
Workplace Violence Prevention: A Guide for Supervisors

Seventh Edition

County of Santa Clara

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County of Santa Clara Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

This Section Contains the Policy Approved by the Board of Supervisors on September 26, 1995

Introduction

Santa Clara County is committed to serving a wide range of citizens, some of whom can be under severe stress and have nowhere else to turn. Providing services to these and other persons can place County employees in a position of vulnerability to violence or threatening behavior. The County values its employees and clients and, with this Policy, the Board of Supervisors affirms its commitment to providing workplaces and facilities that are free from violence.

Types of Perpetrators

Strangers

To help protect employees from violent strangers in the community, the County will provide crime prevention information to employees and will address security issues involving worksites and facilities.

Clients

Employees in many departments deal with clients who are distressed and who may make threats or commit acts of violence. The County will provide support and guidance to employees so that threats of violence can be recognized and prudently addressed, and so that acts of violence can be prevented if possible.

Client violence may be difficult to control, and employee exposure to such violence may be a result of working with special client/patient populations. The handling of some client violence situations may properly be the primary function of local law enforcement agencies. As a matter of policy, the County of Santa Clara will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence by clients or other members of the public towards employees.

Family Members or Acquaintances

If the workplace is affected by a violent act or threat of violence by an employee's family

member or acquaintance, the County will provide support and guidance for the victim and his or her co-workers.

Employees

The County of Santa Clara will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence (either verbal or implied) by employees. In such cases, the County endorses immediate and definitive use of the disciplinary process up to and including discharge from County employment, consistent with ensuring the safety of co-workers. Criminal prosecution will be pursued as appropriate. The County also advocates a preventive approach whereby merit system rules and regulations are fairly and consistently administered, and where troubled employees receive guidance and, if necessary, professional help.

Roles and Responsibilities

County Executive

The County Executive shall ensure that this Policy is fully implemented and adapted to unique needs at the agency/department level, and that the County organization maintains an effective support structure for responding to acts and threats of workplace violence.

The Executive's Office of Occupational Safety and Environmental Compliance will include the Policy as part of the County's written Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

Employee Services Agency

The Employee Services Agency has overall responsibility for maintaining this Policy and for identifying resources that agencies and departments can use in developing their training plans and violence prevention measures. The Employee Services Agency will also administer workplace violence prevention measures involving Labor Relations (including compulsory medical or "fitness for duty" examinations) and the Employee Assistance Program, and will

coordinate post-incident activities involving employee services and claims management.

Agency and Department Heads

Agency and Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that this Policy is implemented in their respective organizations and that the unique needs of their organizations are addressed through procedures and training. Each agency and/or department must develop a plan for preventing and responding to acts of workplace violence. These plans need not be lengthy, but they shall contain at a minimum a Facility Emergency Plan attachment that includes facility specific procedures (such as alarm buttons and escape routes), notification lists, and a timeline for training designated employees.

Managers and Supervisors

It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to make safety their highest concern. When made aware of a real or perceived threat of violence, management shall conduct a thorough investigation, provide support for employees, and take specific actions to help prevent acts of violence. Managers and supervisors shall also provide information and training for employees as needed.

Employees

Employees should learn to recognize and respond to behaviors by potential perpetrators that may indicate a risk of violence. Employees shall also place safety as the highest concern, and shall report all acts of violence and threats of violence.

Physical Security

Since the County is a public organization that wishes to remain accessible to its clients to the fullest extent possible, it is not the County's intent to implement a widespread "fortification" of its facilities. The County prefers to train its employees to be the primary means of reducing workplace violence. However, certain facilities, due to the nature of the service provided, may need barriers, cameras, metal detectors, better locks, and the like. Where such structures are necessary, they should be constructed in the least obtrusive way feasible.

Training and Information

Although acts of workplace violence cannot be precisely predicted, knowledge of how to respond to perpetrators can help County employees minimize the risk of violence or injury. The County will provide designated employees with training that will help them take appropriate precautions and respond wisely when confronted with a potentially violent individual. Departments will structure this training to meet the unique needs of each operation.

Since the vast majority of violent acts perpetrated by employees and employee family members are preceded by a number of behaviors that signal an escalating situation, the County will provide employees with written materials that will help them recognize the warning signs of violence, and will recommend professional consultation or initiate intervention measure before a violent act occurs.

Workplace Violence Prevention: A Guide for Supervisors

Introduction

Although workplace violence against public sector workers is not a crisis or an epidemic (the rate of workplace violence against government employees fell 82% between 1994 and 2011), the annual rate of workplace violence against government workers is still more than twice that of their private sector counterparts. With this in mind, it is important to be prepared. This booklet provides information that will be useful to you as a supervisor when questions or issues arise regarding workplace violence involving a stranger, a client, an employee or an employee family member or acquaintance.

A companion booklet, *Workplace Violence Prevention: A Guide for Employees*, is available from your department Safety Coordinator.

Overview

What is Workplace Violence?

Workplace violence includes violent acts or threats of violence in the workplace, including bullying, disruptive, threatening, and violent behavior.

Bullying behavior is repeated, abusive conduct that is threatening, humiliating, or intimidating, or that prevents work from getting done.

Disruptive behavior disturbs, interferes with or prevents normal work functions or activities. Examples include yelling, using profanity, waving arms or fists, verbally abusing others, and refusing reasonable requests for identification.

Threatening behavior includes physical actions short of actual contact/injury (e.g., moving closer aggressively), general oral or written threats to people or property, (statements like "You better watch your back" or "I'll get you") as well as implicit threats ("you'll be sorry" or "this isn't over").

Violent behavior includes any physical assault, with or without weapons. However, incidents do not need to include assaults and/or weapons to be considered workplace violence. Violent behavior includes actions or words that endanger or harm an employee or client, as well as actions that lead a person to reasonably believe that they are in danger (e.g., throwing things, pounding on a desk or door, or destroying property), or specific threats to inflict physical harm (e.g., a threat to shoot a named individual).

Incidents do not need to include assaults or weapons to be considered workplace violence.

Categories of Workplace Violence

Workplace violence can be categorized into four types: violence committed by strangers; violence by customers or clients; violence by coworkers; and violence by personal relations. These workplace violence categories and their specific characteristics are described below.

Type 1. Violence by Strangers

This is violence committed by an assailant who has no legitimate business relationship with the County and usually enters the affected workplace to commit a robbery or other criminal act. Employees who have face-to-face contact and exchange money with the public, work late at night and into the early morning hours, and work alone or in very small numbers are at greatest risk of a Type I event.

Type 2. Violence by Customers/Clients

This is violence committed by an assailant who either receives services from or is under the custodial supervision of the County. These events involve assaults on public safety and correctional personnel,

public transit operators, health care and social service providers, teachers, and other public or private service sector employees who provide professional, public safety, administrative or business services to the public. Assailants can be current or former customers, clients, patients, or criminal suspects, inmates and prisoners.

Type 3. Violence by Coworkers

This involves violence by an assailant who has some employment-related involvement with the County; for example, a current or former employee, supervisor or manager. Any workplace can be at risk of violence by a co-worker. In engaging in bullying, issuing a threat, or committing an assault, the individual's actions are motivated by perceived difficulties in his or her relationship with the victim or with the affected workplace, and the individual may seek revenge for perceived unfair treatment.

Type 4. Violence by Personal Relations

This includes incidents of domestic violence at the workplace by an assailant who confronts an individual with whom he or she has or had a personal relationship outside of work. Personal relations include a current or former spouse, family member, friend or acquaintance. The assailant's actions can be motivated by perceived difficulties in the relationship or by psycho-social factors that are specific to the assailant.

Workplace Violence Prevention

There are a number of strategies to reduce the risk of workplace violence, including workplace design, administrative and procedural practices, and training and adoption of employee best practices for behavior.

