

# VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

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## SUMMARY

This policy provides guidelines for responding to violence or threats of violence in the workplace. Section headings are:

- Policy
- Definitions
- Procedures
- Communication

## **1. POLICY**

Michigan Technological University is a diverse community that requires an environment of trust, openness, and physical safety where productive work, teaching, and learning can thrive. The University recognizes the necessity of protecting individual rights and encouraging free speech, but also recognizes that certain conduct can threaten the mutual respect that is the foundation of scholarly communities. This policy is intended to secure freedom of expression while maintaining the safe and cooperative environment that is vital to a university community.

This policy does not abrogate other policies, rights, and regulations set forth by the university. Further, federal and state laws and local ordinances will be enforced notwithstanding any provision of this policy.

At Michigan Technological University there is no place for threatening or violent behavior. Acts of violence include any physical action, whether intentional or reckless, that harms or threatens the safety of another individual in the work place. A threat of violence includes any behavior that, by its very nature, could be interpreted by a reasonable person as an intent to cause harm to another individual.

These behaviors by any member of the Michigan Technological University community are prohibited, and individuals engaging in these behaviors are subject to disciplinary procedures ranging from reprimand to termination or expulsion.

The policy shall be administered in accordance with procedures established by the Executive Vice President and Provost in consultation with the university Senate.

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

- a. Acts of violence include any physical action, whether intentional or reckless, that harms or threatens the safety of another individual in the workplace.
- b. A threat of violence includes any behavior that by its very nature could be interpreted by a reasonable person as an intent to cause physical or emotional harm to another individual.

- c. Workplace includes all University facilities and off-campus locations where faculty, staff, or student employees are engaged in University business.

### **3. PROCEDURES**

#### **General Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **a. In general:**

1. Any person experiencing or observing imminent violence should call Public Safety at 7-2216 or their on campus emergency number 123.
2. Any employee who believes a crime has been committed against him/her has the right to report that to the proper law enforcement agency.
3. If one of the parties is a non-employee, notify police immediately.

##### **b. Employee**

Each employee:

1. Should report any acts or threats of violence to his/her immediate supervisor or the Director of the Human Resources Department (HRD) at 7-1737 or the nearest member of management. Such reports will be promptly and thoroughly investigated.
2. Should notify his/her supervisor of any restraining orders against individuals that include the workplace.

##### **c. Supervisor**

The immediate supervisor:

1. Should respond to issues related to workplace safety.
2. Should contact the appropriate specialists, the Director of HRD, or Public Safety at 7-2216 or their on campus emergency number 123 in the event of a potential or actual incident.
3. Should promptly inform his/her supervisor and the Director of HRD at 7-1737 about any acts or threats of violence even if the situation has been addressed.
4. In the event he/she is advised of a restraining order, will contact the Director of HRD.

##### **d. Human Resources Department**

Director of HRD:

1. Consults and advises management regarding concerns about violent and potentially violent employees or others.
2. In the event of an act or threat of violence, investigates the incident and works with management, legal counsel, Counseling Services, and Public Safety to determine the appropriate action to be taken.

3. Gathers and maintains University-wide information on workplace acts or threats of violence.

**e. Counseling Services for Students and Employee Assistant Program (EAP) for Employees.**

Counseling Services or EAP can:

1. Provide confidential counseling services to any student/employee desiring assistance with situations relating to anger or threats or violence in the workplace.
2. Provide educational, emotional support and consultation to groups and individuals who are victims, observers, or otherwise adversely affected by a violent incident or threat.
3. Provide consultation to management on evaluating the potential for violence by employees.

**f. Public Safety**

Public Safety Director/Officers:

1. Public Safety will take appropriate law-enforcement actions.

**g. Threats of Violence**

Responsibilities:

1. The employee should immediately report the incident to his/her supervisor.
2. The supervisor should call the Director of HRD at 7-1737 as soon as possible.
3. The Director of HRD, along with the supervisor, conducts an investigation of the alleged threat, including interviewing any witnesses.
4. Based on the finding of the investigation, appropriate action, disciplinary or otherwise, is taken. Each situation is different and should be addressed case-by-case. Depending on the severity, the appropriate amount of discipline will be determined, following the current practice of progressive discipline.

**h. Acts of Violence Not Involving Injuries or Weapons**

Responsibilities:

1. The employee should report the incident immediately to his/her supervisor.
2. The supervisor should notify the appropriate Human Resources representative as soon as possible.
3. The Director of HRD coordinates, if appropriate, with the Director of Counseling Services and/or EAP counselors for intervention, consultation, or referral for clinical evaluation or treatment. The Director of HRD conducts an independent University investigation of the incident and, in conjunction with management, takes appropriate action, disciplinary or otherwise. Each situation is different and should be addressed case-by-case. Depending on the severity, the appropriate amount of discipline will be determined, following the current practice of progressive discipline.

**i. Acts of Violence Involving Injuries or Weapons**

Responsibilities:

1. Any person observing an incident should call Public Safety at 7-2216 or their on campus emergency number 123 first, then, notify local management.
2. Local management should attempt to ensure the safety of other employees.
3. Management or employees should not intervene unless, in their best judgment, (a) the situation is too critical to wait for law enforcement officials and, (b) they believe intervention would be successful.
4. After the incident, the Director of HRD takes the lead for the University in conducting an independent investigation into the incident and, in conjunction with management, takes appropriate action, disciplinary or otherwise. Each situation is different and should be addressed case-by-case. Depending on the severity, the appropriate amount of discipline will be determined, following the current practice of progressive discipline.
5. If necessary, the Counseling Services and/or EAP counselors arrange to work with victims and observers of the incident.

**4. COMMUNICATION**

HRD with Public Safety will be responsible for appropriate communication and rumor control within the University Community.