

Subject: **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

Date: April 28, 2005

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Replaces Policy Dated: September 6, 2000

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for Pinal County employees regarding unacceptable behaviors in the workplace

STATEMENT OF POLICY: It is the intent of Pinal County to provide a safe workplace for all employees. Behavior that is physically or verbally threatening, either overtly or implicitly, as well as behavior that is coercive, intimidating, violent or harassing will not be condoned. Pinal County is committed to working with its employees to maintain a work environment that is free of violence and intimidation.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all Pinal County full time, part time, temporary employees, volunteers, contractors, or the public on County premises.

DEFINITIONS: For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Workplace Violence: Intimidation threats or acts which adversely affect employee morale or employee/departmental performance or which results in physical, emotional and/or property damage.

Threat: Any behavior physical or verbal, either overt or implicit, which communicates an intent to cause physical, emotional or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the ability to carry it out and without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional, or future.

Physical Attack: Unwanted or hostile physical contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing, shoving, or throwing objects.

Property Damage: Intentional or unintentional damage to property, which includes property owned by the County or employees.

Intimidation: Stalking or engaging in actions intended to coerce or induce duress. Such actions can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions, the use of profanity or other personally insulting remarks, whether made by telephone, voice mail, face-to-face, in writing, or via e-mail.

All employees must be aware that certain conduct is not permitted in the workplace. Engaging in such behavior will result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge, and in some circumstances, criminal prosecution. Threats, violence, or any other behavior defined above, in the workplace, represents conduct that will not be tolerated. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises.

PROCEDURE: If any employee observes, or has information regarding violent, threatening, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior, such as those listed above, by anyone on County premises, they are to report it immediately to a supervisor or manager. If you are uncertain about an observed behavior or situation, or have questions or concerns regarding workplace violence, advise your supervisor, manager or contact the Human Resources Department immediately. This does not eliminate the initial responsibility of every employee to work to resolve conflicts promptly and, if possible, without the need for external, or management intervention.

Employees can also help to prevent violence in the workplace by reporting any suspicious behavior that they observe that could contribute to violence in the workplace.

If a conflict is brought to the attention of management, it is management's responsibility to conduct an immediate assessment of the circumstances, which may include the notification of Human Resources, and/or law enforcement intervention. In some instances it may be appropriate for the County to pursue an injunction prohibiting workplace harassment under the provisions of A.R.S. 14 § 1810.

There are situations where the relationship between employees, an employee and management, or an employee and a member of the public results in strong negative feelings between the individuals involved. Any person involved in such a situation which causes fear of physical retaliation, should immediately bring the situation to the attention of management. This includes a situation where someone (including friends or family of an employee) has made verbal threats of physical violence.

INDICATORS: Indicators of increased risk of violent behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Direct or veiled threats of harm;
- Intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior;
- Numerous conflicts with supervisors or other employees;
- Statements showing a fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating the approval of the use of violence to solve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides;
- Statements indicating desperation (over family, financial issues, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide;
- Drug/alcohol abuse;
- Bringing a weapon to the workplace, brandishing a weapon in the workplace, making inappropriate references to guns, or a fascination with weapons;
- Extreme changes in behaviors.

Advise your supervisor, manager, or Human Resources if you become aware of any of these indicators.

Harassing, obscene, threatening or annoying telephone calls

Any employee who receives a harassing, threatening, obscene or annoying telephone call while on the job should follow the procedure outlined below. If the call has been recorded on the County voicemail system do not delete the message.

- Report the incident to the local Police Dept, get a Police Report number and contact Human Resources with the details of the call and the report number.
- Call the Qwest Annoyance Calls number at 800 582-0655 and report the incident and the Police Report number.
- Qwest will then be authorized to put a trap on calls to the affected number.
- If another Annoyance Call comes in, report it to Qwest at the above number.
- Qwest will investigate and report back to the Police Dept.