Procedural Practices

Work with your facility's Emergency Response Team Leader(s), Facility Manager, Safety Coordinator, Management, Union Personnel, and Facility Safety Committee to prepare a Workplace Violence Prevention section to your facility's Emergency Response Plan. This section does not have to be lengthy, but it should reflect the unique needs of your individual operations. As a minimum, include the following elements:

- Specific roles and responsibilities, such as who goes to the front desk, who calls police, who directs incoming emergency response vehicles, who handles media relations, etc.
- Evacuation routes and safe assembly areas.
- Means of communication, such as portable radios, cordless telephones, cellular telephones, silent alarms, buzzers, and intercom systems. If you have an intercom, you may want to have a code name that the receptionist can use to summon help, such as "Paging Dr. Green" — as well as an all-clear code, such as "Dr. Green says it's safe now."
- Liaison with other agencies and organizations. This may include some of the resources listed at the end of this booklet.
- Notification of relatives and next of kin. (Make sure your plan includes how phone numbers can be obtained.)
- Counseling resources for victims, witnesses, and others affected by the incident.
- Media relations. You may want to involve your department or agency public relations manager (if you have one) or coordinate in advance with the County Executive's Office of Public Affairs.
- Training, both initial and ongoing, for designated supervisors and employees. Include a timeline and the types of training (videos, guest speakers, etc.) that will be used. Training may involve a short video and a limited discussion, or for employees who are at greater risk, it may involve a longer video combined with written handout material or even an all-day seminar. Try to assess the specific training needs of your employees and find appropriate training materials to address these needs. This can

include pamphlets, cards posted in restrooms, and posters — in addition to copies of this policy. See the back of this booklet for a list of training resources.

- Protective measures for employees who perform tasks such as cash handling that may involve a greater risk of stranger violence.
- Reception desk procedures.

Additional elements can encourage employee use of counseling resources such as the Employee Assistance Program, and the use of supervisory techniques to enhance communication and promote peaceable social interactions.

Once it is written, your Workplace Violence Prevention section should be read, understood, and discussed by all affected employees.

Workplace Design

Physical controls remove the hazard from the workplace or create a barrier between the worker and the hazard. Since the County's policy is to keep its facilities as accessible as possible to its clients, the County prefers to not rely on physical security measures as the primary means of preventing workplace violence. However, there are certain measures that will not affect the open appearance of the facility nor greatly impact your department's budget:

- Install a central reception area for each facility. This will enable you to better identify strangers and screen clients.
- Provide employee identification badges.
- Install some kind of physical barrier to the rest of the facility. This can help control client access to employee work areas.
- Provide an escape route for reception personnel. Do not set up your reception area in such a way that the receptionist is blocked in by the client, but have a clear escape route to the back of the desk or to the side so that the receptionist can make a hasty retreat if necessary.
- Check exterior lighting, especially in areas where employees walk to their cars. Discuss lighting needs with your Facility Manager, who can discuss improvements with the Facilities and Fleet.
- If necessary, ask FAF Custodial and Grounds to prune landscaping to eliminate hiding places near entrances, walkways, and parking areas.
- Install a buzzer or silent alarm that alerts employees in the back that a problem exists at the front desk.
- Make sure that all non-public entrances are kept closed and locked, and that signs are posted where necessary directing clients to public entrances. Check with the County Fire Marshal before locking a door that is not equipped with a "panic bar" on the inside.
- Post emergency numbers for police, fire, and medical services. If your phones require dialing "9" first, be sure the notices say "9-911".
- Protect against bombs by placing heavy barriers to keep trucks and vans from parking close to the building.

It may be necessary at some facilities to go beyond the minor physical measures listed above. Installation of such equipment as metal detectors, special locks, and bulletproof glass may be advisable but are beyond the scope of this booklet. FAF Capital Programs can give you an idea of the costs involved. Be aware that such measures, although effective, are not a fail-safe protection against workplace violence. Any physical security improvements should also be accompanied by a particularly aggressive implementation of the other suggestions contained in this Guide.

Prevention through Behavior – Best Practices

In addition to the workplace design and administrative procedures identified above, there are a number of practices that you can encourage your employees to adopt that can reduce their risk of workplace violence. The preventive measures differ for each of the four types of workplace violence events.

Preventing Violence by Strangers

To help your employees protect themselves against violent crimes such as robbery or assault, distribute pamphlets and booklets regarding crime prevention, and make sure they understand the best practices identified in the companion guide *Workplace Violence Prevention: A Guide for Employees*.

Work with your employees to address any work practices (such as cash handling) that may involve a risk of violence. Where appropriate, post signs stating that limited cash is kept on hand.

Preventing Violence from Customers/Clients

Much of what you as a supervisor can do to prevent client violence involves training your employees. Consult one of the resources at the back of this Guide for sources of training and/or training materials.

Some procedures that can help prevent client violence include having clients sign in at the reception area, wear a visitor badge, and/or be escorted if they must enter work areas. Talk with your employees, your supervisor, and one or more of the resources listed at the back of this Guide to get their thoughts about measures that could improve the security of your particular operation.

Many employees ask about security guards. In certain controlled situations, properly trained and screened security guards can be effective, but it is not possible to cover every situation, and security guards are quite expensive. The best protection is to have a trained staff member who knows how to respond appropriately in the event of a threat or a violent act.

Remind your employees that conflict often results from communication breakdowns, cultural/belief differences, system pressures, attitude/stress, or lack of trust. It is unlikely that your employees will be able to address the major stresses in the client's life, and they may not be able to do much about the issue that may be causing frustration. However, a respectful greeting, a smile, and a listening ear can help calm an inflamed temper and diffuse potential conflict. Remind your staff of the following best practices:

- Treat everyone in a professional manner.
- Make eye contact and give your full attention.
- Use neutral verbal and non-verbal communication cues.
- Explain your services, and provide help where possible.
- If you cannot provide assistance, direct customers to another reference or resource, or politely explain that you cannot help them.
- Don't make promises unless you can keep them.
- Anticipate complaints or angry behavior and prepare for them.

Preventing Violence by Coworkers

The best way to reduce violence by employees is to not hire potentially violent employees in the first place. Although an applicant's potential for violence may be the farthest thing from your mind during the selection process, the hiring interview is a prime opportunity to probe an applicant's approach to potentially volatile situations. You might base your questions on a scenario, preferably one that is related to the specific job opening and describes a situation where a hypothetical employee is treated in a way that would tend to provoke anger.

Pay close attention to the applicant's responses — they may be subtle, but they may give you valuable information that will help you in your hiring decision.

A second, very important step is to check references and verify employment dates and titles with prior employers before making a job offer. There are a number of legal issues involved with these checks, and many laws restrict what a prospective employer may ask. California law, however, gives law enforcement

agencies the right to obtain a peace officer applicant's employment information from previous employers.¹ If you need advice in this area, contact Human Resources.

Workplaces prone to disruptive incidents are often characterized by high levels of unresolved conflict and poor communication. Conflict at work is normal, but must be addressed promptly and effectively, not avoided or suppressed.

As a supervisor, you can foster a work environment that supports communication and conflict resolution:

- Encourage open communication among employees
- Create professional development opportunities
- Maintain mechanisms for complaints and concerns, including timely feedback and response
- Maintain consistent and fair discipline for employees
- Implement a conflict resolution process
- Create a safe physical workplace

Make sure you employees receive information or training on:

- Workplace Violence Prevention
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Anger management
- Stress reduction

Bullying

Addressing bullying behaviors immediately can help prevent acts of violence. Bullying often goes unnoticed in the workplace because it is a slow process of emotional and psychological manipulation that is hard to prove and detect.

Bullying can take place between supervisors and subordinates, as well as between colleagues (“lateral violence”). It can occur between professionals (e.g., doctors, nurses, sides) as well as tradespeople (e.g., apprentices, journeymen, masters).

Signs of bullying can include:

- Nonverbal innuendo
- Verbal affront
- Undermining activities
- Withholding information
- Sabotage
- Infighting
- Scapegoating
- Backstabbing

Warning Signs of Violence

People rarely commit a violent act with no warning. A violent act is almost always preceded by a number of warning signs or changes in behavior. You should also become familiar with the behaviors and attitudes that may be indicators of disruptive, threatening, or violent behavior from an employee. Some of these warning signs are listed below.

