

Century Community and Technical College

1B.3.2.1 Zero Tolerance of Workplace Violence

Introduction:

In 1992, the Minnesota legislature adopted the following act (Minn. Stat. 1:5)

Freedom from Violence

The State of Minnesota hereby adopts a policy of zero tolerance of violence. It is state policy that every person in the state has a right to live free from violence.

Minn. Stat. 15.86, mandates that each agency of state government adopt a goal of zero tolerance of violence in, and around, the workplace.

Each agency is also encouraged to develop a plan that describes how the agency will:

1. seek to eliminate any potential violence in and around the agency workplace; and
2. seek to eliminate any potential for violence by affecting the attitudes and behavior of the people that the agency services or regulates.

Definition of Violence:

In 1994, the Violence Prevention Advisory Task Force endorsed the following definition of violence as a reference for those working on violence prevention issues:

“Violence is the abusive or unjust exercise of power, intimidation, harassment and/or the threatened or actual use of force which results in or has a high likelihood of causing hurt, fear, injury, suffering or death.”

Workplace violence generally falls into three categories:

1. A violent act or threat (perceived or real) by a current or former employee, supervisor or manager, or someone who has some involvement with a current or former employee, such as an employee’s spouse, significant other, relative or another person who has had a dispute with an employee.
2. A violent act or threat (perceived or real) by someone receiving service from the agency.
3. A violent act by someone totally unrelated to the work environment. The purpose of the visit is to commit a criminal act such as robbery or bombing.

The college recognizes that violent acts are frequently the end result of long-standing disputes or unresolved arguments that can begin with a disrespectful comment or action that escalated to more serious levels of violence.

The college also recognizes the need to foster and promote a positive working environment and culture for its employees and customers.

College Goal

It is the goal of Century Community and Technical College to achieve a work environment which is free from threats and acts of violence. The college will not tolerate workplace violence of any type, from any source. This includes threats (perceived or real) or violent actions by employees directed against other employees, by employees directed against college customers/students or other workplace visitors, and by college customers or visitors directed against college employees.

College Policy

It is the policy of Century Community and Technical College community to maintain a workplace free from threats and acts of violence. The college will work to provide a safe workplace for employees, students and visitors. Each employee, and everyone, with whom we come into contact in our work, deserves to be treated with courtesy and respect. This will be accomplished by encouraging mutual respect among all individuals, establishing open and honest communication, and enforcing “**zero tolerance**” for any type of violent behavior. Through information and training, the college will work to foster a work environment and culture that is devoid of violence for its customers/students and employees.

The college’s policy on work-related violence includes:

- 1** The college will actively work to prevent and eliminate acts of work-related violence.
- 2** The college will clarify and enforce expectations regarding behavior for employees, customers/students and guests.

The college will respond promptly, positively, and

- 3** aggressively to deal with threats or acts of violence. This response will include timely involvement of law enforcement agencies, when appropriate.
- 4** The college hereby adopts, and will work to enforce, a policy of prohibiting possession of firearms for students and state/college employees, as well as other dangerous weapons in the workplace. This policy does recognize the restricted rights of individuals with permits to possess or carry firearms in accordance with the Minnesota Citizens’ Personal Protection Act of 2003, Minnesota Statutes Section 624.714, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Policy 5.21, and other applicable law(s).
- 5** Incidents of work-related threats or acts of violence will be treated seriously by the college. Reports of all such acts will be promptly investigated, and administration will take action, as necessary, to appropriately address each incident.
- 6** The college will take strong disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from State employment, against employees of the college who are involved in the commission of work-related threats or acts of violence.
- 7** The college will support criminal prosecution of those who threaten or commit work-related violence against its employees, students or visitors to its work environment.
- 8** Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 15.86, this policy does not create any civil liability on the part of the State of Minnesota.

- 9 For all its locations, the college will provide information and training for staff to foster a 1) safe work environment, 2) respectful work environment, and 3) an environment that is proactive and able to be responsive to threats (perceived or real) in the workplace.

Plan for implementing zero tolerance of violence in, and around, the workplace.

1. The college will provide a safe workplace at all its campuses.

Century Community and Technical College is committed to ensuring that the workplace provides for the safety of employees and guests, and for reasonable protection from workplace violence.

10 A “College Security Plan” will be prepared and published in the Workers Right to Know information for each campus. The Plan will address physical security requirements of each campus, and will include procedures for appropriate response to threats and acts of violence.

2. The college will attempt to limit violence from external sources by positively affecting the attitudes and the behaviors of its customers/ students.

1 The College will continue to place emphasis on good customer/student service in a way that is fair, efficient, reliable and understandable. In doing so, and by treating customers/students with respect and dignity, the potential for workplace violence from external sources will be greatly reduced.

3. Prevention: The college will attempt to reduce the potential for internal workplace violence by positively affecting the attitudes and the behavior of its employees.

1 Behaviors and Interactions: Clear expectations of behaviors and interactions for employees, customers/students and guests in the workplace are established by virtue of this policy. This will include zero tolerance for behaviors which indicate disrespect for others within the office or at functions outside the college or using inappropriate or offensive references for customers/students and staff.

2 Creating a low-risk work environment: College administration, faculty and supervisors are expected to promote positive behavior, and to lead by example, by treating students and employees with respect and dignity. Emphasis will be placed on creating a workplace where the established standards of conduct are clear, communicated, and consistently enforced, and where discipline is used fairly and appropriately to deal with instances of unacceptable behavior.

