

# Broome County Workplace Violence Program

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## Broome County Workplace Violence Prevention Program

Broome County Government promotes a safe work environment through a comprehensive Workplace Violence Prevention Program. This program is designed to prevent, deter or minimize, acts of violence within the workplace and provides employees with the tools necessary to respond to these acts through the resources encompassed within the program. Broome County is committed to maintaining a safe work environment and any act of violence, threat, intimidation, harassment or other disruptive behavior occurring within the workplace by or against County employees is a violation of our policy and will not be tolerated. All employees are encouraged to promptly report any violation of this policy so that immediate and reasonable action may be taken. The workplace violence prevention program includes the following components:

- Workplace Violence Prevention Policy
- Management commitment and employee involvement
- Risk Evaluation and Hazard control
- Employee training
- Record keeping and Program evaluation

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY STATEMENT

Broome County Government is committed to the safety and security of our employees. Any incident of workplace violence is a violation of our policy and presents a serious occupational safety hazard to our Departments, staff, and the customers we serve. Workplace Violence is defined as any physical assault or act of aggressive behavior occurring where a public employee performs any work-related duty in the course of his or her employment and which acts would give an employee reason to perceive or legitimately fear or expect bodily harm. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Physical assault
- Wrongful physical contact without consent
- Intentional display of force
- Making a threat (verbal or non-verbal)
- Stalking behavior

Any reported violation of this policy against an employee occurring in the workplace, while performing a work-related duty or that arises from an employment situation will be thoroughly investigated. If warranted, any violation of this policy involving an employee may additionally be referred to Law enforcement authorities for any appropriate action.

The workplace violence prevention program is designed to promote the safety and well-being of all individuals within Broome County worksites. Each employee is responsible for creating an environment of mutual respect for coworkers, customers and visitors by following established County policies, procedures and practices that support a safe and secure work environment.

Employees are encouraged to promptly notify the designated contact person below by completing a Broome County Incident Report and providing a detailed account of any violent act or threatening behavior they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. Any reported incident of violence or threatening behavior will be responded to immediately upon notification. Broome County's Workplace Violence Policy Statement is available to all employees on the intranet under HR and is posted on all employee bulletin boards at each worksite.

**Contact Person: Thomas Behan**  
**Department, Title: Personnel Officer**  
**Email, Phone: [Thomas.behan@broomecounty.us](mailto:Thomas.behan@broomecounty.us) (607) 778-2222**

## **DEFINING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND THE WORKPLACE**

New York State Labor Law 12 NYCRR Part 800.6 Public Employer Workplace Violence Prevention Programs defines Workplace Violence as “Any physical assault or acts of aggressive behavior occurring where a public employee performs any work-related duty in the course of his or her employment including but not limited to”:

- (i) An attempt or threat, whether verbal or physical, to inflict physical injury upon an employee;
- (ii) Any intentional display of force which would give an employee reason to fear or expect bodily harm;
- (iii) Intentional and wrongful physical contact with a person without his or her consent that entails some injury;
- (iv) Stalking an employee with the intent of causing fear of material harm to the physical safety and health of such employee when such stalking has arisen through and in the course of employment.

New York State Labor Law Article 2, Section 27-b defines the workplace as “any location away from an employee’s domicile, permanent or temporary, where an employee performs any work-related duty in the course of his or her employment by an employer.” In addition to worksites these locations can also include county parking areas, off site locations, and traveling to and from work assignments. Broome County employees perform their duties at four (4) primary locations to include:

- County facilities
- Other government and non-profit sites
- Customer private residences
- Other authorized off-site locations

## **CATEGORIES OF VIOLENCE**

Broome County's workplace violence prevention program recognizes the relationship between the aggressor and victim and employs mitigation efforts to combat any risk associated with each type. Research has shown that the aggressors of workplace violence incidents are categorized as follows:

1. **Criminal intent-**  
Violent acts by criminals who have no other connection with the workplace but enter to commit a robbery or other crime.
2. **Customer/client-**  
Violence directed at employees by customers, clients, patients, students, inmates or any others whom the public employer provides a service to.
3. **Worker-on-worker-**  
Violence against co-workers, supervisors, or managers by a present or former employee.
4. **Personal relationship-**  
Violence in the workplace by another person who is not an employee but has a personal relationship with an employee.