Use caution when reading this list — it is not intended as an evaluation tool for you to assess the stability of an employee, since a display of one or more of these signs does not necessarily mean that a person will become violent. Consider these behaviors as a whole, and don't focus on one isolated act. This list is simply a summary of the kinds of behaviors displayed by individuals who have at times committed violent acts. The purpose of this list is to heighten your awareness and to help you to determine if you have a cause for concern.

¹ California Government Code, sec 1031.1

If you observe a *pattern* of such behaviors or attitudes that causes you concern or that frightens you or your employees, please notify your supervisor immediately.

Behaviors:

- Attendance problems, decreased productivity, or inconsistent work patterns
- Upset over recent event(s) at work or home
- Recent major change in behavior, demeanor, appearance
- Recently has withdrawn from normal activities, family, friends, co-workers
- Intimidating, verbally abusive, harasses or mistreats others
- Challenges/resists authority
- Blames others for problems in life or work; suspicious, holds grudges
- Use/abuse of drugs and/or alcohol
- Unwelcome obsessive romantic attention
- Makes threatening references to other incidents of violence
- Makes threats to harm self, others, or property
- Possesses or is fascinated with weapons
- Has known history of violence
- Has communicated specific proposed act(s) of disruption or violence

Attitude:

- Is isolated or a loner
- Morally superior, self-righteous
- Feels entitled to special rights and that rules don't apply to him/her
- Feels wronged, humiliated, degraded; wants revenge
- Believes to have no choices or options for action except violence

If you observe a change in an employee's behavior that fits the overall pattern of this list, it is a cause for concern. It is important that you communicate any concern immediately. Tell your supervisor, and call Labor Relations, and Mental Health Director, or Mental Health Adult Services. Do not attempt to determine whether or not an employee is going to become violent based on behavior you observed; leave this kind of assessment to the experts. At the same time, do not become complacent or put off escalating your concerns.

Preventing Violence by Personal Relations

Violence by personal relations – known as domestic violence – occurs when a person in an intimate or familiar relationship is abused by the other person in that relationship. This abuse can enter the workplace if the abuser shows up at the workplace with the intent of harassing or harming the employee.

Since most incidents of domestic violence are perpetrated by individuals outside the County they may not be readily apparent. There will, however, be early warning signs that this type of violence is escalating outside the workplace. The victim may show symptoms such as increased fear, emotional episodes, and/or signs of physical injury. Victims, as well as perpetrators, also show signs of work performance deterioration. Identification of these early warning signs can prevent a serious incident.

The **Domestic Violence** section of this guide, below, provides more detailed information on responding to situations of domestic violence.

Responding to Disruptive, Threatening, or Violent Behavior

Potential or actual violent situations involving clients and employees can escalate if not defused. The warning signs of threatening and violent behavior can generally be grouped into three levels. The following is an attempt to delineate the warning signs and the appropriate response. It should be noted that any single or combination of warning signs at the three levels may be indicative of a potentially violent situation. You will have to make a judgment call as to the appropriate action to take by discerning and evaluating the given situation.

Level One – Early Warning Signs

The person is:

- Intimidating/bullying,
- Discourteous/disrespectful,
- Uncooperative, and/or
- Verbally abusive.

Action Steps

If you are an offending employee's supervisor, you should meet with the employee to discuss concerns. Follow these procedures:

- Schedule private time and place.
- Coordinate any necessary union participation.
- Get straight to the point.
- Ask the employee for his or her input.
- Ask the employee what should be done about the behavior.
- Ask how you can help.
- Identify the performance and/or conduct problems that are of concern.
- Identify the steps you would like to see to correct problems.
- Set limits on what is acceptable behavior and performance.
- Establish time frames to make changes and subsequent consequences for failing to correct behavior and/or performance.
- Contact Human Resources.

Level Two – Escalation of Situation

The person:

- Argues with customers, vendors, co-workers, and management;
- Refuses to obey agency policies and procedures;
- Sabotages equipment and steals property for revenge;
- Verbalizes wishes to hurt co-workers and/or management;
- Sends threatening note(s) to co-worker(s) and/or management; and/or
- Sees self as victimized by management ("me against them").

Action Steps

- If warranted, call 911 and other appropriate emergency contacts for that particular facility, particularly if the situation requires immediate medical and/or law enforcement personnel.
- Immediately contact the supervisor and, if needed, the supervisor will contact other appropriate official(s) such as functional area experts to seek help in assessing/responding to the situation.
- If necessary, secure your own safety and the safety of others, including contacting people who are in danger (make sure emergency numbers for employees are kept up-to-date and accessible).
- Document the observed behavior in question.

If you are an offending employee's supervisor, you should meet with the employee to discuss concerns and, if appropriate, begin or continue progressive discipline. The supervisor should follow these procedures:

- Call for assistance in assessing/responding, if needed.
- Avoid an audience when dealing with the employee.
- Remain calm, speaking slowly, softly, and clearly.
- Ask the employee to sit down; see if s/he is able to follow directions.
- Ask questions relevant to the employee's complaint such as:
 1. What can you do to try to regain control of yourself?

2. What can I do to help you regain control?
 3. What do you hope to gain by committing violence?
 4. Why do you believe you need to be violent to achieve that?
 5. Try to direct the aggressive tendencies into another kind of behavior so that the employee sees s/he has choices about how to react.
- Identify the steps you would like to see to correct problems.
 - Set limits on what is acceptable behavior and performance.
 - Establish time frames to make changes and subsequent consequences for failing to correct behavior and/or performance.
 - Contact Human Resources.

Level Three – Further Escalation

The person displays intense anger resulting in:

- Suicidal threats,
- Physical fights or assaults,
- Destruction of property,
- Display of extreme rage or physically aggressive acts, and/or
- Utilization of weapons to harm others.

Action Steps

If you observe violent or threatening behavior which poses an immediate danger to persons or property:

- Call 911 (or 9-911) and other appropriate emergency contacts for that particular facility, particularly if the situation requires immediate medical and/or law enforcement personnel.
- Remain calm and contact supervisor.
- Secure your personal safety first.
- Immediately contact others who may be in danger
- Leave the area if your safety is at risk.
- Cooperate with law enforcement personnel when they have responded to the situation.

Recommended Actions

If one of your employees becomes a *troubling* employee it is important to start appropriate personnel actions immediately. Remember that the County's Workplace Violence Prevention Policy prohibits any violent or threatening behavior and provides for disciplinary action as needed. This may include suspension or discharge. The progressive discipline process includes a wide range of options. Since the Americans with Disabilities Act gives some protection to employees who are mentally ill, it is important to consult with the Office of Labor Relations before taking actions.

Do not let such problems persist unaddressed. The worst thing you can do is to ignore a problem or have an employee transferred to another department, because the problem will likely continue there as well.

Document all behaviors that contribute to your concern. This includes comments made to you or other employees, threats – either written or verbal, or behaviors that seem either inappropriate or scary.

The investigation may establish that you have reasonable cause to put the employee on administrative leave pending the initiation of discharge procedures. Consult with Labor Relations for approval before you meet with the employee to inform him or her of your decision. In meeting with the employee, the following steps may help to reduce the likelihood that the employee will resort to violent behavior.

- Always treat the employee with respect.
- Inform the employee prior to the meeting of his or her right to union representation during the meeting.
- Do not dwell on the reasons for your decision.
- Do not negotiate. Your decision is final.

If the discipline process results in the employee's separation from the County, work with the employee and Labor Relations on such issues as delivery of personal mail and references for future employment.

The investigation may reveal that accusations against the alleged perpetrator were false. In this case, you may have to dig deeper to determine and deal with the root causes of such false accusations.

You may want to consult with one of the threat assessment experts in County Mental Health Director or Mental Health Adult Services regarding other actions to be taken. If the investigation determines that the employee is not a threat, but still has personal problems that need addressing, you may refer him or her to the Employee Assistance Program for counseling.

