

SECTION 404: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

404.1 POLICY: It is the policy of Black Hawk County to provide a safe environment for its employees. Therefore, acts of violence, threats of violence, or threatening behavior by or against any County employee or any other individual, are strictly prohibited. The County will take all threats seriously. The prohibited action will subject the perpetrator, if an employee, to serious disciplinary action up to and including discharge, and possible criminal prosecution.

404.2 SCOPE: This policy applies to all Black Hawk County employees on County property, on County machinery or equipment, on County business, or at County functions, and regardless of whether or not the employee is licensed to carry a concealed weapon. The only exceptions of employees being permitted to carry a weapon on County property are peace officers as defined in Section 801.4(11) of the Code of Iowa, those permitted to carry weapons as a function of their jobs, and weapons in residences provided by the County. Whenever the provisions of this policy are in conflict with federal or state laws or regulations, with Standard Operating Procedure for Courthouse Security, or with a current collective bargaining agreement between the County and a certified bargaining unit, the provisions of the collective bargaining unit and/or the laws, regulations, or procedures shall prevail.

404.3 PROHIBITED CONDUCT: Conduct that creates a violent work environment is not permitted under any circumstances. Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- A. The use of physical force with the intent or result of inflicting harm.
- B. The act of creating a hostile or intimidating work environment by means of words, actions, or physical contact that would have the purpose or effect of alarming, intimidating, instilling fear, or inflicting harm, or behaviors that could be construed by a reasonable person to have the said effects.
- C. The surveillance or communication in any form (written, verbal, or electronic) that a reasonable person would deem threatening.
- D. The intentional damage of County or personal property, or acts intended to cause said property to fail to operate or to operate improperly.
- E. The possession of any object used or that could be used to inflict bodily harm, including, but not limited to firearms, explosives, knives, and clubs.
- F. This policy generally focuses on patterns of behavior that create a hostile or intimidating work environment. However, occasional, isolated incidents may be subject to sanctions if such incidents are deemed of a serious nature by the employee's supervisor/Department Head and the Human Resources Department.

404.4 RISK REDUCTION MEASURES: In an emergency situation involving actual or potential violence, the first priority is to protect the safety and well being of persons

involved. The key elements are safety, reporting, coordination and control. In order to provide a safe work environment for employees, the County will take the following measures:

- A. Where applicable, conduct criminal background investigations.
- B. Conduct regular safety inspections.
- C. Respond promptly to all reports of potentially dangerous situations or employees.
- D. Work with employees at-risk for violence because of personal situation or occupational hazards.

404.5 SEARCHES: Black Hawk County reserves the right to conduct searches by law enforcement of any employee, any vehicle operated by an employee, or employee's possessions located on County property, in accordance with local, state and federal laws.

404.6 VIOLENT INCIDENT RESPONSE: In an emergency situation involving actual or potential violence, the first priority is to protect the safety and well-being of persons involved. Because each situation involves unique factors, the following guidelines are intended only to provide general guidance.

- A. If physical danger is imminent, employees should remove themselves and others to a safe location and call 911.
- B. Employees should use verbal and non-verbal skills to de-escalate the situation and remove the individual from an audience when possible.
- C. Incidents shall be reported to a supervisor immediately for investigation.

Situations involving the public that involve conduct prohibited by this policy should be handled in a similar manner, where possible, and referred to the appropriate authorities. Situations involving non-employees will be reported to the proper authority for handling and possible criminal prosecution.

404.7 ENFORCEMENT:

- A. All employees should report immediately to a supervisor any conduct prohibited by this policy. An employee who feels he or she has been the victim of prohibited conduct should report the incident to a supervisor or to the Human Resources Department.
- B. An employee who witnesses prohibited conduct should report the incident to a supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

C. It is the responsibility of supervisors to investigate all reports, to take appropriate disciplinary action, and to make appropriate referrals using established channels. A supervisor who does not appropriately address a report may be subject to discipline.

404.8 VIOLATIONS: Failure to abide by all terms and conditions of the policies described above may result in discipline up to and including discharge, as well as possible criminal prosecution. Carrying a weapon onto County property in violation of this policy will be considered an act of criminal trespass, will be grounds for immediate removal from County property, and may result in prosecution.

404.9 DISCLAIMER: The provisions of this policy shall not be construed to create any duty or obligation on the part of the County to take any actions beyond those required of an employer by law.