

6. APPENDICES

Appendix F – Sample policy about domestic violence in the workplace

Description

Domestic violence is abusive behavior that is either physical, sexual and/or psychological, intended to establish and maintain control over a partner. Domestic violence is a serious problem that affects people from all walks of life. It can adversely affect the well-being and productivity of employees who are victims, as well as their coworkers. Other effects of domestic violence in the workplace include increased absenteeism, turnover, health care costs and reduced productivity.

Policy statement

The *[Employer Name]* will not tolerate domestic violence including harassment of any employee or client while in our facilities or vehicles, on our property or while conducting business. This includes the display of any violent or threatening behavior (verbal or physical) that may result in physical or emotional injury or otherwise places one's safety and productivity at risk.

Any employee who threatens, harasses or abuses someone at our workplace or from the workplace using any company resources such as work time, workplace phones, fax machines, mail, e-mail or other means may be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Corrective or disciplinary action may also be taken against employees who are arrested, convicted or issued a permanent injunction as a result of domestic violence when such action has a direct connection to the employee's duties in our company.

The *[Employer Name]* is committed to working with employees who are victims of domestic violence to prevent abuse and harassment from occurring in the workplace. No employees will be penalized or disciplined solely for being a victim of harassment in the workplace. Our company will provide appropriate support and assistance to employees who are victims of domestic violence. This includes: confidential means for coming forward for help, resource and referral information, work schedule adjustments or leave as needed to obtain assistance, and workplace relocation as feasible.

Employees who are perpetrators of domestic violence are also encouraged to seek assistance. Our company will provide information regarding counseling and certified treatment resources, and make work schedule arrangements to receive such assistance.

Special instructions for employees

It is important that all employees know how best to respond to the effects of domestic violence in the workplace. In addition, they also should be aware of physical or behavioral changes in other employees and know who – personnel officer, manager and/or employee advisory service/resource – they can contact for advice. They should not attempt to diagnose the employee.

Managers/supervisors or human resource professionals in our company should receive domestic violence training. Our company should also:

- Be responsive when an employee who is either the victim or perpetrator of domestic violence asks for help.

- Maintain confidentiality. Information about the employee should only be given to others on a need-to-know basis.
- Work with the victim, personnel office, manager, employee advisory service/resource, available security staff, law enforcement and community domestic violence programs, if necessary, to assess the need for and develop a workplace safety plan for the victim. Victims of domestic violence know their abusers better than anyone else. When it comes to their own personal safety, offer to assist them in developing a workplace safety plan, but allow them to decide what goes in it. If it is determined that other employees or clients are at risk, it is essential to take measures to provide protection for them.
- Adjust the employee's work schedule and/or grant leave if the employee needs to take time off for medical assistance, legal assistance, court appearances, counseling, relocation or to make other necessary arrangements to create a safe situation. Be sure to follow all applicable personnel rules.
- Maintain communication with the employee during the employee's absence. Remember to maintain confidentiality of the employee's whereabouts.
- Post information about domestic violence in your work area. Also, have information available where employees can obtain it without having to request it or be seen removing it, such as restrooms, lunchrooms or where other employee resource information is located.
- Honor all civil protection orders. As appropriate, participate in court proceedings in obtaining protection orders on behalf of the employee.
- Maintain a list of services available to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. This list should include: employee advisory service/resource, local shelters, certified domestic violence treatment programs available to perpetrators, information about how to obtain civil orders of protection and any available community resources.
- Advise and assist supervisors and managers in taking corrective or disciplinary actions against perpetrators of domestic violence.

Options for employees who are victims of domestic violence

- Tell a trusted coworker, supervisor or manager and ask for help.
- Contact your personnel officer for assistance.
- Contact the employee advisory service/resource
- Call the local police.
- Notify your supervisor of the possible need to be absent. Find out what work schedule or leave options are available to you. Be clear about your plan to return to work and maintain communications with your supervisor during your absence.
- If appropriate, and safety is a concern, submit a recent photograph of the abuser and a copy of your protection order to your supervisor. This assists your employer in identifying the abuser should he/she appear in the workplace.

Options for employees who are perpetrators of domestic violence

- Tell a trusted coworker, supervisor or manager and ask for help.
- Contact your personnel officer for assistance.
- Contact the employee advisory service/resource.
- Obtain a referral to a certified domestic violence perpetrators treatment program.

Components of a workplace safety plan

1. Consider obtaining civil orders for protection and make sure that they remain current and are in hand at all times. A copy should be provided to the employee's supervisor, reception area and security areas if there is a concern about the abusive partner coming to the work site.
2. The employee should consider providing a picture of the perpetrator to reception areas and/or security.
3. A company contact person should be identified for the employee to reach when needed.
4. An emergency contact person should be identified should the employer be unable to contact the employee.
5. Review the employee's parking arrangements for possible changes.
6. Consider changing the employee's work schedule.
7. Consider what steps need to be taken to provide for the safety of other employees and clients.
8. Consider having the employee's telephone calls screened at work.