If the threat assessment determines that the employee *is* a threat, warn all potential victims as soon as possible.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence occurs when a person in an intimate or familiar relationship is abused by the other person in that relationship. This abuse may be physical, but it can also be verbal, emotional, or sexual. The abuser often seeks to exert power or to isolate and control the victim by cutting off finances, friendships, and other means of support. Domestic violence can involve persons in a variety of relationships:

- Spouse or former spouse.
- Live-in partner or former partner.
- Dating, former dating or engagement relationship.
- A person with whom the victim has had a child.
- An elderly person who is abused by a grown child or other care giver.

Because women are six times more likely than men to be injured by domestic violence, this Guide uses feminine pronouns when referring to domestic violence. However, a victim can also be a male.

It is important to recognize that violent incidents in the workplace may include acts of domestic violence. Often, co-workers and supervisors believe that domestic violence is something that is not their concern, but a private family matter that should not be brought to work. But the problem does spill over into the workplace. Domestic violence accounted for 27% of violent events in the workplace. If the victim has sought shelter or a restraining order, the workplace is frequently the place s/he can be found. It is not uncommon for the perpetrator to show up at the work site to carry out acts of violence against the partner or anyone trying to protect that person.

How Bad is the Problem?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about one million women each year are victims of domestic violence. Although statistics indicate that poor women are more likely to be victims, domestic violence is present in all levels and circles of society. In Santa Clara County, the District Attorney's Office receives over 100 reports of domestic violence per week — 5,000 per year.

Why is Domestic Violence a Workplace Problem?

Domestic violence affects the workplace in many ways. A survey² of 100 senior executives in Fortune 1,000 companies found that:

- 33% say that domestic violence affects their balance sheet.
- 49% said that domestic violence had a harmful effect on their company's productivity.
- 66% agreed that a company's financial performance would benefit from addressing the issue.

² Liz Claiborne, Inc. "Addressing Domestic Violence: A Corporate Response". Conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide in 1994.

Domestic violence becomes a workplace safety issue when a perpetrator makes threats against an employer or comes to the workplace seeking to harm a victim. Between 2003 and 2008, 33% of the women killed at work in the United States were killed by current or former husbands or boyfriends³.

There is also a human side to the issue. When an abuser tries to keep his victim from having any outside support, a victim of domestic violence may find that her last resort is support from the workplace. Therefore, an employer who is supportive of such a victim may have a key role to play in providing that last link to help. A victim can also change her address and phone number to avoid an abuser but very few victims can afford to leave their employment.

Is Domestic Violence Affecting Your Workplace?

As a supervisor, you may become aware of a domestic violence situation that affects your workplace. But unlike violence or threats involving a stranger, domestic violence is almost always unreported at first. It is only after repeated abuse that a victim is willing to come forward. Therefore, you should be observant of the signs of domestic violence.

Some signs of possible domestic violence are listed below. Use caution when using this list; just because someone is exhibiting one or more of these signs does not necessarily mean that she is a victim of domestic violence. Do not assume that someone is being abused.

Signs that a person may be experiencing domestic violence⁴:

- Nervous or inappropriate laughter or smiling.
- Crying.
- Anxiety.
- Defensiveness, anger.
- Lack of eye contact, or fearful eye contact.
- Minimizes the presence or seriousness of injuries.
- Overly attentive, aggressive or defensive partner.
- Talks about "a friend" who has been abused.
- Refers to a partner's "anger" or "temper".
- Uses health care services repeatedly, especially for psychosomatic complaints or for injury to the same site.
- Tardiness and/or absenteeism.
- Complaints including headaches, sleeping disorders, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, fatigue, nightmares, suicide attempts or gestures, abdominal and gastrointestinal complaints, marital problems.
- Repetitive and/or harassing phone calls from the partner or former partner.
- Pamphlets on domestic violence quietly disappear from display racks in your workplace.

Dealing With a Domestic Violence Situation

If you have reason to believe one of your employees may be experiencing domestic violence that is impacting your workplace, get advice — from your supervisor or from one of the resources listed in Appendix A: Resources at the back of this Guide. Do not take any action without first telling your supervisor.

You have an obligation to respond, but getting started is the hardest part. There is no "trigger" or set of criteria that will indicate exactly what to do since each situation is different.

Gather Information

³ National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Division of Safety Research, Analysis and Field Evaluations Branch, Morgantown, West Virginia. (April 2012)

⁴ Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Protocol for Health Care Providers, April 1994, pg. 7.

The first step in responding to a domestic violence situation is to gather information. Since this can be difficult, consider the suggestions in this section, and who might be able to help you.

Barriers to Communicating with Victims

Some communication barriers that victims of domestic violence may experience are listed below. Before you talk with your employee, take some time to think about how these barriers may be affecting her — and you. Again, get advice and support from others.

The victim may...

- Be afraid of threats by the abuser.
- Deny the existence or extent of the abuse.
- Be afraid of living alone.
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or degraded about the abuse.
- Think the injuries are not serious enough to matter.
- Feel responsible or guilty.
- Feel generally overwhelmed by the situation.
- Love the abuser.
- Believe the abuser's promises that he will stop the abuse.
- Pity the abuser and believe that his behavior can change without help or intervention.
- Be afraid that the abuser will commit suicide.
- Feel a loyalty to the abuser.
- Have an economic dependence on the abuser.
- Have a cultural, ethnic or religious background that inhibits disclosure to non-family members. The Equal Opportunity Division or a community group may be able to help you here.
- Define abuse differently and therefore not consider the situation abusive.
- Think that the situation may reflect negatively on her performance evaluation or eligibility for promotion.
- Believe that children need two parents and that discussing the abuse may remove the father.
- Not wish to disclose his or her homosexuality.

As a supervisor, you may also face some common communication barriers of your own. You may...

- Be afraid of offending the employee.
- Be afraid the employee may not want to discuss the situation.
- Not want to become involved in a personal matter between intimates.
- Feel helpless given the complexity of the issue.
- Think that it is not your role to ask questions or intervene.
- Believe that it is the employee's responsibility to raise the issue of abuse.
- Assume that if the employee does not bring up the subject, there has been no abuse.
- Blame the employee or feel frustrated that she does not leave the relationship.
- Not believe the employee because you have personally observed the alleged abuser to be very concerned and pleasant.
- Be unaware of or uninformed about the scope and dynamics of domestic violence.
- Assume that people from middle to upper class backgrounds are not at risk of abuse.
- Be uncomfortable with situations where the abuser is a woman or a homosexual partner.

What Should You Say?

Appendix B: Suggested Concerns to Address Regarding Domestic Violence contains a list of suggested questions that you can choose from when considering what to ask an employee whom you suspect may be a victim of domestic violence. Be careful not to pry into areas of an employee's personal life that she does not want to discuss, but rather be supportive. Emphasize your concern for her safety and the safety of other employees at the work site.

If the Employee Seems Uncooperative

When a domestic violence situation spills over into the workplace, it is very embarrassing for the victim. She is often frightened, timid and confused. Since she may be in a state of shock or denial regarding a situation, she may be reluctant to discuss the situation, seek help, or work with you to protect others from the perpetrator.

If this is the case, don't push the issue. You may be inclined to pressure the victim into cooperation, but it is important that you empathize and try to put yourself in the victim's shoes. Listen to her and her assessment of the situation. Resolutions are most effective when the victim is a willing participant in the solution. You may want to refer her to expert help or consult an expert yourself so that you can better understand how to be supportive in your role as a supervisor.

Make sure to let her know that you are available to talk and listen at any time.

Support for Victims of Domestic Violence

Be supportive with your words and actions. Employees who feel supported by their supervisor will be more willing to share pertinent details that could help protect all the employees at the work site. Your support will also help preserve the victim's morale and loyalty during this difficult time.

This is not a time for timidity. Abusers fear being exposed, and as you and your department's management become involved in supporting the victim, you may need the courage to take steps that the abuser will not like. But that is the whole point of an employer's involvement — to make sure that the victim is not alone, that she has the resources of the County organization supporting her.

The victim will also need support off the job. You may want to refer her to the National Domestic Violence Hotline or one of the resources listed in Appendix A: Resources at the back of this Guide. The resources listed under "Shelters" may be particularly helpful since they have trained staff members who can provide emotional support as well as logistical support. The Employee Assistance Program is a valuable resource. Some departments have internal domestic violence or counseling resources that are available to department employees. The victim's normal health care provider may also offer counseling that would be of some help.

