

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**University of California
Santa Cruz**

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INTRODUCTION

The intent of this handbook is to establish a **Zero Tolerance Standard** with respect to acts of intimidation, threats of violence, or acts of violence relating to the workplace (violence which stems from an employment relationship) at the University of California, Santa Cruz.¹ It is intended as a guide for employees, supervisors, and managers and has been prepared to aid in the recognition and response to employee workplace violence. A safe and secure workplace is essential to carrying out the mission of the University; the campus and its employees are committed to working together to create and maintain a workplace that is as free as possible from forms of harassing and threatening behaviors.

The policy and procedures contained in this handbook constitute a written program for job safety and security and are part of UCSC's overall workplace health and safety program as set forth in its Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP).

¹ Please refer to the Student Rule Book for policy and procedures on student misconduct, and refer to the Sex Offense Policy for procedures regarding sexual harassment and sexual assault.

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**
University of California, Santa Cruz

The University of California, Santa Cruz is committed to providing a workplace that is as free as possible from intimidation, threats of violence and acts of violence.

- Intimidation:** an intentional act toward another person, causing the other person to reasonably fear for his/her safety or the safety of others.
- Threat of Violence:** an intentional act that threatens bodily harm to another person or damage to the property of another.
- Act of Violence:** an intentional act that causes bodily harm, however slight, to another person or damage to the property of another.

The University prohibits acts of intimidation as well as actual or threatened violence against co-workers, visitors, or any other persons who are either on campus or have contact with University employees in the course of their duties. The following types of behaviors are examples of violations of University policy:

- Unwelcome name-calling, obscene language, and other abusive behavior
- Intimidation through direct or veiled verbal threats
- Throwing objects in the workplace regardless of the size or type of object being thrown, or whether a person is the target of the thrown object
- Physically touching another person in an intimidating, malicious, or harassing manner, including such acts as hitting, slapping, poking, kicking, pinching, grabbing, and pushing
- Physically intimidating others including such acts as obscene gestures, shouting, and fist shaking.

Workplace Violence
Policy and Procedures

Security and safety in the workplace require the cooperation of every staff, academic, and student employee. Any UCSC employee who is the subject of, or a witness to, a suspected violation of this policy is strongly encouraged to report the violation to the next-in-line supervisor who is not a party to the violation. Any emergency, perceived emergency, or suspected criminal conduct shall be immediately reported to the UCSC Police Department.

Any supervisor, manager, or other person in authority who receives a report of a suspected violation of this policy shall investigate the suspected violation and shall consult with the Behavior Risk Assessment Team as appropriate. The results of the investigation shall be reported by the investigating authority to his/her next-in-line supervisor.

Any UCSC employee found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, pursuant to applicable Personnel Policies or Collective Bargaining Agreement, and, if appropriate, shall be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

No employee shall be retaliated against in his/her employment for reporting intimidation, threats or acts of violence.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE WARNING SIGNS

There is no exact method to predict when a person will become violent. One or more of these warning signs may be displayed before a person becomes violent, but they do not necessarily indicate that an individual will become violent. A display of these signs should trigger concern as they are usually exhibited by people experiencing problems.

Verbal, nonverbal, or written threats – or intimidation, explicit or subtle	Frequent interpersonal conflicts
Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence – carrying a concealed weapon	Unable to take criticism of job performance
Expression of a plan to hurt self/others	Displays of unwarranted anger
Feelings of persecution, expressed distrust, especially with management	Moral righteousness – believing the organization is not following its rules
Fear reaction to employee among coworkers/clients	Violence toward inanimate objects
Expression of extreme desperation over family, financial or personal problems	Sabotaging projects, computer programs or equipment
	Holding a grudge against a specific person; verbalizing a hope that something will happen to him/her

Those who witness these warning signs are strongly encouraged to inform their supervisors. Managers and supervisors are encouraged to consult with the Behavior Risk Assessment Team to attempt to prevent a difficult situation from escalating into violence.

