

# Waterloo Vol Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

## **Workplace Violence Policy & Procedures**

The department known as the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department has a long-standing commitment to promoting a safe and secure work environment that promotes the achievement of its mission of serving the public. All members of the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department are expected to maintain a working environment free from violence, threats of harassment, violence, intimidation or coercion. While these behaviors are not prevalent at the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department, no organization is immune.

The purpose of this policy is to address the issue of potential workplace violence in our Waterloo Vol. Fire Department, prevent workplace violence from occurring to the fullest extent possible, and set forth procedures to follow when such violence has occurred.

### **POLICY**

The Waterloo Vol. Fire Department prohibits workplace violence. Violence, threats of violence, intimidation, harassment, coercion, or other threatening behavior towards people or property will not be tolerated. Complaints involving workplace violence will not be ignored and will be given the serious attention they deserve. Individuals who violate this policy may be removed from the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department property and are subject to disciplinary and/or personnel action up to and including termination, consistent with the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department policies, rules, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities for criminal prosecution. Complaints of sexual harassment are covered under the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department's Policy against Sexual Harassment.

The Waterloo Vol. Fire Department, at the request of a member or at its own discretion, may prohibit members of the public, including family members, from seeing a member on Waterloo Vol. Fire Department property unless necessary to transact Waterloo Vol. Fire Department related business. This policy particularly applies in cases where the member suspects that an act of violence will result from an encounter with said individual(s).

### **SCOPE**

All members, members of the public, vendors, contractors, consultants, and others who do business with the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department, whether in a Waterloo Vol. Fire Department facility or off-site location where Waterloo Vol. Fire Department business is conducted, are covered by this policy. This policy also applies to other persons not affiliated with Waterloo Vol. Fire Department, such as former members, and visitors.

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When members have complaints about other members, they should contact their fire chief.

### **DEFINITIONS**

1. Workplace violence is any behavior that is violent, threatens violence, coerces, harasses or intimidates others, interferes with an individual's legal rights of movement or expression, or disrupts the workplace, the work environment, or the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department's ability to provide services to the public. It also involves the abuse or intentional non-authorized destruction of property. Workplace violence does not include the use of reasonable force in the defense of oneself or others.
2. Disruptive behavior intended to disturb, interfere with or prevent normal activities of the organization (such as but not limited to yelling, using profanity, verbally abusing others, or waving arms and fists).
3. Intentional physical contact for the purpose of causing harm (such as but not limited to slapping, stabbing, punching, striking, shoving, or other physical attack).
4. Menacing or threatening behavior (such as but not limited to throwing objects, pounding on a desk or door, damaging property, stalking, or otherwise acting aggressively, or making oral or written statements specifically intended to frighten, coerce, or threaten) where a reasonable person would interrupt such behavior as constituting evidence of intent to cause harm to individuals or property.
5. Possessing firearms, imitation firearms, knives or other dangerous weapons, instruments or materials. No one within the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department, shall have in their possession a firearm or other dangerous weapon, instrument or material that can be used to inflict bodily harm on an individual or damage to the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department property without specific written authorization from the (authority having jurisdiction) regardless of whether the individual possesses a valid permit to carry the firearm or weapon.
6. Hazing is an abusive, often humiliating form of initiation into or affiliation with a group, including any willful action taken or situation created which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of another. Any willful act by any person alone or acting with others in striking, beating, bruising, or maiming; or seriously offering, threatening, or attempting to strike, beat, bruise,

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or maim, or to do or seriously offer, threaten, or attempt to do physical violence to another made for the purpose of committing any of the act

## **REPORTING OF INCIDENTS**

### **1. General Reporting Responsibilities:**

Incidents of workplace violence, threats of workplace violence, or observations of workplace violence will not be ignored by any member of the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department. Workplace violence should promptly be reported to any of the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department officers.

Additionally, members are encouraged to report behavior that they reasonably believe poses a potential for workplace violence as defined above. It is important that all members of the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department take this responsibility seriously to effectively maintain a safe working and learning environment.

### **2. Imminent or Actual Violence:**

Any person experiencing or witnessing imminent danger of actual violence involving weapons or personal injury should call their supervisor immediately, or call 911.

### **3. Acts of Violence Not Involving Weapons or Injuries to Persons:**

Any person who is subject of a suspected violation of the policy involving violence without weapons or person injury, or is a witness to such suspected violation, should report the incident to an department officer, or in lieu thereof, to the (authority having jurisdiction)

### **4. Commission of a Crime:**

All individuals who believe a crime has been committed against them have the right, and are encouraged, to report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

### **5. False Reports:**

Members of the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department who make false and malicious complaints of workplace violence, as opposed to complaints which, even if erroneous, are made in good faith, will be subject to disciplinary action and/or referral to civil authorities as deemed appropriate by Civil Service Law.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Waterloo Vol. Fire Department shall maintain the confidentiality of investigations of

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workplace violence to the extent possible. The Waterloo Vol. Fire Department will act on the basis of anonymous complaints where it has a reasonable basis to believe that there has been a violation of the policy and that the safety and well being of members of the Waterloo Vol. Fire Department would be served by such action.

### **RETALIATION**

Retaliation against anyone acting in good faith who has made a complaint of workplace violence, who has reported witnessing workplace violence, or who has been involved in reporting, investigating, or responding to workplace violence is a violation of this policy. Those found responsible for retaliatory action will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.