

Safety and Risk Management Manual

Original Date: July 10, 2007, Approved by BOCC 8/7/07 Resolution #070521
Revision Date: _____, 2024. Resolution No. 24-____
Title: Threat Assessment Policy - Threat & Violence Assessment Team

Policy Statement

Arapahoe County will not tolerate violent behavior or a threat of violent behavior directed towards an employee, a client, another citizen or property. Such behavior will be investigated when it is reported. Human Resources will investigate all situations when another employee causes the threat or violent behavior. Threats or violent actions by an employee may result in corrective/disciplinary action, including dismissal from employment, and/or criminal charges when appropriate.

Possession of weapons in or on any County-owned public building and adjoining parking lot shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Violence Policy – Weapons located in the Arapahoe County Guidelines and the Safety & Risk Management Manual. , All threats to employee safety from any source will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken. This policy is intended to be a supplement to the County’s existing workplace violence policy and does not replace any existing County policy or program. This policy is intended to instruct staff on the proper procedure for handling these events.

Background/Purpose

Arapahoe County has a strong commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for its employees, clients and the public. This includes a zero tolerance for any type of workplace violence, including threats. This policy outlines procedures for dealing with the instances of violent episodes and threats from individuals and clients who are not employees of Arapahoe County. Violent acts and threats by employees are also prohibited as discussed in the Human Resources Guidelines and will be addressed by Human Resources and the Department Director or Elected Official or their designees and reported to Risk Management. This policy’s purpose is to establish the framework for implementing a plan of action to prevent an incident or reduce the effects of any such incident and to implement a Threat and Violence Assessment Team (TVAT).).¹ This policy intends to:

- Set protocol for reporting, assessing and following up on threats,
- Establish a standardized approach to dealing with these issues,
- Establish a central reporting mechanism to track threats, and
- Eliminate any gaps that may cause a threat to be ignored.

Goals and Definitions

The goal of the program is to keep employees safe from violence in the workplace by adopting these guidelines.

¹ Violence and threats by employees is prohibited and will be investigated pursuant to the Human Resources Guidelines. Employees who engage in such activity will be subject to discipline, which could include termination from employment.

- “Violent behavior” is defined as intimidating, threatening or hostile behaviors; physical/verbal abuse; vandalism; arson; sabotage; use of weapons; carrying illegal weapons onto our premises; or any other act which in Arapahoe County’s opinion is inappropriate in the workplace.
- “Threat” includes veiled, conditional or direct verbal or written threats intended to harass, harm or endanger the safety of another person or property.

Reporting and Investigating Incidents that pose an Immediate Threat

Incidents Posing an Immediate Threat:

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Brandishing or possessing a weapon
- Outrageous behavior which poses an immediate threat
- Any violent act
- Public lewdness or sexual abuse
- Stealing
- A verbal threat describing an action

Action

- Observing employee immediately notifies law enforcement
- Observing employee immediately reports to supervisor and Risk Manager
- Supervisor directs internal investigation and reports to the Elected Official/Department Director and the Risk Manager
- Investigation report is forwarded to the Risk Manager who may convene the Threat and Violence Assessment Team

1. Responding

Co-workers in the area will respond according to department/office policy. Supervisors will intervene as trained to divert the perpetrator away from the target employee and lower anxiety levels as dictated by the situation. The Supervisor or manager should consider which appropriate action should be taken to de-escalate the situation and should begin an investigation.

2. Reporting

Employees will verbally report workplace violence incidents immediately to a Human Resources representative, the local law enforcement authority and their supervisor.

The employee will submit a written/electronic/telephone report to the Risk Manager immediately. There is a Threat/Incident Report tab on the County’s intranet site. Employees should complete the form which is transmitted to both Human Resources and Risk Management immediately.

3. Investigating

The Department/Office will investigate the incident and file a report about the findings and the action taken. Risk Management will assist.

Situations, in which an employee is the aggressor, will be handled by Human Resources and will not involve the TVAT.

Reporting and Investigating Incidents that do not pose an Immediate Threat

Incidents not posing an immediate threat:

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Threatening conduct such as intimidation
- Obsessions, such as a grudge
- Racial/ethnic slurs
- Repeated references to violent episodes

Action

- Employee reports incident to immediate supervisor
- Immediate supervisor intervenes to resolve the issue
- Immediate supervisor investigates and reports to the Elected Official/Department Director, the Human Resources Director and/or the Risk Manager
- Elected Official/Department Director and Risk Manager must take appropriate action, which may include convening the Threat/Violence Assessment Team.

1. Reporting

Employees will verbally report workplace violence incidents immediately to their supervisor.

The employee will submit a written/electronic/telephone report to the Risk Manager.

There is a Threat/Incident Report tab on the County's intranet site. Employees should complete the form which is transmitted to both Human Resources and Risk Management immediately.

2. Responding

The supervisor or manager should decide if and what type of further action is necessary.

3. Investigating

The Department/Office may require an investigation and Risk Management will assist.

Situations, in which an employee is the aggressor, will be handled by Human Resources and will not involve the TVAT.

Procedures for Follow-up after Incidents:

1. Elected Official/Department Director should designate a manager or supervisor who is required to provide a documented report to the Human Resources Director and the Risk Manager.
2. Elected Official/Department Director should designate a staff member to coordinate the activities and recommendations of the Threat and Violence Assessment Team.
3. Elected Official/Department Director and/or Human Resources should require employees to attend training, and when an employee is involved in an incident, require follow up training to discuss the incident.

4. The Human Resources Director and/or the Risk Manager will document and keep records of all reported incidents and investigations.
5. Managers and supervisors are required to develop internal reporting and response procedures and make this program and these procedures readily available to employees in each work area.
6. Managers and supervisors are required to communicate this policy to County staff and to enforce the rules uniformly.

Recommended Rules for Risk Control:

1. Employees working outside of normal duty hours will lock office doors and notify security, when appropriate.
2. Employees working with or meeting with potentially violent clients should arrange to work with a team member.
3. Employees will keep their vehicle doors locked when coming and going to and from work.
4. Employees will walk in pairs when practicable.
5. Employees should pay attention to lighting in work and parking areas, and when needed, suggest additional lighting.
6. Employees handling money or other valuables should use additional protective measures such as safety glass, and use caution when money is visible.
7. Money and securities should be transported between offices with extreme caution. Avoid using cash bags or place cash bags in interoffice envelopes.
8. Public building entrances should be controlled where possible. All other entrances will be kept locked.
9. Employees should keep personal possessions, such as purses, wallets, and cell phones out of sight.