Another type of workplace violence may occur when an individual becomes romantically obsessed with someone who does not reciprocate the romantic feelings. The obsession is irrational and the subject does not respond to the victim's attempts to set limits or to end the attachment. Obsessed individuals have sometimes been known to be a threat to the safety of the individual with whom they are obsessed. If you believe that you are being stalked or that someone has an obsessive attachment to you, you should notify the UCSC Police.

STRATEGIES TO DE-ESCALATE THREATENING BEHAVIOR

The following conflict resolution strategies may be helpful to de-escalate situations where an individual is exhibiting threatening or intimidating behavior:

- Project calmness, move and speak slowly, quietly and confidently
- Encourage the person to talk; listen closely and patiently
- Maintain a relaxed but attentive posture
- Position yourself at an angle to the person rather than directly in front
- Arrange yourself so your access to emergency exits is not blocked
- Acknowledge the person's feelings
- Ask for small, specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area, or to move outside
- Use delaying tactics to give the person time to calm down, such as offering a drink of water (in a paper cup)
- Point out choices, break big problems into smaller ones
- Avoid sudden movements and maintain 3-6 foot distance
- Call the police when it is safe to do so
- Call the Behavioral Risk Assessment Team when the person has left

BEHAVIOR RISK ASSESSMENT TEAM

What is the purpose of the Team?

The Behavior Risk Assessment Team is a resource designed to assist in trying to prevent a difficult situation from escalating into violence. The Team serves as a resource for the supervisor or department manager in assessing warning signs and potential threats and suggests possible strategies in response to acts of intimidation or threats of violence.

How do I convene the Team?

If you are a supervisor or manager, you may call Academic or Staff Human Resources or a Labor Relations representative to discuss the situation, or you may notify any member of the Behavior Risk Assessment Team. Any member of the Assessment Team may convene a team meeting if s/he thinks a situation warrants such action. The Team will meet with the supervisor, department manager and others, if necessary, to gather information, evaluate the situation, and to recommend resources and action that may be appropriate.

Who is on the Team?

The Team is made up of specially trained and experienced members of the following campus units:

University Police	9-2231
Counseling and Psychological Services	9-2628
Academic Human Resources	9-4300
Staff Human Resources	9-2009
Labor Relations	9-2017

Any emergency, perceived emergency, or suspected criminal conduct shall be immediately reported to the UCSC Police Department. If someone is acting violently or is threatening someone, call 9-1-1 for immediate police response.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

The degree to which employees are able to survive an actual act of violence in the workplace may depend greatly upon recognition of potential problems and the measures taken in advance of an incident.

Following are the basic building blocks for the development of a departmental safety plan, to be included as part of the department Disaster Preparedness Plan:

- Identify the physical security needs of the department
- Discuss and coordinate emergency strategies with department employees
- To the extent possible, arrange for limited and authorized access to the affected work area
- Establish protocol for calling the Police (emergency/non-emergency)
- Develop prearranged office procedures to alert others to the need for help
- Develop a procedure to cease normal operations and secure the premises
- Outline emergency evacuation procedures
- Evaluate the need for security alarm, panic button, surveillance cameras, security personnel, etc.

Employees should mentally “map out” a personal survival strategy in the event of workplace violence.

Workplace violence incidents will differ greatly and each situation will dictate a different response. The particular circumstances of a given situation will suggest which of, and in which order, the following should occur:

- Report to the Police by dialing **9-1-1** at the safest opportunity
- Alert others (signals, codes, alarms)
- Activate prearranged safety and security plan
- Secure surroundings, lock doors
- If appropriate, evacuate employees/leave the area

MANAGING THE AFTERMATH OF AN INCIDENT

Police and other emergency response personnel will be available to manage all emergencies. Police will deal with criminal activity. However, it remains the responsibility of UCSC employees, supervisors and managers to work together to try to normalize the workplace following an incident.

The aftermath of a violent situation can be traumatic, characterized by confusion and disorientation. The wave of uncertainty, panic and disbelief will pass and in its place will be the task of normalizing the workplace. Depending on the severity of the incident and the recommendations of the Behavior Risk Assessment Team, the Director of Counseling and Psychological Services will normally coordinate post incident normalization. Under most circumstances, this will include the involvement of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Managers will be expected to take the lead in initiating and participating in debriefings following a violent act, normally within 72 hours of an incident.