Confidentiality vs. Relaying Important Information

Sometimes information you obtain may need to be shared with others at the workplace for their protection. An example would be the posting of a photo of the abuser at the reception area (for employees' eyes only) with a statement listing pertinent facts such as his name, his relationship to the victim, and his observed behavior (such as threats he has made). Consider the victim's feelings, and discuss with her the importance of releasing enough information to ensure the safety of employees at the work site. Before releasing any information, consult your supervisor, County Counsel, Labor Relations, or other resources listed in Appendix A: Resources at the back of this Guide.

Work Performance of the Victim

Domestic violence can affect the victim's job performance in different ways. Fatigue, fear, or depression may affect efficiency and accuracy; child care or court dates may affect punctuality and attendance. Also, the perpetrator may cause interruptions by calling the victim at work. Although you may feel under pressure to maintain the victim's work performance, consider her feelings and make an extra effort to be supportive during this difficult time.

Employees victimized by domestic violence or sexual assault must be given time off to appear in court to obtain a temporary restraining order or other injunctive relief to ensure their safety or the safety of his or her child due to domestic violence. Employees who are victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault must also be given leave for the following reasons: To seek medical attention for injuries caused by domestic violence or sexual assault. Obtain services from a domestic violence shelter, program or rape crisis center as a result of domestic violence or sexual assault. Obtain psychological counseling related to an experience of domestic violence or sexual assault. Participate in safety planning and take other actions to increase safety from future domestic violence or sexual assault, including temporary or permanent relocation.⁵

⁵ California Labor Code 230

Actions to Take If the Threat Is Not Imminent

Although a situation may not require immediate action, lives may still be in danger. Lives have been saved by a supervisor's decisive action. Such actions might include:

Conduct a Threat Assessment

Call and/or refer the victim to threat assessment consultation from County Mental Health Director or Mental Health Adult Services.

Improve Physical Security

Review the violence prevention plans for your facility. Actions you can take to improve security for your employees and/or a single victim include:

- Hiring a police officer to be on hand at the work site. Call the County Sheriff's Reserves. There is an hourly fee for this service.
- Moving the victim's desk to another area or to a more secure facility.
- Posting a photo (if available) of the alleged perpetrator at reception areas (for employee eyes only). Be careful about legal issues surrounding this.
- Purchasing additional equipment (such as panic buttons for the reception desk, cellular phones, intercom and/or public address systems, violence prevention pamphlets, etc.

Conduct Training

Conduct violence prevention training, emphasizing the response procedures contained in this Guide and in your building's emergency plan. Brief employees and other facility occupants regarding the threats.

Work with Law Enforcement

If time permits, you may want to establish a relationship with either a threat assessment team or an individual in your local police department so that if the situation becomes critical, persons within the police department will already be familiar with the situation. This can improve both the level of response and the level of officer safety, because officers will already have prior knowledge of the level of dangerousness of the perpetrator when they are responding to an urgent threat of domestic violence.

When Immediate Action Is Required

In the event the perpetrator shows up at work with the intent of harming the employee and any others who happen to be in the way or involved, follow the procedures described in **Level Three – Further Escalation Action Steps** in the previous section:

- Call 911 (or 9-911) and other appropriate emergency contacts for that particular facility, particularly if the situation requires immediate medical and/or law enforcement personnel.
- Remain calm and contact supervisor.
- Secure your personal safety first.
- Immediately contact others who may be in danger
- Leave the area if your safety is at risk.
- Cooperate with law enforcement personnel when they have responded to the situation.

Support for Threat Victims

In the flurry of activity following a threat of violence, remember to consider the needs of the victim(s). Since threat victims can become anxious or fearful, take the time to listen to their concerns, offer your support and, within the confines of confidentiality, keep them informed. If necessary, refer them to counseling through the Employee Assistance Program.

“Stalkers”

Stalking occurs when a perpetrator “willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or harasses another person and who makes a credible threat with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear for his or

her safety, or the safety of his or her immediate family...”⁶ Stalking goes beyond mere harassment in that threats of violence are involved. A stalker will usually fixate on a particular individual with whom he has had a real or imagined relationship. A stalker can be an abusive husband pursuing his wife or an anonymous admirer pursuing a fantasy. Stalking is illegal in California.

If one of your employees is the target of a stalker, take the situation seriously. Stalkers can be quite intelligent and cunning in their methods, especially in their ability to gain information about the habits and whereabouts of their victims. Therefore, be careful that you and your employees do not release *any* information about the victim's work or home phone number, home address, work location, or schedule.

Once a stalker knows where his victim is, he will try to make contact. If the victim is somewhat protected (by being at work, for instance) the stalker may test the level of protection. For example, he may come to the parking lot at work. Psychologists refer to this type of action as “boundary probing.” The actions and measures suggested in this Guide will help keep your workplace boundary strong, which may deter a stalker. Although the stalker may test other boundaries, you have done your job to protect your employees by strengthening the level of security at your workplace.

Temporary Restraining Orders

California law permits an employer to obtain a temporary restraining order against a perpetrator (including a perpetrator who is also an employee) who is threatening or stalking an employee, elected official, volunteer, or independent contractor.⁷

Employees in urgent need of protection at any time of the day or night — whether or not the courts are open — can request an Emergency Protective Order (very short-term) from the law enforcement agency responding to the incident. Call the police department of the city where the incident occurred.

Restraining Orders, whether obtained by an employee or an employer, can be of value. At the time of this writing, not one of those who obtained a Restraining Order in Santa Clara County has been among the County's domestic violence homicide victims.⁸

But experience has shown that these Orders often do not prevent further stalking; instead, they can trigger a violation of the terms of the Order — or a violent act. Restraining Orders should therefore be used with extreme caution, and only after thorough consultation with threat assessment experts and knowledgeable legal counsel.

Employees Who are Batterers in Domestic Violence Situations

There may be situations where you suspect that one of your employees is an abuser in a domestic violence situation. Although other employees in the workplace may not be in danger, this type of situation can be difficult. Discuss the situation with your supervisor. Since an employee cannot be disciplined for engaging in activity that is not proven, work with your supervisor and Labor Relations to conduct a confidential investigation of the facts, especially as they may pertain to activities in the workplace. For example, if a County employee is using County time or telephones to convey threatening messages, this can be dealt with using the progressive discipline process. If both the victim and the alleged perpetrator work for the County, you will also want to involve management in the victim's department.

The batterer should also be referred for counseling to the Employee Assistance Program, or to one of the other resources in Appendix A: Resources.

Legal Liability

Some actions you may want to take could create the potential for lawsuits against the County. Rash or inflated statements regarding the seriousness of threats or incidents could embarrass a victim, especially

⁶ California Penal Code, sec. 646.9

⁷ California Code of Civil Procedure sec. 527.8

⁸ Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office

if these statements are made public or are the subject of office gossip. Before posting a photo of the perpetrator or releasing any other information, consult with your supervisor, the victim, and County Counsel.

Training

Since domestic violence in the workplace knows no departmental boundaries, it is important that all County employees understand the issues involved. If your department has not already conducted domestic violence training, consult your supervisor and your departmental training coordinator. Consider showing a domestic violence video at your next safety meeting or using one of the training resources listed in Appendix A: Resources.

Threats of Violence

A threat of violence can take many forms. Verbal comments, phone calls, and letters are common, but a threat can include symbols such as mutilated animals – anything that would make a reasonable person fear for his or her safety.

The threat can come from a variety of sources – a disgruntled client, a current or former employee, an abuser in a domestic violence situation, or a member of a group or organization. The target of the threat might be the workplace as a whole or a particular individual.

Reporting Threats

If one of your employees reports a threat of violence, take the threat seriously and tell the employee that reporting the threat was the right thing to do. Assure him or her that the report will be handled discreetly and will only be shared with those who need to know.

