

**WARTBURG COLLEGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY PROGRAM**

**Violence in the Workplace Plan**

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**General**

According to Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), each year almost one million individuals become victims of violent crime while working. The BJS reports that about 500,000 victims of violent crime in the workplace lose an estimated 1.8 million workdays each year and over \$55 million in lost wages, not including days covered by sick and annual leave. Institutions of higher learning are not immune to workplace violence type offenses. Firearms brought to campus, bomb threats, arson and other serious incidents happen all too uncommon in today’s society. Cases of academic failure involving students and discipline or termination involving faculty or staff members have led to on-campus assaults and even homicides.

Wartburg College is concerned about the potential for violent acts or threats of violence that affect the workplace. The President of Wartburg College is ultimately responsible for all safety issues. This responsibility is exercised through the normal chain of authority within the college, delegating the charge for ensuring a safe working environment and compliance of established policies and programs to the Cabinet, directors, department chairs, supervisors, and ultimately each employee and student.

Wartburg College has established certain security measures and procedures designed to reduce or eliminate violence. All buildings are on a set schedule for opening and locking. Employees are issued keys as necessary to protect their work area. Employees and students are issued photo identification cards. Campus Security is on duty and patrols the campus grounds twenty-four hours a day. Hallway phones are located in many academic building hallways and emergency phone numbers are listed to facilitate calling. Emergency phones are located in two student parking lots, one parking area for visitor and employees, and at the main entrance to most residence halls. When working late at night, employees are encouraged to notify Campus Security or anyone who could notify authorities if a problem occurs. They may request an escort to and from parking areas and work areas. In the event that the chance of a violent event is possible, increased security patrols, restricted building hours, the retraction of keys and involvement of Waverly Police and other emergency services, as the situation warrants, are possible.

Wartburg College does not have a history of violent crime complaints. Between 1997 and 2001, Campus Security received two complaints of robbery resulting in minor injuries not requiring hospitalization. Assault complaints reported to Campus Security generally involve students in mutual affray type incidents. The surrounding community of Waverly experiences crime reports consistent with most small Northeast Iowa communities. While any crime of violence is possible at any given time, the actual events are quite rare. Areas of concern for workplace violence include, but are not limited to, counseling sessions between faculty and students concerning grades, counseling sessions between supervisors and employees concerning work performance, the counseling center in the Library and hall director/resident assistant/student life meetings with staff to students regarding discipline, emotional issues, and other personnel situations. The risk of off campus violent crime migrating onto campus is considered, at this time, to be quite minimal.

### **Policy**

It is the policy of Wartburg College that all employees and anyone with whom we come into contact in our work have the right to be free from violence. To that end, any and all acts of violence are strictly prohibited. For the purposes of this policy, violence is defined as:

- The use of physical force directed against a student, staff member or faculty member with the intent to cause bodily harm. Examples may include, but are not limited to, striking, hitting, beating, and kicking.
- Substantial acts or threats, which are intended to intimidate, or cause fear or harm directed against students, faculty and/or staff. Examples may include, but are not limited to, verbal threats, harassing phone calls, warning letters.

Other than for police officers in the course of their official duties, no one may possess, carry, or store firearms on Wartburg College's campus. No one may possess edged weapons, martial arts weapons, explosives, or blunt force weapons on campus, to include student and employee privately owned vehicles parked on college parking lots. Items normally associated with nonviolent purposes that could be used as a weapon, i.e., baseball bat, box cutter, etc., would be evaluated on a case by case basis. Additionally, no one may possess toxic substances for the purpose of causing personal harm. Campus Security has a secure gun cabinet to store weapons. Persons needing to store weapons must bring the weapon directly to the Security Office for storage. When removing weapons from the Security gun storage cabinet, the weapons must be taken off campus immediately and with no delay. This policy does not apply to any of the above materials used for college sanctioned purposes.

Any person who makes a substantial threat, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts on Wartburg College's campus or under other circumstances that may negatively affect Wartburg College's ability to conduct business shall be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits, and shall remain off the college premises pending the outcome of an investigation. This includes verbal or nonverbal threats to

another employee or person, or an expression of intention to inflict bodily injury or damage to another employee or person. This policy also applies to extensions of the physical workplace in the case of incidents that begin on campus and proceed off-premises, e.g., stalking, or begin off campus and extend to campus, e.g., athletic events, service trips.

No existing Wartburg College policy, practice, or procedure should be interpreted to prohibit decisions designed to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring, or a life-threatening situation from developing.

Employee support and involvement are important parts of this plan. All Wartburg College personnel are responsible for notifying one of the following persons or office of any threats, which they have witnessed, received, or have been told by another person who has witnessed or received.

- Campus Security
- Campus Pastor
- Director of Human Resources
- Supervisor
- Vice President or Dean

Personnel are encouraged to report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent, when that behavior is job related or might be carried out on a college controlled site, or is connected with college employment. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person or persons who were threatened or were the focus of the threatening behavior.

All individuals who apply for, or obtain a protective or restraining order that lists campus locations as being protective areas, must provide to Campus Security a copy of the order.

This policy applies to all faculty, staff and students and is intended to protect any person at or in any way connected with the campus.

