



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE / THREAT MANAGEMENT POLICY

(DHR 620)

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY - The policy of the County of Los Angeles is that it will not tolerate workplace acts of violence or threats in any form.

Examples of Acts of Workplace Violence

- Threats or intimidation
- Highly aggressive, emotional behavior
- Vandalism, sabotage, or arson
- Physical assaults
- Domestic violence
- Stalking at home or work
- Employee suicides
- Workplace homicides

PROCEDURES

Safety of personnel should be foremost in determining the initial response to an act of violence or threat. Each threat, alleged threat, or act of violence must be assessed and managed according to the particular circumstances presented.

Security Incident Report (SIR)

A threat or act of workplace violence constitutes a security incident. The incident shall be reported to the Security Operations Unit (SOU) by completing and delivering the SIR within 24 hours. The report shall be completed by the employee involved in the incident, or any supervisor or manager of the affected department.

It is the responsibility of the department head, manager, or supervisor informed of the incident to deliver or send the completed and approved SIR.

Types of Threats:

Imminent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready to take place • About to happen • Approaching, unavoidable
Non-Imminent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distant, remote • In the future, far-off • Not likely to occur

Imminent Threat or Immediate Danger of Violence

Any employee who is a witness or victim to an act of violence or an imminent threat in the workplace, or who is advised of an imminent threat directed at or expressed by other personnel and believed by the victim or witness to constitute an immediate danger requiring an emergency response, **should seek personal safety** and take the following actions:

- Remove yourself from harm's way or threatening situation (this could range from staying and hiding in a safe area to running away).
- Obtain emergency assistance from local law enforcement by **calling 9-1-1**.
- Warn potential victim(s).

If the threat is overt and poses risk of imminent harm:

- If an assault is in progress or a threat is imminent, contact the local law enforcement agency (**dial 9-1-1**) and on-site security.
- Notification of the Sheriff's Department's Security Operations Unit, as described in the previous reporting procedures, shall follow the summoning of any additionally needed emergency personnel.

Non-Imminent Threats:

If a non-imminent threat is directed at someone within a County facility by an identifiable party currently or not currently at that facility, the following timely notifications shall be made by the reporting employee, supervisor, and/or manager:

- On-site security (if any)
- Local Law Enforcement Agency (Police or Sheriff)
- The Risk Management Branch Supervisor or Manager.
- The Sheriff's Department's Security Operations Unit: (213) 893-2031
- The potential victim(s).

Suspicious person in and around building, General Guidelines:

- Prepare to provide physical description and behavior that causes your concern.
- Do NOT provide any personal information about yourself or other co-workers.
- For suspicious activity on the facility (County property), or adjacent grounds, notify on-site security.
- For activity in the vicinity of facility (non-County property), notify local law Enforcement Agency (Police or Sheriff).

Three Keys to Surviving a Critical Incident

RUN – HIDE – FIGHT

RUN:

- Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life--have a plan.
- RUN if you can, but not in a straight line.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Help others escape if possible.
- Follow the instructions of any law enforcement officer--keep your hands visible.
- Do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Call 9-1-1 when you are safe.

HIDE:

- Remain calm at all times.
- Stay out of view of the assailant.
- Close and lock all doors, turn lights off.
- Barricade the door(s) with heavy furniture.
- Silence your cell phone.
- Keep in mind *Cover vs. Concealment*.
- Hide behind large items (cabinet or desk).
- Call 9-1-1, if possible.
- Find the safest location, be prepared to hide in more than one location.

FIGHT:

- As a last resort, and if in imminent danger, prepare to take action to defend yourself.
- If you are in a group, formulate a plan of action.
- If you have made the decision to take action, your goal is to stop the attacker.
- Know your physical and mental limitations.
- Prepare for the worst case scenario.
- Ensure your plan for escape and protection is flexible.
- Utilize common office items for your protection and defense.
- Do not stop looking for an opportunity to escape.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:



The Sheriff's Department's Security Operations Unit (SOU) is the central security management authority of the County of Los Angeles. The unit is staffed by Sheriff's Department law enforcement and professional personnel. The chief responsibilities and functions of the unit are to:

- Monitor and address security issues throughout the County through the administration of the County's security incident reporting, threat assessment, and building/physical security assessment programs.
- Work with various levels of County management, law enforcement agencies, and other government offices to assess the security needs and issues involving County employees.
- Work with County management to identify resources and develop solutions to County security and employee safety issues.
- Develop and provide training to County employees in areas such as field safety and violence in the workplace.
- Conduct criminal and confidential investigations for the County
- Regulate County badges and identification cards in accordance with the County of Los Angeles' badge ordinance.