## **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION CONTROL MEASURES**

The Broome County workplace violence prevention program utilizes a combination of the following control measures throughout our facilities as a comprehensive multi-layered approach to reduce acts of workplace violence and promote a safe work environment.

### **Engineering Controls**

A primary strategy of the prevention program is to restrict access to staff, and to internal or sensitive areas. This is accomplished using physical devices to include access control, employee identification credentials, video surveillance, video, audio door entry systems, intrusion, duress systems, and strategically deployed uniformed Security Officers. Structural modifications used to further restrict unauthorized access include counter tops, cubicles, partitions, doors, barriers, and screening checkpoints. Other devices including internal telephones, email, County-issued cell phones, e-tablets, MCT's, NYALERT, two-way handheld radios, public address, fire and CO2 systems promote additional safety measures for staff in the workplace.

### **Work Practice Controls**

Broome County has adopted administrative policies and procedures that aid in the prevention of workplace violence incidents. The Broome County Safety Committee, incident report form, incident report management system, processes to analyze reported data, and the employee network (ENI) all support the workplace violence prevention program. Broome County facilities also establish protocols and practices that promote workplace safety include defined reception areas, designated interview areas, unobstructed aisles, stairways, exits, clear desk practices, and visitor escort policies. Additionally, other planning tools promoting workplace safety include County wide Emergency Action Plans, COOP-COG, Event Action Plans, the posting of emergency numbers, floor plans, emergency evacuation routes, and conducting routine practiced emergency evacuation drills.

### **Behavioral Controls**

Broome County policy requires that all employees, interns and volunteers are provided workplace safety training at time of orientation. Employees assigned to various work sites are trained on any identified site-specific safety risks and mitigation methods by the appropriate supervisory personnel. In addition to these initial training programs, all employees are required to self-review the Workplace Violence Prevention training program on an annual basis. The training program encompasses staff's ability to recognize the potential for violence, and methods to defuse or de-escalate potentially violent situations through non-violent responses and conflict resolution. In addition to these strategies, staff is also trained on the proper use of deployed engineering controls, work practices, personal protection equipment, and any other safety devices available to them while performing their duties.

## **MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT AND EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT**

The Broome County workplace violence prevention program promotes the safety and well-being of all people within our workplace. All employees are responsible to maintain an environment of mutual respect for each other as well as for clients and visitors by following the established Broome County policies, procedures and practices.

Any reported violations of this policy or acts of violence against any employee will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action will be taken, including involving law enforcement authorities when warranted. Broome County encourages all staff to promptly report any violent incidents or threatening behavior they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. All reported incidents of violence or threatening behavior will be responded to immediately.

Broome County has developed and implemented the workplace violence prevention program to meet the requirements of New York State Labor Law Article 2, Section 27-b with full participation of the authorized employee representatives. The collective bargaining unit representatives will participate in the following:

- Evaluating the physical environment and determinations
- Assist in developing the Workplace Violence Prevention Program
- Annual review of workplace violence reports or after a serious incident to analyze statistics, identify trends in the types of incidents reported, and evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation actions taken.

## RECORDS EXAMINATION

Broome County Government maintains a comprehensive reporting system for all staff to utilize in the event they report any violent incidents, threatening behavior, threats they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. The Broome County General Incident Report form is readily available to all employees at their worksite, at the Department of Personnel, and in the HR section on the Broome County intranet. Staff have received training on the proper reporting protocols as well as in the use of the reporting form. All written and submitted reports are received in the Department of Personnel and will be recorded into the Security Division incident management system where the data will be retained.

