



## Policy HR 14.9 Violence Prevention

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees: 01/24/2013

NOLS will not tolerate violence in the workplace by employees, volunteers or patrons. Employees who violate this policy shall be subject to prompt and appropriate discipline up to and including termination of their employment. In addition, the employee may be subject to penalties or criminal charges under Washington State law.

### I. Definitions

Workplace violence is defined as threats or threatening behavior that may be demonstrated in the workplace as follows:

- a. Assault – a physical or verbal attack;
- b. Physical harassment – a threat to do harm to another individual's physical or mental health or safety, with the intent to alarm the targeted individual, including but not limited to physical gestures of hitting, stabbing, or cutting one's throat, obscene phone calls, stalking, or unlawful coercion;
- c. Verbal assault or harassment – a verbal threat toward persons or property, the use of vulgar or profane language toward a person, disparaging or derogatory comments or slurs, offensive sexual flirtations and proposition, verbal intimidation or name-calling; and
- d. Visual harassment – posters, cartoons, publications, including electronic; drawings or similar materials that are intended to be derogatory or offensive, or threatening, other than those necessarily encountered during the normal course of working in the Library with patrons using the Internet and/or library materials that might be considered offensive by the individual employee.

Workplace is defined as the building, work area where the principle part of the work is performed, parking lots or any location where NOLS employees conduct official Library business.

Dangerous weapons are defined as any devices or implements designed, intended or used as an instrument for inflicting bodily injury including, but not limited to, firearms, swords, spears, javelins, knives, daggers, switchblades or any other edged or pointed cutting blade in excess of 3 inches in length; bows, bats, sticks, saps, brass knuckles or any similar striking or clubbing implement; explosives and explosive devices, and any device discharging a chemical designed or intended to incapacitate persons.

Legal protection is defined as a restraining order as directed by the Court that prohibits a potentially violent perpetrator from having contact with the intended victim. Any NOLS

employee that has secured a restraining order is encouraged to disclose information about the restraining order to the Library Director or designee so security measures can be taken to protect the individual, his/her colleagues, volunteers and Library patrons.

*Fit-for-duty* shall mean a medical or psychological exam of an employee that is conducted by a licensed health provider when an employee's behavior threatens to harm others and causes the Library to question the employee's ability to function in a safe manner in the workplace. (Need Fit-For-Duty form in Appendix)

*Administrative leave* is defined as temporary removal of an employee from the workplace without loss of pay, benefits, or employment status. After a threat or incident of violence, an employee may be placed on Administrative Reassignment until it is determined the employee is safe to return to work, the investigation into the alleged misconduct is adequately investigated, or the workplace has been prepared for the employee to re-enter.

## **2. Policy Provisions**

- a. Any employee who commits or threatens to commit an act of workplace violence on NOLS property will be placed on administrative leave until the act of violence is investigated and appropriate steps have been taken to reduce the risk that any further incident of violence may occur.
- b. Any employee found to have committed an act of violence on or off duty, and on or off NOLS premises may be required to undergo a Fit-For-Duty examination by a licensed medical provider of the Library's choice and expense, to determine whether the employee poses any safety risk to him/herself, other employees, volunteers or patrons before the Library will consider the return of the offending employee.
- c. NOLS employees are prohibited from bringing onto Library facilities or property, or having on their person, any form of dangerous weapon. Dangerous weapons are defined in Section I of this policy.
- d. Any NOLS employee who is victimized by an act of violence will be provided support in the form of education, assistance from the Employee Assistance Program, and leave from work in accordance with applicable laws.

## **3. Reporting an Incident of Violence**

Any NOLS employee who is a victim of violence in the workplace, has been threatened with an act of violence, has witnessed a threat or incident of violence, or has witnessed the presence of a dangerous weapon in or on Library property, is responsible for immediately reporting the matter to their supervisor.

Should the threat or act of violence pose immediate risk of harm to others (i.e., the employee is in the workplace), any employee or supervisor should call 911 immediately, and then contact the Library Director or designee.

If there is no immediate danger, the supervisor is still responsible for reporting the threat or act of violence to the Library Director or designee in the form of a completed Incident Report. The Director will determine next steps, including contacting local law enforcement.

#### **4. Investigation**

Any incident of a threat or act of violence is to be investigated by an individual selected by the Library Director or designee, who in turn will notify the applicable law enforcement agency. The criminal nature of the act of violence will be determined by law enforcement.

Separate from the criminal matter, the Library will investigate any incident of violence that occurs on Library property or in a location where library service is provided. During the investigative interview, the Library will respect the employee's procedural rights per labor law.

An employee found to have violated this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

No NOLS Board member or employee will retaliate against an employee that makes a good faith report about workplace violence.

#### **5. Administration**

All managers and supervisors are responsible for the administration of this policy.