All County employees are welcome to contact the Security Operations Unit at:

**785 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room #B-98
Los Angeles, California 90012**

(213) 893-2031 • Fax (213) 613-0848

Email: sir@lasd.org



Los Angeles County
Sheriff's Department
Security Operations Unit

THREAT MANAGEMENT QUICK GUIDE



RESOURCES:

- ▶ **Emergency:**
9-1-1 (*May have to dial "9" first*)
- ▶ **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):**
(213) 738-4200
- ▶ **Security Operations Unit (SOU):**
(213) 893-2031
- ▶ **Department of Mental Health (DMH), Access Center:**
(800) 854-7771
- ▶ **DMH Psychiatric Mobile Response Team (PMRT):**
(213) 351-2813
- ▶ **Occupational Health Programs (OHP), Psychological Services Unit:**
(213) 738-2213
- ▶ **County of Los Angeles Mental Evaluation Team (MET):**
(626) 258-3002
(626) 258-3020 After Hours
- ▶ **Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department County Services Bureau (CSB):**
(213) 974-8000
- ▶ **Chief Executive Office Office of Emergency Management (OEM):**
(323) 980-2260
- ▶ **Local Law Enforcement:**

- ▶ **On-site Security:**

THREAT MANAGEMENT RESOURCE GUIDE
H.R. POLICY NO. 620
SECURITY OPERATIONS UNIT (SOU)

The Security Operations Unit was designated by the Board of Supervisors as the central security management authority for all County facilities and the employees who work in those facilities. Sworn Sheriff's Department personnel assigned to the unit staff it. SOU has responsibility for the County's Threat Management Program and is available to departments and their employees regarding the reporting and managing of threats or other security incidents. SOU's contact information is as follows, telephone number: (213) 893-2031, email: sir@lasd.org, and fax: (213) 613-0848.

The Security Operations Unit will provide consultation to, and if requested, meet with County departments regarding threats or acts of violence or other security incidents. SOU will assist County departments by making recommendations regarding appropriate responses to the incidents and liaison with the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction. SOU will not assume responsibility for the investigation of an incident when another agency has jurisdiction unless that law enforcement agency is unable to or unwilling to pursue a reasonable course of action.

SOU shall document its response to the reported incident. The documentation shall include but not limited to a description of the circumstances, parties involved in the threat, safety precautions taken by the involved County departments, and additional SOU actions.

SOU will inform the County Department and/or the victim of the proper procedures to obtain a restraining order.

SOU may contact suspects when the local law enforcement agency cannot act expeditiously, and there is reason to believe the suspect may act on the threat.

SOU shall track all Security Incident Reports submitted by County departments.

LEVELS OF THREAT AND SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Following are situational descriptions representing a generally descending order of urgency, together with resources for intervention or consultation that should be given primary consideration in such circumstances. Recognizing the complexity and uniqueness of the situations that actually arise, and the importance of exercising discretion in the management of each case these suggestions are offered as guidelines only. (Refer to appendix for relevant criminal and civil codes.)

If the threat is overt and poses risk of imminent harm:

If an assault is in progress or a threat is imminent contact local the law enforcement agency (dial 9-1-1) and on site security.

Notification of the Security Operations Unit, as described in the previous reporting procedures, shall follow the summoning of any additionally needed emergency personnel.

If the threat is overt but risk of harm is not imminent:

Some threats, while clear in their aggressive implications, are linked conditionally by the perpetrator to some future circumstance.

Examples: *“Someday I’m going to…”*, or, *“I don’t know how much more I can take before I…”*

When a threat is clear in expressing the perpetrator’s ideas about carrying out a violent act, the department shall promptly consult with the Security Operations Unit regarding a course of action.

If a law enforcement officer responds to the location but does not appear to take appropriate action for the circumstances, immediately call the police station (preferably while the officer is still at the scene) and ask for the Watch Commander. After contacting the Watch Commander and a satisfactory resolution to the situation is not achieved, contact the Security Operations Unit at (213) 893-2031. The Security Operations Unit will review the incident and attempt to resolve the situation with the law enforcement agency.