Broome County Security Division will forward a statistical compilation of any reported incidents to the Broome County Safety Committee each quarter for review in accordance with the established protocols. Any incident deemed “critical” will be reviewed by the committee in executive session. In addition to quarterly meetings, the Safety Committee will meet with the authorized employee representative bargaining unit(s) for an annual review of statistical records compiled. The Safety Committee review processes will consist of the following:

- Discuss, evaluate and analyze the reported incidents to determine if a hazard is present that place staff at a risk of workplace violence. If a hazard is identified, determine any practical mitigation effort(s) that can be employed.
- Discuss, evaluate, and analyze a review of accident and injury reports compiled by the Department of Risk and Insurance to identify any injury that may have resulted from a workplace violence incident.
- Discuss, evaluate, and analyze statistical data of past reported workplace violence incidents to identify any trends or patterns occurring in the workplace.
- Review and discuss the risk evaluation and the mitigation efforts identified in completed physical site assessments of County facilities.



## **BROOME COUNTY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

The Broome County Safety Committee was established by executive order **XXXX** and serves to coordinate county safety policy, review critical incidents, implement safety measures, and establish training at the worksite level. The Broome County Safety Committee consists of:

- Risk Manager
- Personnel Officer
- Director of Public Health
- Commissioner of Public Works, Parks, and Youth Services
- Director of Security

The duties of the Committee consist of:

- Meet at least quarterly
- Review all critical incidents in executive session
- Oversee all county worksite safety teams
- Evaluate County worksites to identify the presence of any workplace violence factors that staff may encounter or be exposed to while performing their duties.
- Develop, implement and maintain a written workplace violence prevention program.
- Monitor compliance with the New York State workplace violence prevention Law, NYS Labor Law 27-b
- Conduct any further duties or reviews as directed by the County Executive as it relates to workplace safety.

## **WORKPLACE RISK EVALUATIONS AND DETERMINATIONS**

The Broome County workplace violence prevention program includes an onsite security risk analysis performed at each primary County facility and at other County work sites as practical or warranted. These reviews are documented on the Broome County site assessment log and focus on work practices within the defined workplace to identify any workplace violence factors that staff may be exposed to as a result of an employment situation. These onsite reviews are coordinated through the Division of Security and include representatives from facilities, the Department, the employee representative bargaining unit(s), or other County designee as appropriate. The site assessment evaluation process includes:

- Meeting of all stakeholders to review the general work practices, current trends, and any documented workplace violence incidents or injury reports that have occurred at the worksite or to assigned staff.
- Observation of the facility exterior property, parking area(s), and immediate surrounding neighborhood to identify any conditions present that could be potentially harmful to staff or visitors. The evaluation also evaluates any shared use of the facility by other agencies to identify any conditions present that could be potentially harmful to County staff as a result of their operations.
- Observation of the facility interior focusing on public accessibility to secure or limited areas, workflow processes, customer interactions, and the effectiveness of the deployed engineering, work practice, or behavioral controls.
- Application of any practical mitigation effort to an identified condition present that could be potentially harmful to County staff.

## **EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS**

New York State Department of Labor has identified ten (10) employment situations that may place an employee at risk. In conducting evaluations of the designated Broome County worksites, specific attention was given to identify the presence of these factors while realizing that workplace violence can occur in any workplace setting. New York State Department of Labor defines typical examples of employment situations that may pose higher risks to include:

- Duties that involve the exchange of money
- Delivery of passengers, goods, or services
- Duties that involve mobile workplace assignments
- Working with unstable or volatile persons in health care, social service, or criminal justice settings
- Working alone or in small numbers
- Working late at night or during early morning hours
- Working in high-crime areas
- Duties that involve guarding valuable property or possessions
- Working in community-based settings
- Working in a location with uncontrolled public access to the workplace

## **COUNTY-WIDE EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS**

While the above employment situations may pose an elevated risk to staff, employees of multiple County Departments perform critical functions similar in scope where conditions may also be present that are potentially harmful to County staff. Employees representing the various Departments perform these functions while working on site or out within the community perform. The following identified employment situations are routinely performed by numerous County staff representing multiple Departments:

- Conducting administrative hearings within facilities.
- Providing home health care, meals on wheels, and other case management services.
- Conducting Probationer checks, field investigations, traffic control, or other Law enforcement action.
- Domestic violence and other personnel management issues.

