

<b>Chapter 8</b> <b>Violence and Harassment in the Workplace</b>
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**I. Goal & Purpose of the Policy**

It is an essential goal of STFD3 that all employees and reserve members feel safe and protected in their work environment. Unfortunately, in our world, it has become necessary to state the expectations of the organization with regard to violence and harassment in the workplace.

**II Violence**

Violent behavior shall not be tolerated. All employees and reserve members are subject to the following standards of behavior or may face disciplinary action for acting violently or failing to report acts of violence.

**A. Types:**

An act of violence may include, but is not limited to, violent acts, threats (direct or implied), unlawful harassment, verbal or physical abuse, stalking, intimidation, physical battering of objects (with or without an instrument), or other disruptive behavior.

**B. Prevention**

1. An important and positive investment in prevention is conducting a criminal background check on all new employees.
2. STFD3 shall strive to obtain accurate information regarding performance in previous employments on all potential candidates.

**C. Behavior**

**1. Warning signs**

All employees and reserve members are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate professional manner. The following are examples of behavior that are deemed unacceptable and should be reported immediately to the Fire Chief, Assistant Chief, or the Appointing Authority, in the absence of either Chief.

**2. Level One**

Report to superior. Superior shall closely monitor behavior, counsel employee, offer any EAP program services, recommend professional counseling. May include, but not limited to:

- a) Uncooperative with supervisors and co-workers.
- b) Belligerent toward patients, co-workers, or other people in the course of a workday.
- c) Abusive profanity
- d) Verbal assaults or bursts of anger
- e) Physical damage to or battery of objects; throwing, kicking or battering of objects in an inappropriate manner
- f) Unwanted or inappropriate sexual comments made (see Sexual Harassment Policy)
- g) Adamant objection and refusal to obey and/or constant undermining of fire district policies and procedures
- h) Increased absenteeism and/or lack of focus on the job.
- i) Employees meeting Level One behavior may be counseled or disciplined, however professional services, though encouraged, shall be optional.

**3. Level Two –**

**Action:** Report behavior to superior. Superior shall remove employee from workplace *immediately*, report to civil authorities. May include, but not limited to:

- a) Direct or veiled threats
- b) Written sexual or violent notes – intimidates verbally or physically.
- c) Carrying or storing a lethal weapon on STFD3 premises.
- d) Suicidal comments or threats
- e) Involvement in physical fights or assaults.
- f) Severe physical damage or battery of objects that escalates to be dangerous to people or property, even if the case is a near-miss situation.

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g) Stalking of any kind.

4. TAKE ALL THREATS SERIOUSLY – STFD3 shall treat all threats of any kind as a serious matter. No joking or pranks shall be tolerated in the matter of workplace violence.
5. Conflict resolution and domestic violence  
See **Appendix M** for Tips on Handling Conflict with patients, citizens or other emergency responders. See **Appendix N** for Tips on Domestic Violence.
6. Employees meeting Level Two behavior shall be subject to severe disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
7. If not terminated, professional help shall be required for employment continuation.

**D. Crisis Management and Intervention**

Should an act of violence occur, it is important to follow a plan of action.

1. Call law enforcement immediately via any means available.
2. Write down all the details involving the incident for accurate recall later. Include a precise description of the perpetrator, the incident times, the incident details, physical descriptions of the setting and description on possible witness, vehicles etc.
3. Media contact should be handled through the Fire Chief ONLY. (Refer to Media policy Ch. 2:III)
4. Refer all STFD3 members to EAP or other professional assistance.

**III Harassment**

STFD3 does not condone and shall not tolerate harassment of any kind to employees or reserve members. The following describes examples of, but is not limited to, types of behavior that shall be subject to strong disciplinary action.

**A. Sexual**

1. Unsolicited, nonreciprocal behavior by an employee who is in a position to control or affect another person's job status and who uses the power or authority of that position to cause that employee to submit to sexual activity or to cause that

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employee to fear that he/she would be punished for refusal to submit.

2. Unreasonably interfering with another person's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment which may include, but is not limited to:
  - a) Subtle pressure for sexual activity
  - b) Inappropriate touching
  - c) Demands for sexual favors
  - d) Physical assaults
  - e) Intimidating comments, messages, photos or other communication.
  - f) Frequent 'false' intrusions into bathroom or gender separate bedrooms.
  - g) Intrusion into private personal belongings.

**B. Hazing**

Coercing or forcing an employee to participate in any type of *member-originated* 'initiation' to a particular shift, station house or other group which may involve but is not limited to:

1. Feats of strength or endurance
2. Physical pain given or received
3. Tests of obedience to 'group' leaders
4. Showing lack of respect for a newly hired employee by repeated references to being 'probie', 'recruit', 'newbie', or any other term used in a way as to take away the dignity of the person or discredit them or without regard to any experience or training.
5. Performing acts of servitude or submission not associated with standard work duties and outside of the normal chain of command.
6. Any other act which may be perceived as *a forced act required to be done to belong to the group, clique, or faction.*

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7. If an employee feels that hazing has occurred, whether to himself/herself or to a co-worker, he/she is required to report it to the supervisor of the person responsible for the hazing.
8. The supervisor to whom it is reported shall address the matter immediately (within 3 days) and take appropriate corrective action to those involved.

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