If the threat is ambiguous or “veiled:”

Some statements, acts, or gestures may be reasonably construed to have threatening overtones without expressing a clear threat of harm. SOU shall be notified.

Examples: *“If this harassment continues, I don’t know what I might do;”* *“She won’t get away with it, you’ll see!”* or *“This is what causes people to go off!”*

The Psychological Evaluation Section (213) 738-2213 of Occupational Health Programs, Chief Executive Office, is available for consultation to help assess the potential risks in such cases, and to suggest approaches to the department’s management of the situation.

If no threat is expressed but a troubled employee arouses safety concerns, consult with SOU regarding potential options for resolutions.

A small minority of distressed or troubled employees may pose a significant risk of becoming violent, but workplace apprehension and concern about such employees is common. Departments are encouraged to offer the confidential and free services of the Employee Assistance Program (213) 738-4200 to employees who show signs of disturbance or distress. Early identification and referral of such employees can avert the development of more serious problems.

Consultation regarding troubled employees who create workplace concerns is available to departments from the Employee Assistance Program (213) 738-4200 or the CEO Psychological Evaluation Section (213) 738-2213.

A request for a Medical/Psychological Reevaluation, conducted in accordance with Civil Service Rule 9.07 (B), may be directed to CEO Occupational Health Programs (213) 738-2212 to determine if an employee may be expected to perform his/her duties satisfactorily and without undue hazard to self or others. Such re-evaluation, conducted under the authority of the Director of Personnel, may be warranted in cases in which job functioning appears to be affected by emotional or mental factors, and the employee has either declined or failed to benefit from other measures and suggestions.

Threats Associated with Domestic Conflict (DHR620)

Threats, intimidation, or harassment on the part of someone who has a personal relationship with an employee may spill over to the workplace. For example, an angry former boyfriend or girlfriend may make threatening calls to the employee at the workplace, or may attempt to confront the employee directly at the work site. The County has an interest in such cases in protecting the safety and welfare of its employee, as well as the safety of any others potentially at risk in the workplace, because of proximity to the employee victim of the threat.

Restraining orders: Any employee who experiences domestic harassment or threatened violence, or a County department whose employee has suffered a credible threat of violence, may have grounds to seek a temporary restraining order and injunction against the individual making the threat (refer to Appendix I for excerpts of Sections 527.6 and 527.8 of the Code of Civil Procedure).

Any employee or department seeking a temporary restraining order in accordance with the above sections may obtain procedural guidance from the Office of County Counsel, Management Services Division (213) 974-8394.

Any employee who independently obtains a restraining order or injunction against someone who poses a credible risk of violating the order at the employee's work site must advise the department of the restraining order or injunction. The employee must provide a copy to the local law enforcement agency of jurisdiction of the employees' work place (refer to Domestic Violence Policy, 622). The Security Operations Unit shall be notified of these incidences

Danger Due to Mental Disorder

On occasion, an employee at the work site may show such severe signs of an emotional or mental disturbance as to pose a safety hazard to him/herself or others. An example would be an employee who becomes so overwhelmed by a distressing personal crisis as to express immediate suicidal intentions. Another example would be an employee who becomes very erratic, agitated, and disruptive, and makes grossly irrational accusations.

Section 5150 of the Welfare and Institutions Code pertains to persons who pose an imminent danger to themselves or others, or are gravely disabled, as a result of a mental disorder. This provision makes it possible to have such persons psychiatrically evaluated, and if necessary, hospitalized to prevent harm.

The County's Department of Mental Health operates Psychiatric Mobile Response Teams (PMRT) to make on-site evaluations of individuals in such cases when it is not feasible or safe to arrange other transportation for the needed medical or psychiatric care. The Centralized Screening/Dispatching telephone number to request assistance of a PMRT is (800) 854-7771.

Peace officers are also authorized to respond to calls for on-site assistance in such cases, to make an initial assessment, and to transport to designated facilities for further evaluation and possible hospitalization.

SOU shall be notified of these incidences.

