# 1500.450 VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PROCEDURE

Security and safety in the workplace require the cooperation of every employee. Any Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) employee who is the subject of or a witness to a suspected violation of the violence in the workplace policy is strongly encouraged to report the violation to the next-in-line supervisor who is not a party to the violation. Any emergency, perceived emergency, or suspected criminal conduct shall be immediately reported to law enforcement.

## A. REPORTING URGENT OR DIRECT THREATS

To report an urgent or direct threat where there is actual violent behavior or it appears that violent behavior is likely to take place, such as a verbal altercation that appears to be escalating.

**Step 1:** Call 911 (emergency/law enforcement agencies) and 6911 (campus security).

**Step 2:** Once you are safe, alert your supervisor to the situation.

**Step 3:** The employee will fill out an incident report form as soon as practical and submit it to the vice president of administrative services.

## B. REPORTING EMERGING OR POTENTIAL THREATS

To report an emerging or potential threat where you believe a situation has the potential for becoming violent over time because it exhibits one or more violence [warning signs](http://a.cms.omniupdate.com/10/#oucampus/Wenatchee/www-2016/preview/humanresources/policies-procedures/media/documents/workplace-violence-checklist-inc-warning-signs.docx) (also see Section D below).

**Step 1:** If it is an immediate concern and you feel unsafe call security at 6911 and alert your supervisor to the situation.

**Step 2:** If it is not an immediate concern, alert your supervisor and your supervisor will, depending upon the seriousness of the threat, call campus security (6911) and local law enforcement agencies (911) and/or initiate an investigation of the allegation. The supervisor will also inform any employees impacted by a threat as soon as possible after notification that a threat has been made.

**Step 3:** The supervisor will fill out an incident report form as soon as practical and submit it to the vice president of administrative services. The supervisor may also request that you complete an incident report form.

## C. SUPERVISORS OF SOMEONE WHO FEELS THREATENED

**Step 1:** Alert the next in-line supervisor. Keep information the employee has shared confidential, except for the reporting requirements above.

**Step 2:** Encourage the individual to seek additional assistance. Provide the employee with the phone numbers for college counselors, human resources, or other resources as appropriate, and give the employee a private place to make the phone call.

## D. WARNING SIGNS

There is no exact method to predict when a person will become violent. One or more of these warning signs may be displayed before a person becomes violent, but they do not necessarily indicate that an individual will become violent. A display of these signs should trigger concern as they are usually exhibited by people experiencing problems.

### 1. Verbal, nonverbal, or written threats - or intimidation, explicit or subtle.

### 2. Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence – carrying a concealed weapon.

### 3. Expression of a plan to hurt self/others.

### 4. Feelings of persecution, expressed distrust, especially with management.

### 5. Fear reaction to employee among coworkers/clients.

### 6. Expression of extreme desperation over family, financial or personal problems.

### 7. Frequent interpersonal conflicts.

### 8. Unable to take criticism of job performance.

### 9. Displays of unwarranted anger.

### 10. Moral righteousness – believing the organization is not following its rules.

### 11. Violence toward inanimate objects.

### 12. Sabotaging projects, computer programs or equipment.

### 13. Holding a grudge against a specific person; verbalizing a hope that something will happen to him/her.

Those who witness these warning signs are strongly encouraged to inform their supervisors. Managers and supervisors are encouraged to consult with their next in-line supervisor, college counselors or human resources to attempt to prevent a difficult situation from escalating into violence.

Another type of workplace violence may occur when an individual becomes romantically obsessed with someone who does not reciprocate the romantic feelings. The obsession is irrational and the subject does not respond to the victim’s attempts to set limits or to end the attachment. Obsessed individuals may be a threat to the safety of the individual with whom they are obsessed. Anyone who believes they are being stalked or are the object of an obsessive attachment should call the police.

## E. STRATEGIES TO DE-ESCALATE THREATENING BEHAVIOR

The following conflict resolution strategies may be helpful to de-escalate situations where an individual is exhibiting threatening or intimidating behavior:

### 1. Project calmness, move and speak slowly, quietly and confidently.

### 2. Encourage the person to talk; listen closely and patiently.

### 3. Maintain a relaxed but attentive posture.

### 4. Position yourself at an angle to the person rather than directly in front.

### 5. Arrange yourself so your access to emergency exists is not blocked.

### 6. Acknowledge the person’s feelings.

### 7. Ask for small, specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area, or to move outside.

### 8. Use delaying tactics to give the person time to calm down, such as offering a drink of water (in a paper, light plastic or Styrofoam cup).