Your next step after receiving a threat depends largely on your judgment. If you think that a violent act is imminent, you should call the police at 911 (or 9-911) and warn employees immediately. In any case, tell your supervisor about the threat and request that an incident report regarding the threat be conveyed to top level administrators in your department. You may also want to report selected facts about the threat to your Facility Manager, neighboring offices in your building, and, in leased facilities, to the landlord.

Threat Investigation

Work with your supervisor and Labor Relations to investigate all threats, regardless of the nature of the threat. Ask the following questions, and keep proper notes and records.

- Who made the threat?
- Against whom was the threat made?
- What is the alleged perpetrator's relationship to the victim?
- What was the specific language of the threat?
- Was there any physical contact or other considerations that would lead you to believe the threatening person will follow through?
- The names of witnesses to any threats.
- What was the time and place where the threat occurred?
- Have there been any prior incidents of violence or threats?
- Is there any documentation such as letters or recorded phone messages, or other physical evidence? (If so, save them.)
- Is there any other information or any suggestions that would help in the investigation?

If you feel you should meet with witnesses, do so immediately. Maintain confidentiality except where the release of selected facts is needed to ensure the security of others.

Threat Assessment

A difficult question is: will the perpetrator actually follow through on a threat of violence? Expert threat assessment consultation is available from County Mental Health Director or Mental Health Adult Services.

Most police departments are not equipped to conduct threat assessments; their role is primarily to respond immediately to situations involving a violation of the law.

Be alert to an escalating situation, and ask (with discretion and sensitivity) if an employee feels he or she is in danger. Do not act on rumors; make sure that facts are confirmed before you or anyone else confronts a perpetrator or takes action. Along with your supervisor, consult expert help, including County Counsel (see the list of resources in Appendix A: Resources under Threat Assessment). When in doubt, err on the side of safety for your employees.

In a situation of domestic violence, threat assessment is often more difficult since the perpetrator cannot be directly observed or interviewed and you will have to rely on statements by the victim and other witnesses. In some cases the victim may have letters, recordings of voice mail messages, or other items that a trained professional can use to make a more accurate threat assessment. Tell the victim to be sure to save any such evidence.

Threat Assessment Team

Although Santa Clara County does not have a pre-designated threat assessment team, your department may have one. If not, you may want to ask your agency and/or department head to convene a meeting of various County or department officials who may be involved with the case. Such a team would include representatives from Mental Health, Labor Relations, Human Resources, County Counsel, and County Executive. The meeting may also involve outside specialists such as security or psychological consultants.

Contact with the Perpetrator of the Threat

If you need to make contact with the alleged perpetrator, do not place yourself in danger by doing so – get help; you should not have to handle difficult situations alone. You may also want to take steps to increase security before making contact. When making contact, ask non-threatening open-ended questions. Be supportive in the initial stages of the conversation, but do not suggest that you would be willing to give in to demands made or violate any laws, County policies, contracts, or merit system rules.

Bomb Threats

Bomb threats are a unique kind of threat because the stakes are so high. The two most common reasons for bomb threats are:

- The caller knows about a bomb and wants to minimize injury or property damage. (The caller may be the bomber or someone else who has information about the bomb.)
- The caller wants to create an atmosphere of anxiety and panic in order to disrupt normal operations at a County facility.

Most bomb threats are made by phone. Since most County facilities lack a central switchboard, any employee who receives calls directly could receive a bomb threat. Copy the Bomb Threat Checklist in Appendix D: Bomb Threat Checklist for your employees to keep under their phones.

Report all bomb threats to your supervisor, your Facility Manager, the Emergency Response Team Leader, and, in some cases, to 911 (or 9-911). The decision to evacuate will be made by the Facility Manager based on the amount of detail available and whether the call appears to be a legitimate threat or a prank. If an evacuation is needed:

- Pay attention to specific evacuation directions.
- Leave doors and windows open to let the blast wave escape.
- Take your brief case, purse, lunch bag, etc. with you to minimize the search.
- The Facility Manager will work with police to keep anyone from re-entering the building.

The search, if required, needs to be done by people who are familiar with the facility. The police will help, but they do not have the resources to do it alone. If your employees help with search, make sure that they:

- Check their immediate work area and report any suspicious objects to you or the Facility Manager.
- Do not touch any suspicious object – leave removal and disposal for the Bomb Squad.
- Report the object to you or the Facility Manager. (You should then tell the Bomb Squad.)
- Use normal phones for communication – radios or cellular phones can detonate a bomb.

Suspicious Mail or Packages

Suspicious mail or packages may contain harmful and dangerous materials, such as an explosive (bomb), or radiological, biological, or chemical material.

Ways to identify a suspicious package:

- Packages misaddressed or sent to a generic title instead of to someone in your office.
- Excessive stamp postage as opposed to metered postage.
- Odd markings such as “Personal”, “Confidential” or “Do not x-ray”.
- Oil or grease stains, or a strange odor escaping the package.
- Unnecessary amounts of tape or string.
- The package is rigid, bulky or beat up looking
- Handwritten or poorly typed address.
- Protruding wires or foil.

If you suspect that a package may be dangerous, do not try to open it. Isolate it, keep everyone back at least 25 feet, open doors and windows, and call 911 (or 9-911).

Truck Bombs

Report suspicious or unattended trucks or vans to the police and to the Facility Manager. This is especially true if the facility recently received a bomb threat.

Incidents of Violence

Your response to an incident of violence will depend on the situation, and whether or not there are injuries or deaths involved. The Workplace Violence Prevention section of your Facility Emergency Plan can help guide your actions. If you have not prepared such as section, here are some general actions to take:

- Call 911 (or 9-911) immediately. If you can't speak freely, just calling and leaving the receiver off the hook may allow a dispatcher to hear noises that will clarify the nature of the incident.
- Remember to use your panic button if one is installed. If you don't have access to a panic button, you may be able to use the phone or an intercom system to alert co-workers.
- Give the perpetrator what he or she wants. Don't try to be a hero by denying a request for such items as money, keys, documents, or equipment. These can be replaced, lives cannot.
- Flee if you can. If you can't, try to find a hiding place.
- Cooperate fully with police officers on the scene. These are the professionals who know how to handle such situations and may be acting on information that you do not have.
- If you witness an act of workplace violence that does not directly involve you, your actions will depend on your assessment of the situation and your judgment. In some cases, your involvement may help a co-worker; other times it may be better to simply slip quietly away and call 911 (or 9-911).

As soon as you can do so, write down all the details of the incident, including who, what, when, how, and where.

Active Shooter

An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims.

Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation. See Appendix E: Active Shooter Situations for guidelines on how to respond in an active shooter situation.

Post-Incident Response

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

All those affected by the incident can benefit from a Critical Incident Debriefing. Contact one of the counseling resources listed in Appendix A: Resources. Such services can help mitigate negative long-term effects of the event. Be sure to arrange for follow-up sessions, as well as additional debriefing sessions if needed.

Notification of Relatives and Next of Kin

If an employee is severely injured or killed in an act of workplace violence, the likelihood of future claims and lawsuits can be reduced if the notification process is carried out professionally and sensitively. Since notification of next of kin should be handled at the top levels of the County's organization, be sure you or your supervisor contacts your agency/department head prior to making any such notification.

Support for Those Affected by the Incident

All those affected by the incident, including co-workers, supervisors, witnesses, clients and survivors and next of kin will benefit from offers of support – including counseling, transportation, and other logistical assistance that would help ease the pain. In summary, any gesture of kindness during this time will do a great deal to provide comfort and support – and help to prevent future claims and lawsuits by family members. Since expenses for such support can be an issue, especially when out-of-town family members are flying in, decisions regarding payment should be made by the executive managers involved.

It will help the emotional well-being of co-workers if clean-up procedures required by an incident begin immediately so that the work site is restored to a normal appearance as soon as possible. This may include replacing broken windows, painting, carpet replacement, etc. Ensure this work is done quickly and professionally – ideally within one working day.

