



WADING RIVER FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

5.8 Workplace Violence Policy & Procedures

The Wading River Fire District has a long-standing commitment to promoting a safe and secure work environment that promotes the achievement of its mission of serving the public. All Fire District employees and volunteer firefighters of the Wading River Fire Department are expected to maintain a working environment free from violence, threats of harassment, violence, intimidation or coercion. While these behaviors are not prevalent at the Fire District, no organization is immune.

The purpose of this policy is to address the issue of potential workplace violence in the Fire District and Fire Department, to help prevent workplace violence from occurring to the fullest extent possible, and set forth procedures to be followed when such violence, or threats of violence has occurred.

POLICY

The Wading River Fire District prohibits workplace violence. Violence, threats of violence, intimidation, harassment, coercion, or other threatening behavior towards people or property will not be tolerated. Complaints involving workplace violence will not be ignored and will be given the serious attention they deserve. Individuals who violate this policy may be removed from Fire District property and are subject to disciplinary and/or personnel action up to and including termination, consistent with Fire District policies, rules and Department By-Laws, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities for criminal prosecution. Complaints of sexual harassment are covered under the Fire District's Sexual Harassment Policy.

The Wading River Fire District, at the request of an employee or volunteer firefighter, or at its own discretion, may prohibit members of the public, including family members, from seeing an employee or volunteer firefighter on Fire District property unless necessary to transact Fire District business. This policy particularly applies in cases where the employee or volunteer firefighter suspects that an act of violence will result from an encounter with said individuals.

SCOPE

All employees, volunteer firefighters, members of the public, vendors, contractors, consultants, and others who do business with the Fire District, whether at a Fire District facility or off-site location where Fire District business is conducted are covered by this policy. This policy also applies to other persons not affiliated with the Fire District such as former employees, former volunteer firefighters and visitors. When employees or volunteer firefighters have complaints about other employees, or volunteer firefighters, they should contact their supervisor immediately.

DEFINITIONS

1. Workplace violence is any behavior that is violent, threatens violence, coerces, harasses or intimidates another, interferes with an individual's legal right of movement or expression, or disrupts the workplace, the work environment, or the Fire District's ability to provide services to the public. Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to:

- A. Disruptive behavior intended to disturb, interfere with or prevent normal work activities (such as yelling, using profanity, verbally abusing others, or waving arms and fists).
- B. Intentional physical contact for the purpose of causing harm (such as slapping, stabbing, punching, striking, shoving, or other physical attack).
- C. Menacing or threatening behavior (such as throwing objects, pounding on a desk or door, damaging property, stalking, or otherwise acting aggressively; or making oral or written statements specifically intended to frighten, coerce, or threaten) where a reasonable person would interpret such behavior as constituting evidence of intent to cause harm to individuals or property.
- D. Possessing firearms, imitation firearms, knives or other dangerous weapons, instruments or materials. No one within the Fire District shall have in their possession a firearm or other dangerous weapon, instrument or material that can be used to inflict bodily harm on an individual or damage to Fire District property without specific written authorization from their Supervisor regardless of whether the individual possesses a valid permit to carry the firearm or weapon.

REPORTING INCIDENTS

- 1. General Reporting Responsibilities-Incidents of workplace violence, threats of workplace violence or observations of workplace violence are not to be ignored by an employee or volunteer firefighter of the Fire District. Workplace violence shall promptly be reported, in writing, to the appropriate Administrator (see below). Additionally, employees and volunteer firefighters are encouraged to report behavior