3 All Staff Training: Appropriate to the position, all college staff will be provided with training on managing conflict. Management training will focus

on prevention and de-escalation of violence, will include suggestions for appropriate responses to threats and acts of violence, and will identify resources which are available for use once a potential problem has been identified or an incident has occurred.

Other training and information foster a positive workplace environment, such as enhanced communication or stress management, etc. will be made available.

- 4 Employee Counseling and Assistance: The College will encourage use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is primarily an assessment, short-term counseling and referral agency. While supervisors, union representatives, or family members may encourage employees to seek help from the EAP, the decision to use its services must be a voluntary one; employees may also choose to seek assistance from private a health service.
- Safety Promotion: Information and instruction will be provided or posted for college employees and customers/students regarding appropriate responses to potential safety threats. For example, evacuation routes will be posted for all workplace areas to ensure the safe evacuation of all staff, students and visitors. Information detailing essential security and safety measures will be available for all staff.
- 1 Self-help: Informational brochures and other methods will be used to make employees familiar with the services offered by the EAP, and will provide information on how to take advantage of those services. Information will also be provided about other options for the resolution of personal and work-related problems which may have a potential for escalating to a violent incident. Employees will be encouraged to utilize available resources.
 - 2 Valuing and Respecting Diversity: It is the college's policy and practice to value and respect individual differences among people. Harassment of any person in the workplace is strictly prohibited. Harassment can be any behavior which is unwelcome, personally offensive, insulting or demeaning, when:
 - submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of an individual's employment;
 - submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual; or,
 - such conduct has the primary purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's/student's performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Harassment and discrimination are serious concerns. Incidents of this nature, if not corrected, may result in workplace violence. Administration will continue to treat reports of harassment and discrimination seriously. Complaints of alleged harassment or discrimination will be promptly investigated and, as necessary, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

4. The college will effectively deal with threats of violence, and with actual incidents of violence.

- 1 Supervisory Responsibilities: College administration, managers and supervisors have primary responsibility for ensuring a safe work environment. They are specifically empowered to take immediate action to resolve or stabilize violent situations in the workplace, and to protect people from harm. They will ensure that, when a threat is made or violent incident occurs, an appropriate response is immediately taken. Administrators, managers and supervisors will also ensure that appropriate disciplinary responses to internal workplace violence and aggression are made. They will carry out these responsibilities with the assistance of the college's Public Safety Office and, as appropriate, other state and local government agents.
- 2 Reporting Threats or Acts of Violence: All incidents should be reported immediately to an administrator, manager and/or supervisor and the Public Safety Office. Reports should fully detail the specific incident and the names of all persons involved including witnesses. All incidents will be fully investigated by the college and public safety personnel with assistance from other state and local agents as appropriate. A full written report will be kept in the Public Safety Office.

Media inquiries regarding incidents of workplace violence will be handled by the Director of Community Relations.

As warranted, college Public Safety Office (cell phone number 651-295-3000 or local law enforcement agencies or emergency medical personnel should immediately be contacted by dialing 9-911.

5. The college will work to eliminate dangerous weapons from the workplace.

- 1 Dangerous Weapon Prohibition: College/state personnel and students are prohibited from possessing any dangerous weapon, including guns and pistols while in work status.

This policy does not prohibit the possession or carry of a pistol by a visitor who has a lawful permit to carry a pistol pursuant to Minnesota Statue Section 62A.174, Subd. 1A.

Plan Implementation

Copies of this policy and plan will be distributed to all employees, will be posted on employee bulletin boards, and will be posted for the information of customers/students and visitors. Administrators, managers and supervisors will be responsible for informing employees of this policy and plan, and for enforcing compliance. This policy and plan will be included in new employee orientation and employee handbooks.

The college will continue to provide information about the services available through the Employee Assistance Program to help employees deal with concerns and issues related to workplace or family violence. Training needs will be assessed, and training sessions for managers, supervisors and employees will continue to be made available. The college will work to further advance this plan and will identify and address specific action items.

Administrators, managers and supervisors will have primary responsibility for ensuring a safe workplace, for monitoring and resolution of employee conflicts or disputes, for taking appropriate corrective action when potentially violent situations develop, and for working with the Public Safety Office and other appropriate agencies when threats or acts of violence do occur.

References:

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 1B.3 Sexual Violence Policy (draft)
Minnesota State Colleges and University Board Policy 1B.3.1 Sexual Violence Procedure (draft)
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 1B.1
Century College Policy 1B.1.1.1
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 3.6 - Student Conduct
Century College Policy 3.6.0.1 - Student Conduct
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 3.1 - Student Rights and Responsibilities
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 3.8 - Student Grievance
Century College Policy 3.8.0.1 - Student Grievance Procedure
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 5.21 – Possession or Carry of Firearms
Minnesota Statute Chapter No. 452 S.F. No. 1985 section 1:5 and 15:90
Minnesota Statute Chapter No. 624.174, Subd 1A
AFSCME - Article 16, Discipline and Discharge and Article 17, Grievance Procedure
MAPE - Article 8, Discipline and Discharge and Article 9, Grievance Procedure
MMA - Article 6, Discipline, Demotion and Discharge and Article 7, Grievance Procedure
Commissioner's Plan - Chapter 11, Disciplinary Action and Chapter 12, Resolution of Disputes
MSCF Article 25, Disciplinary Procedures and Article 25, Grievance Procedure

Date Implemented:

Date Revised: 9/04/03