



Violence Protection

1.B.1.4

PURPOSE

This document explains the policy and plan of Lake Superior College (LSC) to prevent workplace violence. The policy and plan have been developed in accordance with State law. It is the goal of Lake Superior College to achieve a work environment which is free from threats and acts of violence, whether perceived or real. The College will work to provide a safe workplace environment for all employees, students and visitors. Each employee, student and visitor will be treated with respect and dignity. LSC will not tolerate workplace violence of any type, from any source, including threatening or violent actions by (a) employees, whether directed against students, visitors, or other employees; or (b) students or visitors, whether directed against employees or other students or visitors.

STATE LAW

In 1992, the Minnesota Legislature adopted the following into State statute (sections 1.50 and 15.90): The State of Minnesota 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. In furtherance of that policy, Minnesota Statute 15.86 mandated each agency of State government adopt a goal of zero tolerance of violence in and around the workplace. Each such agency was also required to develop a plan describing how the agency will seek to eliminate any potential for violence (a) in and around the agency workplace, and (b) affecting the attitudes and behavior of the people whom the agency serves or regulates.

DEFINITIONS

In 1994, the Minnesota Legislatures Violence Prevention Advisory Task Force endorsed this 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: (a) a violent act or threat by a current or former employee, supervisor, or manager, or someone who has some involvement with a current or former employee, such as an employees spouse, significant other, relative, or other person who has had a dispute with an employee; (b) a violent act or threat by someone receiving service from the agency; or (c) a violent act by someone unrelated to the

work environment. Violent acts are frequently the end result of longstanding disputes or unresolved arguments which can begin with a disrespectful comment or action and escalate to more serious levels of violence. A continuum of violence often begins with such acts as name-calling or other negative comments which progress to pushing, shoving, or shouting that can continue into physical assault. The complete workplace climate or environment must be assessed in order to prevent violence, rather than merely respond to incidents or violence in the workplace. Factors external to the workplace may impact the safety of the workplace environment, e.g., the spillover effects of family violence.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Supervisors and Administrators have a 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. Supervisors will ensure appropriate incident response resources are notified immediately when a threat is made or a violent incident occurs. They will also ensure appropriate disciplinary responses to workplace violence and aggression are made.

SECTION 1

It is the policy of LSC and the responsibility of its employees, students, and visitors to maintain a workplace free from threats and acts of violence. LSC will work to provide a safe workplace for its employees, students, and visitors. Each employee, student, and visitor with whom we come into contact in our work at LSC deserves to be treated with courtesy and respect. That 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. LSC will work, through information, training, and enforcement, to foster a work environment and culture that is devoid of violence for employees, students, and visitors. LSC's policy includes:

- LSC will actively work to prevent and eliminate acts of work-related violence.
 - Welcoming Environment: LSC will endeavor to create and maintain a work environment that is caring and supportive, and try to assist employees in positively resolving problems, losses, and/or other stressors that arise in their lives.
- LSC will clarify and enforce expectations regarding behaviors for employees, students, and visitors.
 - Conduct Codes and Discipline: Standards of conduct at LSC will be clear, communicated, and consistently enforced; and discipline will be used fairly, consistently, and appropriately to deal with instances of unacceptable behavior.
 - Leadership: All employees will be expected to promote positive behavior, and to lead by example in the zero tolerance of workplace violence.
 - Language and Behavior: LSC will not tolerate rude, offensive, insulting, derogatory, hateful, threatening, or violent language or behavior among its employees, students, or visitors, including, but not limited to, such things as name-calling; heated arguments; obscene language or gestures; throwing things; harassment; pushing; stalking; insulting or slighting comments; bullying; hazing; unjust or unwarranted exercise of power;