Wartburg College understands the sensitivity of any information provided and will take such action as necessary to protect the privacy of the reporting employee(s) within the limitations of law.

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or expulsion (as applicable) and/or criminal prosecution.

Employees are encouraged to express their safety and security concerns, make sure that violent incidents are reported promptly and accurately, and make recommendations for any corrective actions.

## **Reference**

Public Law 91-596, as amended by Public Law 101-552, Section 5, (a) (1)  
*“Each employer – (1) shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious injury.”*

## **Guidelines**

Substantial threats involve verbal or written threats where the victim sincerely believes his or her health and welfare are at risk. The use of profanity, hand signals, and hastily muttered threats/comments in and of themselves do not constitute a substantial threat.

Examples of physical violence considered workplace violence include, but is not limited to, physical assaults intended to injure the victim, use of weapons, and minor physical assaults (i.e. pushing, shoving) accompanied by threats of more serious injury.

The victim in a workplace violence situation must be an employee. This includes students employed in the work-study program. However, there must be a correlation between the threat and the work-study duties. Student conflicts that are not work or workplace related do not apply to this plan.

Not all physical force incidents should be treated as workplace violence. Minor affrays between students involved in differences of opinion do not constitute workplace violence. Accidents in the workplace without evidence of intent to harm, even if resulting injuries are serious, are not considered workplace violence. Incidents involving only students and no correlation to an on campus job will be handled by Student Life.

## **Prevention/Training**

Campus Security, with the assistance of Human Resources, will periodically review medical, safety, workers' compensation, and insurance records for trends that may affect workplace violence. Campus Security will coordinate with other colleges in the geographic area to learn about their experiences in actual or potential workplace violence. Additionally, Campus Security will solicit input from employees via surveys and will conduct periodic workplace inspections and task evaluations to identify operations or situations and conditions that could lead to violence.

Training is the key to workplace violence prevention. When people are aware of indicators of violence and report information to the appropriate authorities, the chances of nonviolent resolution increases.

Campus Security, in partnership with Human Resources, provides initial training for all new faculty and staff hires. Periodic refresher training will be conducted upon request or during faculty of staff workshops.

Workplace violence issues will be covered in new student orientation and upon request.

Hiring supervisors will insure that employment reference checks of prospective employees are conducted. A criminal background check of candidates to whom an offer of employment is made is strongly recommended for positions incompatible with certain prior criminal convictions. In certain circumstances and with cause, the Human Resources Department will coordinate with Campus Security to pursue the possibility of receiving a criminal background check of any employee thought to pose a threat of violence.

### **Managing a Threat/ an Incident**

Upon the receipt of a complaint that hasn't yet resulted in violence, an ad hoc committee will be established to evaluate the complaint and make a recommendation to the appropriate Vice President. The committee will include the Director of Campus Security, Director of Human Resources, Director of Counseling Services, the supervisor of the apparent victim and the supervisor of the alleged aggressor. In situations involving faculty, the department chair will act as supervisor. Situations involving only students will be directed to the office of the Dean of Students and action will be taken under the provisions of the Student Handbook. The committee will use whatever information is available upon which to base a recommendation. That recommendation will be provided to the Vice President of the aggressor for further action. In the event the aggressor is not affiliated with the college, a recommendation will be provided to the Vice President of the potential victim.

If the recommendation is made to discipline an employee, the Director of Human Resources will convene a meeting with the Director of Campus Security, the disciplining supervisor and the Director of Counseling Services to ascertain the potential for violence. Recommendations from this committee will be provided to the Vice President of the employee to be disciplined and the action will follow the guidelines of the Faculty Handbook, Employee Handbook, or Student Handbook, as applicable.

Once it is verified that a violent crime has been committed or is in progress, initiate the following actions (simultaneously or in the most expedient or safest order):

- Notify the police and emergency medical and fire department as applicable.
- Activate the Emergency Response Plan.
- Activate the Communication Plan.
- Cordon off the affected area.
- Administer first aid if applicable.
- Identify witnesses and persons involved.

Campus Security will prepare a report of any incident requiring the involvement of the ad hoc committee for workplace violence, regardless of whether or not an act of violence is carried out.

### **Managing the Aftermath of an Incident**

After any workplace violence incident, regardless whether or not a violent act occurs, all identified parties (complainant, Security, Human Resources, witnesses, Communications and Marketing) will convene to discuss the incident to identify measures that can prevent or diffuse future incidents.

Workplace violence victims and witnesses (as necessary), will be provided counseling services within the parameters of workers' compensation law or student health plan as applicable and as resources permit.

### **Plan Administration**

The Director of Campus Security and Safety is responsible for preparing, maintaining, disseminating, and updating this plan. At minimum, this plan will be reviewed annually. Questions relating to this plan or suggestions for improvement should be directed to the Director of Campus Security via letter, (Campus Security, Wartburg College, 100 Wartburg Boulevard, Waverly, Iowa 50677), email ([campusecurity@wartburg.edu](mailto:campusecurity@wartburg.edu) or [myers@wartburg.edu](mailto:myers@wartburg.edu)) or phone ((319) 352-8372).

All offices will maintain a copy of this plan.