

**Department of Finance and Administration**  
**Workplace Violence Policy**  
**Effective 6/1/2008**

**Introduction**

The safety and security of all employees, clients, visitors, and all property of the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) is of the utmost importance. Harassment, intimidation, threats, physical attacks, domestic related violence, and property damage committed either on the property of DFA or in the performance of work duties outside of DFA's premises will not be tolerated. Workplace violence includes acts of violence committed in the workplace by state employees, contractual workers, clients, customers, relatives of state employees, acquaintances of state employees, or others.

**Purpose**

It is the intent of DFA to provide a workplace that is free from violence by establishing preventative measures, holding perpetrators of violence accountable and by providing assistance and support to victims. It is intended that all useful management tools be employed to accomplish the dual purpose of reducing the effects of violence on victims and providing consequences to those who perpetrate violence. It is also intended that management utilize available resources such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), law enforcement, and applicable personnel policies and procedures.

**Definitions**

**Harassment** is engaging in actions that include but are not limited to abusive conduct, verbal abuse and/or behavior intended to frighten, coerce, or induce duress.

**Intimidation** is behavior or communication designed or intended to intimidate, menace, or frighten another person.

A **Threat** is the expression of intent to cause physical or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the present ability to carry it out and without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional, future, or verbal.

A **Physical Attack** is hostile physical contact or attempted physical contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing, shoving, or throwing objects.

**Domestic Related Violence** is the use of abusive or violent behavior, including threats and intimidation, between people who have an ongoing or prior intimate relationship. This could include people who are family members, married, live together or date or who have been family members, married, lived together or dated.

**Stalking** is conduct that places a person in fear for his or her safety and includes any unwanted contact or actions which directly or indirectly communicates a threat or places the individual in fear for his or her safety.

**Property Damage** is intentional damage to property and includes property owned by the State, employees, visitors, or vendors.

The **Workplace Environment** consists of the building(s), parking facilities, grounds, lighting, space planning, and other considerations. It also includes the attitude the employees have about management, their perception of fair and equal treatment, and their belief that they will be safe at work.

### **Coverage**

This policy applies to DFA full-time and part-time employees with permanent, probationary, trainee, or time-limited status. It also applies to contract workers, independent contractors, and student interns. This policy applies to the conduct of an employee any time that employee is functioning in the official capacity as an employee of DFA.

### **Retaliation**

This policy prohibits retaliation against any employee who, in good faith, reports a violation of this policy. Every effort will be made to protect the safety and anonymity of anyone who comes forward with concerns about a threat or act of violence.

### **False Accusations and Information**

If any employee knowingly makes a false accusation of violation of this policy or knowingly provides false information in the course of an investigation of a complaint, such conduct will be grounds for discipline. Complaints made in good faith, however, even if found to be unsubstantiated, will not be considered a false accusation.

### **General Procedures**

1. If an employee experiences or witnesses such acts, conduct, behavior, or any communication that violates this policy, that employee must immediately contact his or her **immediate supervisor, Office Director, the Human Resources Director, the DFA Deputy Executive Directors, or the DFA Executive Director.**
2. Any supervisor who receives a complaint of violence, threats, or harassment, or who has reason to suspect that these acts or behaviors are occurring, must notify their **Office Director, the Human Resources Director, DFA Deputy Executive Directors or the DFA Executive Director** immediately.
3. Upon being informed of an allegation of violence, threat, or harassment, the designated officials will investigate the matter.

4. Upon the conclusion of this investigation, the agency will determine how to respond. The reporting employee may or may not be notified of the outcome of the investigation, and the employee may or may not be advised of any corrective or preventative action taken.
5. Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, will be taken in instances of misconduct, as identified by the agency.
6. Employees who knew of information about violence, threats, or harassment, but did not act in a consistent manner with this procedure, will be subject to appropriate discipline.

### **Reporting Responsibilities**

Any indicators of potential violence in the workplace must be immediately brought to the attention of the employee's **immediate supervisor, Office Director, the Human Resources Director, the DFA Deputy Executive Directors, or the DFA Executive Director**. If an employee has experienced any form of harassment or threats from another employee, supervisor, customer, or client, or have witnessed any behavior that indicates a potential for violence, that employee should report the incident as soon as possible to management. It is within the employee's rights to request confidentiality concerning the report to management. **The Department of Finance and Administration will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of all parties concerned in any incident, but cannot completely ensure that confidentiality in all cases can be maintained.**

If an employee is victimized in the workplace, he or she is encouraged to report the crime to local law enforcement authorities. The choice about whether or not to report belongs to the employee, however, statistics show that crimes reported immediately have a higher arrest rate.

If any employee has become involved in a non-criminal dispute with someone and has obtained an "Order of Protection" or an "Injunction Against Harassment" or a similar court order (Restraining Order), that employee should include his or her work location, as well as place of residence in the Order. The employee should also notify his or her immediate supervisor and the State Capitol Police of the issuance of the Order and provide a description of the individual cited in the Order.

### **General Awareness**

- Make certain you know the location of emergency alarms in your offices, and make certain you know how to use them.
- Do not allow visitors into secure areas if you are "uncomfortable" with the purpose of their visit or there appears to be any problem. Make management aware of any situation or contact Capitol Police, (601) 359-3125, if you feel it is necessary.

- Do not allow persons visiting one secure office area to have access to other secure offices or areas.
- Keep all security doors locked at all times.
- Keep all valuables in locked drawers or cabinets. Never leave wallets, handbags, cash, or credit cards on your desk or unsecured in other parts of your work area.
- Office money for coffee, gift, and flower funds should always be kept in locked cabinets. Place coat racks in the center of work areas or away from doors leading to hallways. Never leave items of value in pockets of garments on coat racks.
- Employees should not bring personal items of substantial value to the office.
- If your purse or wallet is stolen, provide PIN numbers only to those banking, credit companies or officials you have directly contacted.
- If you are working after hours, keep all doors locked. Never “advertise” that you will be working alone. Look into corners before fully entering the restroom. Check stalls if possible. After hours, employees should go to restrooms in pairs, if possible.
- Be alert for strange objects and packages. Never touch or disturb a strange package or briefcase found in your work area.
- If you become the victim of stalking, you should notify your supervisor and Capitol Police of this as soon as possible following filing a report with local law enforcement authorities.

### **Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors**

If an incident occurs, the Office Director, DFA Deputy Executive Directors or designated person in charge shall immediately assess what level of intervention by management is appropriate or if law enforcement authorities should be notified.

Intervention by the Office Director, DFA Deputy Executive Directors, or designated person in charge shall include actions to:

- Diffuse the situation (if law enforcement intervention is not needed);
- Ensure the safety of employees; and
- Seek medical attention if necessary.

If law enforcement intervention is necessary, the Office Director, DFA Deputy Directors or designated person in charge will notify the appropriate law enforcement authorities and the DFA Executive Director, DFA Deputy Executive Directors, or Human Resources Director.

### **Warning Signs**

Early reporting and response to disruptive behavior can prevent more serious incidents of workplace violence. Many extreme incidents of violence by co-workers are preceded by lesser offenses such as insubordination, challenges to authority, and harassing comments. Some of the potential behaviors that should place employees on alert are:

- A past history of violent or threatening behavior;
- Co-worker fear of an employee;
- Extreme stress in an individual's personal or work life;
- Evidence of chemical dependency
- An obsession with weapons;
- Observations of threatening behavior;
- Routine violations of agency policy or rules;
- Sexual and other harassment of co-workers;
- Destructive behavior;
- Obsession with retaliation after being disciplined – not receptive to criticism;
- Showing little involvement with co-workers – a “loner” unwilling to adjust to agency policies and/or culture;
- Significant changes in behavior or beliefs;
- Deteriorating physical appearance;
- Showing excessive interest in recently publicized violent acts or violent entertainment; and
- Exhibiting paranoid behavior.

While we may all exhibit one of these behaviors on any given day, a combination of these behaviors over an extended period of time may be an indication for concern.

### **Removing Motivations for Violence**

If you are confronted by a person who seems capable of violent behavior, you may reduce the potential for violence by practicing the following:

- Appear calm;
- Listen and allow the person to vent;
- Lower your voice, tone and pitch;
- Don't be defensive;
- Don't talk over the person when they are yelling; wait until a breath is taken and use quiet assertive language to redirect;
- Be respectful;
- Try to clear up misunderstandings and acknowledge valid complaints;
- Ask what they would like done;
- Allow for physical space; don't crowd or touch them;
- If things aren't progressing positively, terminate the meeting and/or call for backup or security;
- Don't turn your back;
- Call Capitol Police (601) 359-3125 if necessary.

### **Bombs and Suspicious Packages and Letters**

The following is a list of easy recognition points for possible letter and parcel bombs:

- Oily stains or discolorations;
- No return address;
- Excessive weight;
- An envelope that is rigid;
- An envelope that is lopsided or uneven;
- Wires or tinfoil protruding from package or envelope
- Excessive masking tape, string, or other wrappings;
- Foreign mail, air mail, and special delivery;
- Restrictive markings such as “Confidential” or “Personal”,
- Excessive postage;
- Addresses that are handwritten or poorly typed;
- Titles that are incorrect;
- A title but no name;
- Misspellings of common words; or
- Visual distractions on letters and parcels.

If you see a suspicious object, please make management aware of it at once. Never touch or disturb a suspicious package object.

### **Policy Concerning Weapons in the Workplace**

The unauthorized possession of a deadly weapon while on state property or in a state owned vehicle is prohibited unless you are a certified law enforcement officer. Any individual possessing a deadly weapon without appropriate authorization may be removed from or denied access to state offices, facilities, work sites or vehicles, and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and are defined in Section 97-37-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, as any bowie knife, dirk knife, butcher knife, switchblade knife, metallic knuckles, blackjack, slingshot, pistol, revolver, or any rifle with barrel of less than sixteen (16) inches in length, or any shotgun with a barrel of less than eighteen (18) inches in length, machine gun or any fully automatic firearm or deadly weapon.

### **Workplace Searches**

As a public employer, the Department of Finance and Administration reserves the right to open and inspect public properties for a work-related purpose. Additionally, based on a reasonable, good faith, objective suspicion of a present danger, a search may be conducted not only of an employee’s work area or desk, but also personal property which may include a briefcase, purse, lunch box, backpack, or car while on State Property.

A search of the workplace depends on the circumstances in which a search takes place. Such a search must be based on a reasonable, good faith, objective suspicion, and should have the approval, in advance, of the DFA Executive Director, or designee. All searches must satisfy the following criteria:

- The search is justified at the time it is conducted; and

- The search must be reasonably related in scope to the circumstances which led to the search.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action which may include: verbal or written reprimand, suspension, reassignment, or termination of employment.

### **Incident Investigations**

Once an incident of violence has been reported, management will immediately conduct a thorough investigation. The following procedures will be followed during the investigation of a reported incident:

- All previous incidents will be reviewed;
- The scene of the incident will be visited as soon as possible;
- Any threatened or injured employees and any witnesses will be interviewed
- The area in which the incident occurred will be examined for security risk factors associated with the incident;
- The investigator(s) will attempt to determine the cause of the incident;
- Corrective action will be taken to prevent the incident from recurring; and
- A record will be made of the findings of the investigation and corrective actions taken.

Consistent with the necessity of prevention and investigation of violence in the workplace, personal information obtained in the course of an investigation will be considered confidential, and not subject to public disclosure except as may be necessary as part of the disciplinary process or as otherwise provided by law.

### **Post – Trauma Crisis Management**

In order to alleviate the stress that an act of violence can cause an employee, the following measures should be taken:

- Contact family members as soon as possible.
- Demonstrate concern and caring for those who have been harmed by the trauma.
- Report on the condition of the injured through agency communications methods.
- Hold meetings on a regular basis with those who are affected to debrief them on issues related to the event.
- Open up communication channels and control rumors.
- Utilize the Department of Finance and Administration's Employee Assistance Program to provide counseling to affected employees. The Department of Finance and Administration utilizes St. Dominic Health Services. They can be reached at 1-866-366-1510 or (601) 200-3110 anytime, day or night.

## Telephone Threat Checklist

### Immediate Actions:

- Inform (without alerting the caller) a supervisor or other employee of the call and have them notify law enforcement – State Capitol Police at 601-359-3125.
- Remain calm and speak slowly and distinctly.
- Do not hang up the receiver or place the caller on hold.
- Write down the caller's exact words.

### Questions to ask the Caller in the case of a bomb threat:

- Who is calling?
- When is the bomb scheduled to explode?
- What type of bomb is it?
- How will the bomb go off?
- Where is the bomb located and what does it look like?
- Why is this threat/action being taken?

### Impression of Caller: (Check appropriate response)

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult | <input type="checkbox"/> Child   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male  | <input type="checkbox"/> Female  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calm  | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous |

Accent (Type): \_\_\_\_\_

- |                                      |                                      |                               |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stutter     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lisp        | <input type="checkbox"/> Loud |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal       | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear       | <input type="checkbox"/> Soft |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intoxicated | <input type="checkbox"/> Well Spoken | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vulgar      | <input type="checkbox"/> Coarse      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disguised   | <input type="checkbox"/> Normal      |                               |

Background Noises: \_\_\_\_\_

Text of Conversation: \_\_\_\_\_



## **CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, AND RADIOLOGICAL THREAT RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

### **Release inside the building:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Notify Capitol Police at 601-359-3125 or local emergency numbers such as 911, and appropriate agency personnel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Immediately alert others in immediate area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Secure and evacuate the area; close doors, shut off air handling equipment, put up warning sign if available. Do not disturb the area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contain employees and visitors at pre-determined assembly location and restrict access to the building to limit exposure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop a roster of individuals that may have been exposed to the hazard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow instructions of emergency responders as to decontamination requirements.

### **Release outside the building:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Notify Capitol Police at 601-359-3125 or local law enforcement, utilizing local emergency numbers such as 911, and appropriate agency personnel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shut off all air handling equipment to limit outside air penetration.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shelter all personnel and visitors in a pre-designated location. Location should afford the maximum number of barriers to the outside environment. An area without external ventilation would be optimal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Require all employees and visitors to remain in the facility until released by the appropriate authorities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow instructions of emergency responders regarding any decontamination requirements.

**NOTE: EVACUATION SHOULD BE UPWIND OF AFFECTED FACILITY.**

**ASSAULT INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

Date of Incident (MM/DD/YY): \_\_\_\_\_

Day of Week: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:      Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant Description: \_\_\_\_\_ Employee (Job title \_\_\_\_\_)

                                 \_\_\_\_\_ Contract Worker    \_\_\_\_\_ Client    \_\_\_\_\_ Visitor

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Has Supervisor been notified?      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

Describe the assault incident: \_\_\_\_\_

List any witnesses to the incident (name and telephone number): \_\_\_\_\_

Did the assault involve a firearm?    \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

If so, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**ASSAULT INCIDENT REPORT FORM (Page 2)**

Did the assault involve a weapon other than a firearm?  Yes  No

If so, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the complainant injured?  Yes  No

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Who committed the assault (name, if know)? \_\_\_\_\_

What is his/her status to the victim?

- Stranger  Co-worker
- Personal Relation  Supervisor
- Client/Patient/Customer  Other (describe: \_\_\_\_\_)

What was the gender of the person(s) who committed the assault?  Male  Female

Please check any risk factors applicable to this incident:

- Working with money  Working with drugs
- Working in a high-crime area  Working late at night
- Poor lighting outside of worksite
- Other risk factor: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other risk factor: \_\_\_\_\_

**ASSAULT INCIDENT REPORT FORM (Page 3)**

Name/Position of Person filling out this form:

Explain any action taken:

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## EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE DIRECTORY

This directory is designed to provide a means to quickly contact key personnel, agencies and resources in times of emergency.

### CATEGORY OF SERVICE TELEPHONE

### ORGANIZATION

#### Law Enforcement

(601) 359-3125	Capitol Police
(601) 987-1530	MS Highway Patrol
(601) 960-1234	Jackson Police Department
(601) 974-2901	Sheriff's Department
(601) 948-5000	FBI

#### Fire/Rescue

(601) 969-3333	Local Fire Department
(601) 982-7911	Local EMS/Ambulance Service
(601) 200-3110	E.A.P. – Intervention/Counseling St. Dominic Hospital

#### Agency

(601) 359-3402	DFA Executive Director DFA Deputy Executive Directors
(601) 359-3630	Director of Capitol Facilities
(601) 359-2514	Human Resources
(601) 359-6514	Capitol Police Administrator, Agency Emergency Representative

#### Miscellaneous

**DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION  
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY  
EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM**

I hereby certify that I have received a copy of the Department of Finance and Administration's Workplace Violence Policy and have read and understand the policy. I understand that exhibiting violent behavior, issuing threats, or other activities as indicated are a violation of this policy. I also realize that participating in, encouraging, or instigating threats or violent activities is prohibited. I understand that violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. I understand that certain violations of this policy may result in arrest and criminal prosecution.

I acknowledge responsibility to notify my **immediate supervisor, Office Director, the Human Resources Director, the DFA Deputy Executive Directors, or the DFA Executive Director**, regarding threats, potential acts of violence, or violent activities. I realize that reported allegations must be made in a good-faith effort to protect individuals and employees from defamation. I understand that deliberate, unwarranted allegations will be viewed as an attempt to disrupt agency operations and may result in disciplinary action.

I acknowledge that I am prohibited from having at my workplace or on my person, any deadly weapon as defined in the Policy Concerning Weapons in the Workplace section of this policy. I realize my employer has the right to search my work area, desk, or under compelling circumstances, personal possessions, or person for any deadly weapon, and may seize any prohibited item deemed necessary.

My signature acknowledges my receipt of the policy and my understanding of its content. My signature does not indicate that I agree with the content of the policy.

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**Employee Name (Please Print)**

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**Employee Signature**

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**Date**