### 9. Point out choices, break big problems into smaller ones.

### 10. Avoid sudden movements and maintain 3-6 foot distance.

### 11. Call the police and campus security when it is safe to do so.

## F. ORDERS FOR VICTIM PROTECTION

Orders for victim protection include the following types of court orders:

### 1. Protection order.

### 2. No contact order.

### 3. Restraining order.

### 4. Anti-harassment order.

Anyone with an order for victim protection that includes the college as a residence, school or workplace or other protected area will:

**Step 1:** Immediately provide a copy of the order to campus security and the vice-president of administrative services and discuss the specific details of the order.

**Step 2:** Alert their supervisor regarding the order for victim protection.

If the college deems necessary, written notification restricting access to the college campus may be issued to the perpetrator. When it is necessary for an individual who has been restricted from campus to be on college property, the college will notify affected employees of his or her presence, and the individual who has been restricted will be accompanied by a college staff member while on campus. In the event that an individual who has been restricted access has no authority to be on campus, the college shall immediately notify campus security and local law enforcement agencies.

## G. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. Employee Responsibilities

All WVC employees are required to adhere to the violence in the workplace policy. It is the responsibility of every WVC employee to assist and cooperate in making the workplace as safe and secure as possible.

#### a. Any conduct or “jokes” which involve intimidation and/or threats are inappropriate and will be taken seriously.

#### b. Employees are strongly encouraged to report any perceived violation of the violence in the workplace policy to their next-in-line supervisor who is not a party to the violation. No employee shall be subjected to criticism, reprisal, retaliation or disciplinary action for good faith reporting of intimidation, threats or acts of violence.

#### c. Employees who are the subject of, or witnesses to, a possible violation of the violence in the workplace policy may be requested by management to document their experience or observations in order to facilitate the handling of the situation.

#### d. Employees are required to report orders of victim protection to their supervisor and campus security when those orders affect the workplace.

### 2. Supervisor/Management Responsibilities

All WVC supervisor/management employees are required to adhere to the violence in the workplace policy and to ensure that those they manage are aware of and accountable for adhering to the policy.

Supervisors have a crucial role in making WVC a safe and secure working environment by reducing the potential for employee workplace violence through training, appropriate and consistent use of sound supervisory practices and by applying timely corrective action when necessary. Adherence to WVC policies, procedures, workplace rules and regulations, documentation of employee performance problems, appropriate training in identifying early warning signs, appropriate workplace conduct, and/or conflict resolution will greatly assist in the prevention of potential workplace violence.

The issues surrounding employee workplace violence can be complex and difficult to assess. Therefore, supervisors are encouraged to consult with available WVC resources including, but not limited to, campus security, human resources staff, and counseling services. Consultation with these resources will greatly assist in identifying intervention strategies that may minimize or avert potentially violent situations. Such intervention(s) may include:

#### a. Supervisory action to address performance problems and inappropriate conduct.

#### b. Corrective action or dismissal.

#### c. Professional employee counseling through available referral services.

#### d. Medical and/or psychological evaluation to determine fitness for duty.

It is the responsibility of all supervisors to report the results of their investigations into alleged violations of the violence in the workplace policy to their next-in-line supervisor and to consult with their next in-line supervisor, campus counselor, human resources or other resources, on potential employee workplace violence situations as appropriate.

Supervisors shall document all violations of the violence in the workplace policy in order that appropriate corrective action can be administered.

Supervisor/management will follow up with law enforcement as deemed appropriate.

## H. TRAINING AND OTHER RESOURCES

The college will discuss with each employee, during orientation, the college’s policy and procedure on violence in the workplace as well as the college’s procedure for harassment and discrimination complaints. The college will keep employees informed about workplace violence through ongoing training.

Supersedes 2.A.72

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Procedure contact: Human Resources

Related policies, procedures and resources

 500.450 [Violence in the Workplace Policy](https://www.wvc.edu/humanresources/policies-procedures/500-human-resources/500.450-violence-in-the-workplace.html)

 1000.350 [Complaint Procedure for Discrimination and Harassment](https://www.wvc.edu/humanresources/policies-procedures/000-general/1000.350-complaint-procedure.html)

[Workplace Violence Checklist](http://a.cms.omniupdate.com/10/#oucampus/Wenatchee/www-2016/preview/humanresources/policies-procedures/media/documents/workplace-violence-checklist-inc-warning-signs.docx)