University Police	9-2231
Counseling and Psychological Services	9-2628
Employee Assistance Program	1-866-808-6205 (toll free)

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

All UCSC staff, academic and student employees are required to adhere to this policy. It is the responsibility of every UCSC employee to assist and cooperate in making the workplace as safe and secure as possible.

- Any conduct or “jokes” which involve intimidation and/or threats are inappropriate and will be taken seriously.
- Employees are strongly encouraged to report any perceived violation of the *Workplace Violence Policy* to their next-in-line supervisor who is not a party to the violation. No employee shall be subjected to criticism, reprisal, retaliation or disciplinary action for good faith reporting pursuant to this policy.
- Employees who are the subject of, or witnesses to, a possible violation of this policy may be requested by management to document their experience or observations in order to facilitate the handling of the situation.
- Employees are strongly encouraged to report Restraining Orders to the University Police and to their supervisors when those Orders affect the workplace.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

All UCSC supervisory employees are required to adhere to this policy.

Supervisors have a crucial role in making UCSC a safe and secure working environment by reducing the potential for employee workplace violence through training, appropriate and consistent use of sound supervisory practices and by applying timely corrective action when necessary. Adherence to UC policies, workplace rules and regulations, documentation of employee performance problems, and appropriate training in identifying early warning signs, appropriate workplace conduct, and/or conflict resolution will greatly assist in the prevention of potential workplace violence.

It is the responsibility of all supervisors to report the results of their investigations into alleged violations of this policy to their next-in-line supervisor and to consult with the Behavior Risk Assessment Team on potential employee workplace violence situations as appropriate.

Supervisors shall document all violations of the *Workplace Violence Policy* in order that appropriate corrective action can be administered.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All UCSC management employees are required to adhere to this policy and to ensure that those they manage are aware of and accountable for adhering to this policy.

The issues surrounding employee workplace violence can be complex and difficult to assess. Therefore, department managers are encouraged to consult with available UCSC resources including, but not limited to, the University Police Department, Labor Relations, Staff or Academic Human Resources, Counseling and Psychological Services, the Behavior Risk Assessment Team, the Ombudsman, the Title IX/Sexual Harassment Officer, and/or the Employee Assistance Program. Consultation with these resources will greatly assist management in identifying intervention strategies that may minimize or avert potentially violent situations. Such intervention(s) may include:

- Supervisory action to address performance problems and inappropriate conduct
- Corrective action or dismissal
- Professional employee counseling through the EAP and other available referral services
- Medical and/or psychological evaluation to determine fitness for duty .

Managers are also responsible for developing and implementing departmental safety plans to be included as part of the department Disaster Preparedness Plan. (See “Incident Management,” p. 9, for elements to include.) The UCSC Police Department is available for office security evaluation and to assist in developing a departmental safety plan.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

Warning Signs

Verbal, nonverbal, or written threats – or intimidation, explicit or subtle	Frequent interpersonal conflicts
Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence – carrying a concealed weapon	Unable to take criticism of job performance
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Feelings of persecution, expressed distrust, especially with management	Moral righteousness – believing the organization is not following its rules
Fear reaction to employee among coworkers/clients	Violence toward inanimate objects
Expression of extreme desperation over family, financial or personal problems	Sabotaging projects, computer programs or equipment
	Holding a grudge against a specific person; verbalizing a hope that something will happen to him/her

What to do if there is an incident:

Employees

Phone

If an emergency, or if you suspect criminal conduct, call the UCSC Police Department immediately. Follow department safety plan.

911

If not an emergency, inform your supervisor of the incident.

Managers and Supervisors

Phone

If an emergency, or if you suspect criminal conduct, call the UCSC Police Department immediately. Follow department safety plan.

911

If not an emergency, contact a member of the Behavior Risk Assessment Team, as appropriate.

University Police	9-2231
Labor Relations	9-2017
Staff Human Resources	9-2009
Academic Human Resources	9-4300
Counseling & Psychological Services	9-2628

What to do following an incident:

Contact Counseling & Psychological Services, if appropriate, for initial debriefing and assessment.

9-2628