- that they reasonably believe poses a potential for workplace violence as defined above. It is important that all employees and volunteer firefighters take this responsibility seriously to effectively maintain a safe working and learning environment.
2. **Imminent Danger of Actual Violence**-Any person experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or actual violence involving weapons or personal injury shall call their supervisor immediately, or call 911.
 3. **Acts of Violence Not Involving Weapons or Injuries to Persons**-Any person who is the subject of a suspected violation of this policy involving violence without weapons or personal injury, or is a witness to such suspected violation, should report the incident to his or her supervisor, or in lieu thereof, to their respective law enforcement agency. The law enforcement agency will work with the Fire District on an appropriate response.
 4. **Commission of a Crime**-All individuals who believe a crime has been committed against them have the right, and are encouraged, to report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
 5. **Incident Reports**-The Fire District will report incidents of workplace violence consistent with the Fire District's policy for Incident Reporting.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Board of Fire Commissioners**-The Board shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The responsibility includes dissemination of this policy to all Fire District employees and volunteer firefighters, providing for appropriate investigation and follow-up of all alleged incidents of workplace violence, and ensuring that all Chief's and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities under this policy through internal communications and training.
2. **Chief**-The Chief is responsible for responding to, intervening, and documenting all incidents of violence in the workplace involving volunteer firefighters. The Chief will maintain an internal tracking system of all threats and incidents of violence.

The Chief is responsible for assisting a Law Enforcement Agency and his assistants in responding to workplace violence; facilitating appropriate responses to reported incidents of workplace violence; notifying the Law Enforcement Agency of workplace violence incidents reported to his office; and consulting with, as necessary, counseling services to secure professional intervention. Services that will result in an expense to the Fire District must be secured with the approval of the Board of Fire Commissioners and based upon District purchasing protocols.

The Chief is responsible for providing new volunteer firefighters with a copy of this Workplace Violence Policy and Procedures and insuring that employees receive appropriate training. The Chief will also be responsible for annually disseminating this policy to all volunteer firefighters.

3. Employees and volunteer firefighters-Employees and volunteer firefighters must report workplace violence, as defined above, to either the Chief or District Supervisor. Recurring or persistent workplace violence that an employee or volunteer firefighter reasonably believes is not being addressed satisfactorily, or violence that is, or has been, engaged in by the employee's Supervisor should be brought to the attention of the Chief, EMS Supervisor or Board.
4. The EMS Supervisor shall monitor and enforce this policy with all paid EMS Personnel. The Board shall be responsible for the enforcement of this policy as to all non-EMS paid personnel.

Employees and volunteer firefighters who have obtained Orders of Protection are expected to notify their supervisors of any orders that list Fire District Locations as protected areas.

Victims of domestic violence who believe the violence may extend into the workplace, or employees or volunteer firefighters who believe that domestic or other personal matters may result in their being subject to violence extending into the workplace, are encouraged to notify their supervisor. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

Upon hiring and appointment, employees and volunteer firefighters will receive copies of this policy. Thereafter, they will receive copies of any amendments to the policy. Additionally, the policy will be posted in the Fire District and be placed on the Fire District's website, as appropriate.

EDUCATION

The Chief and the Board are responsible for the dissemination and enforcement of this policy as described herein, as well as for providing opportunities for training in the prevention and awareness of workplace violence. Entry level training will be provided. Periodic refresher training will be provided as recommended by the Chief for employees and volunteer firefighters.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Fire District shall maintain the confidentiality of investigations of workplace violence to the extent possible. The Fire District will act on the basis of anonymous complaints where it has a reasonable basis to believe that there has been a violation of this policy and that the safety and well being of employees or volunteer firefighters of the Fire District would be served by such action. However, confidentiality must be balanced

by the due process hearing rights of employees or volunteer firefighters when disciplinary action is contemplated.

RETALIATION

Retaliation against anyone who in good faith has made a complaint of workplace violence, who has reported witnessing workplace violence, or who has been involved in reporting, investigation, or responding to workplace violence is in violation of this policy. Those found responsible for retaliatory action will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Adopted by the Wading River Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners on Monday, 05/29/2012.

Thomas Lateulere, Chairman
Timothy Deveny, Commissioner
Michael Harrigan, Commissioner
James Meier, Commissioner
John McManus, Commissioner