- negative racial or sexual comments; assault; inappropriate touching; carrying weapons; making fun of or showing disrespect for others; offensive, derogatory, or inappropriate references to others; or any other form of language or behavior which intimidates, is offensive to, or manifests hostility toward another, whether that language or behavior occurs on campus or at LSC functions away from the campus.
- LSC will respond promptly, positively, and aggressively to deal with threats or acts of violence. That response will include timely involvement of law enforcement agencies when appropriate.
 - Incident Response: LSC's Director of Security will be responsible for coordinating responses to violent or threatening situations in the workplace. The Director will
 - (a) assist in the development of training programs,
 - (b) serve as a resource referral agent and information source for supervisors and others with regard to workplace violence concerns, and
 - (c) respond as needed to incidents involving threats or acts of workplace-related violence. This will require the Director to
 - (a) perform situation assessments and evaluations,
 - (b) assist with attempts to de-escalate and properly manage potentially violent situations,
 - (c) facilitate and coordinate response actions of appropriate resources, both internal and external, and
 - (d) coordinate appropriate follow-up action, e.g., investigation, victim assistance, preventive and corrective actions.
 - LSC hereby adopts, and will work to enforce, a policy of prohibiting possession of firearms and other dangerous weapons in the workplace.
 - Dangerous Weapon Prohibition: Effective immediately, the possession of any dangerous weapon at LSC by any person, other than official firearms carried by a law enforcement officer, is strictly prohibited. Employees, students, and visitors are prohibited from possessing any dangerous weapon while on campus or at LSC off-campus events. The category dangerous weapon includes, but is not limited to: any weapon which, per applicable law, is illegal to possess; any firearm, loaded or unloaded, assembled or disassembled, including pellet, BB and stun guns (electronic incapacitation devices); replicate firearms, as defined in Minnesota Statute 609.713; knives, and other similar instruments, bows, cross-bows, and arrows; explosives and explosive devices, including fireworks and incendiary devices, and any other item commonly used, or primarily intended for use as, a weapon; any object that has been modified to serve as, or has been employed as, a dangerous weapon; or any other item considered in the professional judgment of the Director of Security to be, or have the potential to be, a dangerous weapon.
 - Incidents of work-related threats or acts of violence will be treated seriously by LSC. Reports of all such acts will be promptly investigated, and management will take appropriate and necessary action to address each incident.
 - Incident Reporting: All incidents of threats or acts of violence are to be immediately reported to the area supervisor and the Director of Security. Reports must fully detail the specific incident and identify all persons involved, including witnesses. All reports will be fully investigated by the Director of Security, who will provide a full report to LSC's president, including a follow-up on the response action taken.
 - Critical Incidents Stress Debriefing: LSC will develop and implement procedures for dealing with critical incidents, i.e., any incident

(a) involving an employee which results in death or substantial bodily harm to an employee or member of the public,
(b) in which deadly force, as defined in Minnesota Statutes 609.066, Subdivision 1, is used by or against an employee, or
(c) deemed serious enough by circumstances to warrant investigation and review. All critical incidents will be reported to the immediate supervisor and the Director of Security, who will follow the reporting procedures for violent acts. The critical incidents procedures will also include appropriate responses, e.g., leave, counseling, relocation or reassignment.

- LSC will take strong disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from State employment, against employees of LSC who are involved in the commission of work-related threats or acts of violence.
- LSC will support criminal prosecution of those who threaten or commit work-related violence against its employees, students, or visitors.
- Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 15.86, this policy does not create any civil liability on the part of the State of Minnesota.
- LSC will provide information and training for employees, students, and visitors to foster a work environment that is safe, respectful, proactive, and responsive to threats or acts of violence.
 - Staff Training: All employees will be provided with training in how to deal with workplace-related threats and acts of violence. That training will focus on threat awareness; identifying, preventing, and de-escalating violence; appropriate responses to threats and acts of violence; and identification of resources which are available for use once a potential problem has been identified or an incident has occurred. Assessment of additional training needs for employees will be made upon request by the area supervisor, and appropriate training programs will be developed and presented. Other training and information that foster a positive work environment, such as stress reduction, conflict management, and confronting and dealing with unacceptable behavior, will be made available.
 - Employee Counseling and Assistance: LSC will encourage use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), an assessment, short-term, counseling and referral agency. While supervisors, union representatives, or family members may encourage employees to seek help from EAP, the decision to use the services is voluntary. Employees may also choose to seek assistance from private health services to deal with pressures, stress, emotional problems or other personal issues which could, if ignored, lead to threats or acts of violence.
 - Safety Promotion: Information and instruction will be provided or posted for employees, students, and visitors regarding appropriate responses to potential safety threats, e.g., evacuation routes in the event of fire or other emergency. An afterhours policy will be developed and disseminated to all employees, detailing essential security and safety measures. A parking lot escort service has been implemented and posted for all students and employees.
 - Valuing and Respecting Diversity: It is LSC'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 (a) submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of an individuals employment, (b) submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such an individual, or (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employees performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Harassment and discrimination are serious concerns, incidents of which may, if not corrected, result in workplace violence. The Administration will treat reports of harassment and discrimination seriously; complaints will be promptly investigated; and, if necessary, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Date Proposed: October 13, 1998

Date Implementation: March 4, 1999

Signature of College President

Date