Conclusion

You and your employees may never be involved in an incident of workplace violence. However, due to the types of services the County provides, and the violent history of many of our clients, it is important to understand how to help prevent, prepare for, and respond to such incidents. This booklet has provided a starting point for such an understanding, but you should now discuss specific training and preparedness needs with your employees, and work with your supervisor to fully address those needs.

Because of the complexities of workplace violence, you may want to consult with one of the resources listed in Appendix A: Resources or refer the victim to one of these resources. In doing so, you should be aware of the tendency for various organizations to recommend solutions in their own areas of specialty. For example, law enforcement agencies will tend to recommend a law enforcement-related solution, psychologists will want to conduct interviews and assessments, and attorneys will want to pursue a legal solution. While all of these may be necessary, it remains up to you, the supervisor, in consultation with your department's management, to exercise your best judgment as to the best course of action to take, since each case is different.

Appendix A: Resources

Workplace Violence Contacts:

- Assistance with difficult clients: Office of Human Relations 408-792-2300
- Assistance with difficult employees: Office of Equal Opportunity 408-299-5865
- Building Modifications: Fire Marshal 408-299-5760; FAF Building Operations 408-918-2700; FAF Capital Programs 408-993-4600
- Claims management (in the event of an incident involving injuries or property damage): ESA Risk Management 408-441-4300
- Counseling: Employee Assistance Program 408-241-7772
- Counseling (incident recovery): Center for Living With Dying 408-243-0222
- Cultural guidance: information about the County's Sexual Harassment Policy: Equal Opportunity Division 408-299-5865
- Hiring guidance: Human Resources 408-299-6816
- Incident response: Emergency 911 (or 9-911)
- Incident response: Emergency Response Teams (trained County employees). Ask your Facility Manager for the ERT members in your facility; call 408-441-4343 for program information.
- Landscape pruning: FAF Custodial and Grounds 918-2791
<http://www.sccgov.org/sites/faf/ReportAConcern/Pages/default.aspx>
- Legal advice: County Counsel 408-299-5900
- Media relations: County Executive's Office of Public Affairs 408-299-5151
- Next of kin notification (in the event of serious injury or death): County Executive's Office 408-299-5105
- Personal action guidance, including compulsory medical/fitness for duty examinations: Labor Relations 408-299-5820
- Security Services: County Sheriff's Reserves 408-808-4570
- Threat assessment: Mental Health Director 408-885-5770
- Threat assessment: Mental Health Adult Services 800-704-0900
- Suicide & Crisis 1-855-278-4204 (24/7)
- San Jose Police Family Violence Center Threat Assessment Unit 408-277-3700.
- Training videos: Occupational Safety and Environmental Compliance 408-441-4280

Domestic Violence Contacts:

- Domestic Violence Resources: 24-hour Victim Counseling and Referrals, Battered Women's Shelters, 3-year Protective Orders. Foreign Languages as indicated.
 - ❑ Family Violence Center 125 Gish Rd., San Jose (Domestic Violence Assault Unit of the San Jose Police; other on-site resources) 408-277-3700.
 - ❑ Support Network for Battered Women 800-572-2782 (English, Spanish 24 hours).
 - ❑ Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence (Central County) (English, Spanish). Crisis: 408-279-2962 (hotline); 408-279-3700 (advocate at the Family Violence Center).
 - ❑ Community Solutions (So County & San Benito County 408-842-7138) English, Spanish 24 hour Crisis Hotline 1-877-363-7238.
 - ❑ Asian Women's Home (San Jose) 408-975-2739 (English, Cambodian, Cantonese, Lao-Mien, Laotian, Mandarin, Tagalog, Thai, Vietnamese).
 - ❑ MAITRI (San Jose) 1-888-862-4874 (Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Konkani, Malayalam, Marathi, Marwari, Oriya, Punjabi, Sindhi, Sinhalese, Tamil, Telgu, and Urdu)
 - ❑ Asian Women's Shelter (San Francisco) 415-751-0806 24hr Crisis 1-877-751-0880
 - ❑ NISA (Palo Alto) 1-888-275-6472 (North-American Islamic)

- ❑ SAVE (Fremont) 510-794-6055.
- ❑ Women's Crisis Support (Santa Cruz) 831-425-4030 Watsonville 831-722-4532
- ❑ Woman, Inc. (updated info on shelter vacancies) (all languages) 415-864-4722.
- ❑ National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233

Domestic Violence Batterer's Programs

- ❑ Bata/Starr Counseling 408-450-8370
- ❑ Lighthouse of Hope Counseling Center 408-716-8101
- ❑ Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative 408-294-0006
- ❑ Turning Point Counseling and Educational Services 408-739-2171

Legal Advice and Attorney Referrals:

- ❑ Asian Law Alliance 408-287-9710
- ❑ Santa Clara Bar Association 408-971-6822
- ❑ Family Court Self Help Center 408-882-2900 x2926
- ❑ Family Violence Counseling Associates 408-246-1507
- ❑ George & Katherine Alexander Community Law Center (restraining orders) 408-288-7030
- ❑ Legal Aid Society of Santa Clara County 408-998-5200
- ❑ National Traffic Safety Institute 408-297-7200
- ❑ Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence (Central County) 408-501-7550
- ❑ Senior Adults Legal Assistance 408-295-5991
- ❑ Support Network for Battered Women 408-541-6100 24hr Crisis Line 1-800-572-2782

Spanish:

- ❑ YMCA Support Network (North County) (Spanish) 800-572-2782
- ❑ Community Solutions (South County) (Spanish) 842-7138
- ❑ Family Children Services of Silicon Valley (Spanish) 408-292-9353

Other Domestic Violence Resources:

- ❑ Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office 408-299-3099
- ❑ Child Abduction Unit (Parental) 408-792-2921
- ❑ Victim/Witness Assistance Center 408-295-2656
- ❑ Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting 408-299-2071
- ❑ Adult Protective Services 408-975-4900
- ❑ Dependents or Elders in Facilities: Long-Term Care Ombudsman daytime hours 408-944-0567; after 5 PM 800-231-4024, or call local police
- ❑ Parental Stress Hotline 408-279-8228
- ❑ Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center 408-293-4525

Workplace and Domestic Violence Websites:

- ❑ U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence/>
- ❑ U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA– Healthcare:

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/healthcarefacilities/violence.html>

- ❑ Cal/OSHA Guidelines for Workplace Security:

https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/worksecurity.html

- ❑ California Department of Public Health, Domestic Violence / Intimate Partner Violence:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/injviosa/Pages/DomesticViolence.aspx>

- **General Information and Referral Lines:**

- ❑ United Way 2-1-1 (in Santa Clara County) or 1-866-390-6845. Outside Santa Clara County 1-866-896-3587

Partial Bibliography

If you need help right now:

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If you need general information:

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- U.S. Department of Agriculture: *Departmental Administration; Human Resources Management: Domestic Violence Awareness Handbook*.
- U.S. Public Health Service, Region IX: *The Prevention of Workplace Violence*. San Francisco, Self-published 1994. *Conference proceedings*.

Training Resources

- Call to Action: Managing Violence in the Workplace and other videos are available for free loan from the County Supervisors Association of California Excess Insurance Authority. Contact OSEC at 441-4280 for details.
- Videos available from Occupational Safety and Environmental Compliance at 441-4280 include:
 - ❑ Conflict Communication Skills
 - ❑ Diffusing Hostility Through Customer Service
 - ❑ Nonviolent Crisis Intervention: Preventative Techniques
 - ❑ Nonviolent Crisis Intervention: Therapeutic Physical Intervention
 - ❑ Public Building Safety
 - ❑ Reduce Your Risk (vehicle related crime)
 - ❑ Workplace Violence
 - ❑ Workplace Violence: The First Line of Defense
 - ❑ Workplace Violence: The Calm Before the Storm
 - ❑ Violence in the Workplace
- The District Attorney's Office offers Domestic Violence training and has Domestic Violence videos available for loan 408-295-2656.
- Other resources may also be available including online safety videos, please contact OSEC.

Appendix B: Suggested Concerns to Address Regarding Domestic Violence

If you have reason to believe that one of your employees may be experiencing domestic violence, you or your supervisor may want to use this list as a starting point for discussion of what your role might be in providing support. Since this is not a checklist, it has more questions than you will want to ask. Therefore, select certain questions to develop your own list.

