



CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

Violence in the Workplace Policy

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I. Overview

A. Purpose

The Chicago Park District (“Park District”) is committed to providing a safe workplace for the benefit of its employees and the public. To ensure a safe work environment and to reduce the risk of violence, all employees should review and understand all provisions of this Violence in the Workplace Policy (“Policy”). This Policy provides guidance regarding weapons in the workplace, violent incidents, reporting structures, and enforcement actions.

B. Scope & Applicability

The Policy is applicable to all Park District employees – whether full-time, part-time, or seasonal – while working at the Park District, attending Park District programs and events, or at Park District locations, including premises that are owned or leased by the Park District. This Policy also is applicable to vendors, contractors and partners who operate on Park District property.

This Policy aligns with several of the Park District’s existing policies and protocols, including its:

- *Victim’s Economic Safety and Security Act (VESSA) Policy*, which provides procedures for when Park District employees may need to take time off due to domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, gender violence, or any other crime of violence.
- *Firearm Policy for Park District Security Officers*, which aligns with existing federal and state law and addresses Security Officers carrying concealed firearms in the course of duties
- *Standard Operating Procedures for Violent Incidents*, which documents the standard operating procedures that Park District employees follow after violent incidents occur in the Park District.

II. Prohibited Conduct

The Park District does not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. Employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities.

Examples of prohibited conduct include:

- Using physical force against another person;
- Making direct or implied threats either verbally, electronically, or in writing that create a reasonable fear of harm to a person or the person’s property;
- Exhibiting aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress;
- Intentionally damaging Park District property or the property of another employee;
- Sexual harassment, domestic violence, stalking, or gender violence;

- Possessing, concealing, storing, or using a weapon while on Park District property or while conducting Park District business.¹ Examples of prohibited weapons include:
 - Firearms such as revolvers, pistols, shotguns, or rifles
 - Ammunition
 - BB guns, compressed air guns, or pellet guns
 - Tasers
 - Knives such as bowie knives, dirk knives, daggers, and switchblades²
 - Fireworks or explosive devices
 - Realistic replicas of firearms or dangerous weapons
 - Other dangerous items that can be used to inflict significant bodily harm

III. Reporting Procedures

A. Reporting Immediate Threats to Safety or Wellbeing (Emergencies)

If a violent incident is currently taking place or if there is an imminent threat to the safety or well-being of any person, employees should:

1. Call 911 immediately, and
2. Notify Park District Security at 312-747-2193.

B. Reporting Concerns about Potentially Dangerous Situations

If an individual has concerns about potentially dangerous situations, workplace violence complaints that do not involve an imminent threat, or questions related to this Policy, the individual should contact the Office of Prevention and Accountability (“OPA”):

- By emailing OPA@ChicagoParkDistrict.com,
- By calling 312-742-5OPA (312-742-5672), or
- By submitting a complaint online at www.ChicagoParkDistrict.com/OPA.

Workplace violence complaints can be submitted to OPA anonymously, **with the exception of Park District supervisors or management-level employees.**

The Violence in the Workplace Policy falls under the Park District’s Human Rights Ordinance (Chapter IV of the Chicago Park District Code). The Code requires supervisors or management level employees who receive a report or reasonably suspect a violation of the Human Rights Ordinance – including workplace violence - to report that information to OPA in writing within five business days. Supervisors and management-level employees cannot make workplace violence reports

¹ This provision shall not apply to sworn members of the Chicago Police Department or other law enforcement agencies, authorized Park District Security personnel or employees using tools as required for their work at the Park District.

² Knives used as common eating utensils and personal use knives with folding blades three inches or less are allowed.

anonymously.

C. Reporting Employee Injuries or Medical Treatment

If an employee is injured and/or requires medical treatment or evaluation, the employee's supervisor should:

1. Report the matter to Risk Management immediately by calling 312-742-7238 (312-742-SAFT) or emailing RiskManagement@ChicagoParkDistrict.com
2. Submit an Employee Incident Report on SharePoint as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours following the occurrence of any violent incident.