Post-incident Stress Debriefing and Trauma Counseling

Violent incidents occurring at the work site, particularly those resulting in serious injuries, subject witnesses and others associated with the work locations and/or its personnel to atypical and often severe emotional reactions. It is important to address the reactions aroused by such incidents promptly and fully, both to alleviate the acute emotional shock or distress that may have been triggered by the incident, and to prevent the development of avoidable longer-range unhealthful effects.

When professional on-site counseling or debriefing is needed quickly, help is available through arrangements by the Department of Mental Health's (Critical Incident Response Team). The CIRT Coordinator's pager number is (562) 807-8875, although it is advisable to first call the office voice mail number (213) 738-4431 to ensure that someone is available and has not referred callers to a back-up resource.

The Employee Assistance Program (213) 738-4200 is also available to provide services associated with the emotional consequences of trauma and injury.

APPENDIX

Excerpts

Penal Code Section 422. Criminal Threats. “Any person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death or great bodily injury to another person, with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate, and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety, shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail not to exceed one year, or by imprisonment in the state prison.”

Penal Code Section 646.9. Stalking. “(a) Any person who 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, is guilty of the crime of stalking, punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year or by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1000), or by both that fine and imprisonment, or by imprisonment in the state prison.”
“(b) Any person who violates subdivision (a) when there is a temporary restraining order, injunction, or any other court order in effect prohibiting the behavior described in subdivision (a) against the same party, shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for two, three, or four years.

Penal Code Section 601 (a). Trespass. “Any person is guilty of trespass who makes a credible threat to cause serious bodily injury, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 417.6, to another person with the intent to place that other person in reasonable fear for his or her safety, or the safety of his or her immediate family, as defined in subdivision (i) of Section 646.9, and who does any of the following:(1) Within 30 days of the threat, unlawfully enters into the residence or real property contiguous to the residence of the person threatened without lawful purpose, and with the intent to execute the threat against the target of the threat.(2) Within 30 days of the threat, knowing that the place is the threatened person's workplace, unlawfully enters into the workplace of the person threatened and carries out an act or acts to locate the threatened person within the workplace premises without lawful purpose, and with the intent to execute the threat against the target of the threat.”

Penal Code Section 602 (m). “Every person who willfully commits a trespass by any of the following acts is guilty of a misdemeanor: Entering and occupying real property or structures of any kind without the consent of the owner, the owner's agent, or the person in lawful possession.”

Penal Code Section 602.1 (b) “Any person who intentionally interferes with any lawful business carried on by the employees of a public agency open to the public, by obstructing or intimidating those attempting to carry on business, or those persons there to transact business with the public agency, and who refuses to leave the premises of the public agency after being requested to leave by the office manager or a supervisor of the public agency, or by a peace officer acting at the request of the office manager or a supervisor of the public agency, is guilty of a misdemeanor.”

Penal Code Section 653 (m) “(a) Every person who, with intent to annoy, telephones or makes contact by means of an electronic communication device with another and addresses to or about the other person any obscene language or addresses to the other person any threat to inflict injury to the person or property of the person addressed or any member of his or her family, is guilty of a misdemeanor. (c) Every person who makes repeated telephone calls or makes repeated contact by means of an electronic communication device with the intent to annoy another person at his or her place of work is guilty of a misdemeanor.”

Code of Civil Procedure Section 527.6. Harassment, temporary restraining order and injunction; domestic violence. “a) A person who has suffered harassment as defined in subdivision (b) may seek a temporary restraining order and an injunction prohibiting harassment as provided in this section. (c) For the purposes of this section, ‘harassment’ is a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific person which seriously alarms, annoys, or harasses the person, and which serves no legitimate purpose. This course of conduct must be such as would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, and must actually cause substantial emotional distress to the plaintiff. ‘Course of conduct’ is a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a period of time, however short, evidencing a continuity of purpose. Constitutionally protected activity is not included within the meaning of ‘course of conduct.’”

Code of Civil Procedure Section 527.8. Workplace violence and threats; temporary restraining order and injunction; “Any employer, whose employee has suffered unlawful violence or a credible threat of violence from any individual, which can reasonably be construed to be carried out or to have been carried out at the workplace, may seek a temporary restraining order and an injunction on behalf of the employee prohibiting further unlawful violence or threats of violence by that individual.” Violation of such a restraining order is punishable by imprisonment and/or fine.