Carefully consider the entire situation before you interview the employee. Approach the employee with sensitivity and be careful not to intrude where your questions are not welcome.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

- Are you a battered woman (or a victim, or some other "title")?
- What keeps you with a person like that?
- Do you get something out of the violence?
- What did you do at that moment that caused him to hit you?
- What could you have done to avoid or defuse the situation?

QUESTIONS REGARDING WORK

These questions concern a domestic violence situation that might be affecting the work site. Remember, don't ask all of these questions.

- Have you ever had to be late for (or miss) work because of a situation related to domestic violence?
- Has your partner prevented you from going to work?
- Has your partner followed you to work?
- Has your partner had to know where you are at all times? Even when you are at work?
- Has your partner called work excessively?
- Has domestic abuse affected your work in other ways? How?
- Has your partner ever phoned or contacted you at work to threaten you?
- Do you have any voice or E-mail recordings (or other evidence) of threats made to you? (If so, tell her to keep them).
- Has your partner ever come to work to check up on you or threaten you?
- Has your partner ever visited the parking lot at work in a way that made you afraid?
- Has your partner ever brought a gun or other weapon to your work site or to the parking lot at work?
- Has your partner made threats regarding the County, your work site or the people you work with?
- Have you ever been afraid for the safety of your co-workers?
- Is there reason for a higher level of concern at this particular time (due to an event such as a release on bail, a break-up, the serving of a restraining order, etc.)?
- Are you concerned about your safety at work or the safety of your co-workers?
- Are you concerned about your safety when walking to your car?

QUESTIONS ABOUT WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

- How dangerous do you think your partner is?

- What do you think he is capable of?
- Do you have any current injuries or health problems that have to do with this situation?
- Is there anything specific we can do to help you feel safe at work or when walking to your car?

Appendix C: Warning Signs of Escalating Behavior

Five Warning Signs of Escalating Behavior

Confusion	
Warning Signs	Possible Response
Behavior characterized by bewilderment or distraction. Unsure or uncertain of the next course of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to their concerns. • Ask clarifying questions. • Give them factual information.

Frustration	
Warning Signs	Possible Response
Behavior characterized by reaction or resistance to information. Impatience. Feeling a sense of defeat in the attempt of accomplishment. May try to bait you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See steps above. • Relocate to quiet location or setting. • Reassure them. • Make a sincere attempt to clarify concerns

Blame	
Warning Signs	Possible Response
Placing responsibility for problems on everyone else. Accusing or holding you responsible. Finding fault or error with the action of others. They may place blame directly on you. Crossing over to potentially hazardous behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See steps above. • Disengage, bring second party into discussion. • Use teamwork approach. • Draw client back to facts. • Use probing questions. • Create “Yes” momentum

Anger — Judgment call required	
Warning Signs	Possible Response
Characterized by a visible change in body posture and disposition. Actions include pounding fists, pointing fingers, shouting or screaming. This signals very risky behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize venting techniques. • Don’t offer solutions. • Don’t argue with comments made. • Prepare to evacuate or isolate. • Contact supervisor and/or security office

Hostility — Judgment call required	
Warning Signs	Possible Response
Physical actions or threats which appear imminent. Acts of physical harm or property damage. Out-of-control behavior signals they have crossed over the line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disengage and evacuate. • Try to isolate person if it can be done safely. • Alert supervisor and contact security office or 911 immediately

Appendix D: Bomb Threat Checklist

Place this list under your telephone for easy reference.

1	Exact Wording of the Threat:
	Remain calm and keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask to have the message repeated.

2	Ask the caller: There are a lot of people who could be injured. What can you tell me?
	When is the bomb going to explode?
	Where is the bomb right now?
	What kind of bomb is it?
	What will cause it to explode?
	Did you place the bomb?
	Why?
	What is your address?
What is your name?	

3	Report the threat immediately to your supervisor, the Facility Manager, and (in some cases) 911 (or 9-911).
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Be prepared to describe the threat in as much detail as possible to the police. Record information here.																						
4	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">A</td> <td> Voice characteristics: <input type="checkbox"/> Calm <input type="checkbox"/> Angry <input type="checkbox"/> Excited <input type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid <input type="checkbox"/> Soft </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Loud <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter <input type="checkbox"/> Crying <input type="checkbox"/> Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Deep <input type="checkbox"/> Ragged </td> <td> Sex: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Distinct <input type="checkbox"/> Slurred <input type="checkbox"/> Lispering <input type="checkbox"/> Raspy <input type="checkbox"/> Clearing Throat <input type="checkbox"/> Deep Breathing </td> <td> Age: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal <input type="checkbox"/> Stuttering <input type="checkbox"/> Cracking <input type="checkbox"/> Disguised <input type="checkbox"/> Accent <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">If the voice is familiar, whom does it sound like?</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">B</td> <td> Background Noises: <input type="checkbox"/> Street Noises <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant <input type="checkbox"/> Factory Machinery <input type="checkbox"/> PA System <input type="checkbox"/> Office Machinery </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Household Noises <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Noises <input type="checkbox"/> Motor(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Voices </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Long Distance <input type="checkbox"/> Clear <input type="checkbox"/> Static <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">C</td> <td> Threat Language: <input type="checkbox"/> Well Spoken <input type="checkbox"/> Foul </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Incoherent <input type="checkbox"/> Taped </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Irrational <input type="checkbox"/> Message read </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">D</td> <td colspan="3"> Other Details: Remarks: </td> </tr> </table>	A	Voice characteristics: <input type="checkbox"/> Calm <input type="checkbox"/> Angry <input type="checkbox"/> Excited <input type="checkbox"/> Slow <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid <input type="checkbox"/> Soft	<input type="checkbox"/> Loud <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter <input type="checkbox"/> Crying <input type="checkbox"/> Normal <input type="checkbox"/> Deep <input type="checkbox"/> Ragged	Sex: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Distinct <input type="checkbox"/> Slurred <input type="checkbox"/> Lispering <input type="checkbox"/> Raspy <input type="checkbox"/> Clearing Throat <input type="checkbox"/> Deep Breathing	Age: ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal <input type="checkbox"/> Stuttering <input type="checkbox"/> Cracking <input type="checkbox"/> Disguised <input type="checkbox"/> Accent <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar	If the voice is familiar, whom does it sound like?				B	Background Noises: <input type="checkbox"/> Street Noises <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant <input type="checkbox"/> Factory Machinery <input type="checkbox"/> PA System <input type="checkbox"/> Office Machinery	<input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Household Noises <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Noises <input type="checkbox"/> Motor(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Voices	<input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Long Distance <input type="checkbox"/> Clear <input type="checkbox"/> Static <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	C	Threat Language: <input type="checkbox"/> Well Spoken <input type="checkbox"/> Foul	<input type="checkbox"/> Incoherent <input type="checkbox"/> Taped	<input type="checkbox"/> Irrational <input type="checkbox"/> Message read	D	Other Details: Remarks:		
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D	Other Details: Remarks:																					
Time of Threat: _____ Date: _____ Phone # where threat was received: _____																						
Your Name: _____ Your Position: _____																						

DOXYS

Appendix E: Active Shooter Situations

An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims.

Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

How to Respond When an Active Shooter is in Your Vicinity

If you hear shots fired, resist the temptation to investigate the cause. Do not go to the area. Do not attempt to try to determine what is happening.

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that customers and clients are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active shooter situation.

Evacuate

If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Keep your hands visible
- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe

Hide out

If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.

Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter's view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door)
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement

To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:

- Lock the door
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture

If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
- Remain quiet

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

- Remain calm
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen

Take action against the active shooter

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:

- Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
- Throwing items and improvising weapons
- Yelling
- Committing to your actions

When Law Enforcement Arrives

Law enforcement's purpose is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible. Officers will proceed directly to the area in which the last shots were heard.

The first officers to arrive to the scene will not stop to help injured persons. Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises.

How to react:

- Remain calm, and follow officers' instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises