



# TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

## PERSONNEL POLICY

POLICY 215

CREATED 8/1/08

### **SUBJECT: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

**PURPOSE:** To establish policies and procedures related to violence and threats of violence occurring relating to the workplace.

### **STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

The Town recognizes that violence in the workplace is a growing nationwide problem necessitating a firm, considered response by employers. The costs of workplace violence are great, both in human and financial terms. We believe that the safety and security of Town employees are paramount. Therefore, the Town has adopted this policy regarding workplace violence.

Acts or threats of physical violence including intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion that involve or affect the Town or that occur on Town property or in the conduct of Town business off Town property, will not be tolerated. This prohibition against threats and acts of violence applies to all persons involved in Town operations including, but not limited to, Town personnel, contract workers, temporary employees and anyone else on Town property or conducting Town business off Town property. Violations of this policy by any individual will lead to disciplinary and/or legal action as appropriate.

This policy is intended to bring the Town into compliance with existing legal provisions requiring employers to provide a safe workplace; it is not intended to create any obligations beyond those required by existing law.

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **Definitions**

Workplace violence is any intentional conduct that is sufficiently severe, offensive or intimidating to cause an individual to reasonably fear for his or her personal safety or the safety of his or her family, friends and/or property, such that employment conditions are altered or a hostile, abusive or intimidating work environment is created for one or several Town employees. Workplace violence may involve any threats or acts of violence occurring on Town premises, regardless of the relationship

between the Town and the parties involved in the incident. It also includes threats or acts of violence that affect the business interests of the Town or that may lead to an incident of violence on Town premises. Threats or acts of violence occurring off Town premises that involve employees, agents or individuals acting as a representative of the Town, whether as victims of or active participants in the conduct, may also constitute workplace violence. Specific examples of conduct that may constitute threats or acts of violence under this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Threats or acts of physical or aggressive contact directed toward another individual;
- Threats or acts of physical harm directed toward an individual or his/her family, friends, associates or property;
- The intentional destruction or threat of destruction of Town property or another employee's property;
- Harassing or threatening phone calls;
- Surveillance;
- Stalking;
- Veiled threats of physical harm or similar intimidation; and
- Any conduct resulting in the conviction under any criminal code provision relating to violence or threats of violence that adversely affects the Town's legitimate business interests. Workplace violence does not refer to occasional comments of a socially acceptable nature. These comments may include references to legitimate sporting activities, popular entertainment, or current events. Rather, it refers to behavior that is threatening or intimidating.

## **Reporting And Enforcement**

Report all threats of violence, direct and indirect, as soon as possible to a supervisor or Human Resources. Report threats by employees, as well as threats by members of the public. You should provide as many details as possible.

Report all suspicious individuals or activities to your supervisor or Human Resources. **DO NOT PLACE YOURSELF IN PERIL.** If you see or hear a commotion near your workstation, do not try to see what is happening. Any person who engages in a threat or violent action on Town property may be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits and may be required, at the Town's discretion, to remain off Town premises pending the outcome of an investigation of the incident.

When threats are made or acts of violence are committed by employee(s), a judgment will be made by the Town as to what actions are appropriate, including calling 911, possible medical evaluation and/or possible disciplinary action.

Once a threat has been substantiated, it is the Town's policy to put the threatmaker on notice that he/she will be held accountable for his/her actions and then implement a decisive and appropriate response.

Under this policy, decisions may be needed to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring or a life-threatening situation from developing. No existing policy or procedure of the Town should be interpreted in a manner that prevents the making of these necessary decisions.

**Important Note:** The Town will make the sole determination of whether and to what extent threats or acts of violence will be acted upon by the Town. In making this determination, the Town may undertake a case-by-case analysis in order to ascertain whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that workplace violence has occurred or has been threatened. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the Town may suspend employees, either with or without pay, pending investigation.