D. Reporting Domestic Violence

If an employee is impacted by domestic violence, the employee should notify the Park District if they obtain an order of protection that might cover a Park District premises and/or place restrictions on a Park District employee, patron, volunteer, vendor, partner, contractor, or visitor. The employee should:

1. Report the situation to their immediate supervisor, and
2. Inform Human Resources by calling 312-742-5220.

Employees impacted by domestic violence should also refer to the [Park District's Victims Economic Security and Safety Act \("VESSA"\) Leave Policy](#) for additional procedures and resources. Employees may request VESSA leave for absences for the reasons related to domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, gender violence, or any other crime of violence for the employee or the family or household member who is a victim.

IV. Risk Reduction Measures

While the Park District does not expect employees to be experts at identifying potentially dangerous persons, employees are expected to exercise good judgment and report any individual who exhibits behavior that could be a sign of a potentially dangerous situation. Such behavior includes:

- Discussing weapons or bringing them to the workplace;
- Displaying overt signs of extreme stress
- Displaying overt signs of resentment, hostility, or anger towards patrons, employees, or themselves;
- Making threatening remarks;
- Threatening to hurt others or themselves;
- Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior.

V. Dangerous & Emergency Situations

Employees should avoid confronting armed and/or dangerous individuals. After calling 911 and/or contacting Park District Security, employees should notify their supervisor if that notification can be made without endangering the safety of the employee or others.

Employees should assist anyone injured as a result of workplace violence, including summoning Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel (where reasonable and where doing so would not put the employee in harm's way), staying with the injured person(s) until EMS personnel arrive, and assisting Park District officials in reaching the emergency contact(s) of any injured person(s). Employees who suffer post-incident distress as a result of workplace violence should be referred to the Employee Assistance Program.

VI. Enforcement

Threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Any employee determined to have committed such acts will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Any employee or non-employee who engages in violent acts on Park District property will be reported to the proper authorities.

The Park District may seek a Workplace Order of Protection against any patron or employee who violates this Policy. Workplace Orders of Protection are handled by the Park District's Law Department.

VII. Investigations

Pursuant to [Chapter IV of the Chicago Park District Code](#), OPA is tasked with administering and enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance. OPA, in collaboration with Human Resources, other Park District departments and law enforcement agencies as appropriate, will conduct thorough, impartial, and independent investigations as necessary regarding alleged violations of this Policy. At the conclusion of an investigation, OPA will issue a report to the General Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer outlining the findings of the investigation. OPA's report may include recommendations – including recommendations for any disciplinary action or penalties for violations of this Policy.

As part of OPA's investigation, employees and other witnesses may be questioned concerning incidents of workplace violence. All Park District employees have a duty to cooperate and provide truthful information in all investigations conducted by OPA.

VIII. Additional Duties of Personnel

Managers and supervisors shall implement and maintain safe workplace practices, including

practices outlined in this Policy, and communicate this Policy to subordinates.

Employees shall report incidents of violence in the workplace or any potentially dangerous situation to their supervisors, to OPA, to Risk Management, and, where appropriate, to law enforcement authorities.

IX. Confidentiality & Protection from Retaliation

Consistent with the necessity of prevention and investigation of violence in the workplace, personal information obtained in the course of an investigation under this Policy shall be considered confidential and not subject to public disclosure except as may be necessary as part of the disciplinary process or as otherwise required by law.

Retaliation against a person for having made a good faith complaint or report of violence in the workplace or for aiding in an investigation of violence in the workplace under this Policy is prohibited. Any person who believes that they have been subject to such retaliation should contact the OPA by emailing OPA@ChicagoParkDistrict.com or calling 312-742-5OPA (312-742-5672).

X. Mental Health Supports for Employees

The Park District is committed to the wellbeing of its employees. All employees are encouraged to take advantage of available mental health and wellbeing supports, including:

Chicago Park District Employee Assistance Program

- All Park District employees have access to our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which offers free, confidential counseling among other services.
- Employees can call the 24-hour EAP free hotline for support: 877.215.6614 or visit www.wseap.com. The code is CPD.

Chicago Department of Public Health Resources

- The [Chicago Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#) has many resources to ensure Chicagoans have access to high-quality mental health services.
- To find a mental health center, visit the [CDPH Mental Health Centers](#) website.
- If you are unsure of what type of services you may benefit from, can call the Greater Lawn Clinic at **312-747-1020** for support. This service is free for all Chicagoans.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, please call a Crisis Hotline to receive immediate support

- Dial **988** for the National Suicide and Crisis Hotline
- Dial **708-681-4357** for the Chicago Department of Public Health Crisis Hotline