## **EMPLOYEE INFORMATION AND TRAINING**

Broome County Government Workplace Violence Prevention Program requires that all employees, interns and volunteers are provided initial training at orientation while any location specific employment situations are conducted on site by the appropriate supervisory personnel. In addition to these initial training programs, all employees are required to self-review the Workplace Violence Prevention training program located on the Broome County intra-net annually. Departments will make accommodations for all personnel without intra-net access to review the training material at designated office locations. In addition to these trainings, The Division of Security may also conduct facility specific training sessions in response to an identified need or at the request of the Department. The Broome County Workplace Violence Prevention Program training curriculum includes the following topics:

- New York State Workplace Violence Prevention Act overview
- Broome County Workplace Violence Prevention Program overview
- How to and where employees can find information about the program.
- Broome County Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Statement.
- How employees can protect themselves, report threats or incidents, and suggest improvements to the program.
- Defining Workplace Violence and the Work site.
- How to identify potential aggressors and other reportable behaviors.
- Details of the risk factors identified in Broome County risk assessments.
- Training on dealing with potentially violent strangers, customers, patients, co-workers, inmates, understanding and initiating emergency plans of action.
- How to obtain assistance, medical care, and post incident crisis counseling.
- Overview of the privacy act and reporting of employee concerns to NYS DOL.

## **REPORTING METHODS**

Broome County Government encourages all staff to promptly report any violent incidents, threatening behavior, including threats they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. All reported incidents of violence or threatening behavior will be responded to immediately.

Any employee who experiences a harmful event, becomes aware of one, or receives a threat shall first consult his or her supervisor, notify Broome County Security as warranted, and then report the same to Broome County Personnel by completing and submitting a Broome County General Incident Report form. In any emergency, the appropriate Police, Fire, or EMS agency should be notified immediately by calling 911.

### **Emergency and Non-Emergency Situations**

The following procedures are designed to assist and guide an employee's response to an incident that they may have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. Any employee who reports an incident of workplace violence shall follow the emergency or non-emergency notification methods.

Non-emergency situations include acts, threats, or other behaviors that cause an employee fear of physical harm for themselves or another person but having determined that no immediate danger of being harmed is present, the employee should:

- Immediately notify their supervisor
- Notify Security of the incident
- Monitor the situation, apprise supervisor/security of developments, and follow emergency procedures if warranted
- Complete and submit a general incident report form to Broome County Personnel

Emergency situations including injury, assault, physical harm, or through an act, threat, or other behavior the employee believes there is an immediate threat of physical harm to them or another person the employee should:

- Immediately contact 911 for Police, Fire, and EMS
- Immediately notify others of the situation
- Monitor the situation, apprise supervisor/security of developments
- Complete and submit a general incident report form to Broome County Personnel

## **GENERAL INCIDENT REPORT**

Employees that report incidents of workplace violence whether in emergency or non-emergency situations are required to complete a Broome County General Incident Report form as directed and submit it to the Department of Personnel. The incident report form is located on the County intra-net, hard copy in Departments, or upon request from The Department of Personnel. The following information should be gathered and detailed upon submission of the report:

- Date and Time of the incident
- Employee name, Department, title, contact information, assigned location
- Location of occurrence
- Detailed description of the incident including any historical events
- Names of all individuals involved in the incident
- Names of any witnesses to the incident
- If Security, Police, Fire, or EMS were contacted
- Any action that was taken regarding the incident
- Supervisor name and contact information
- Signed, dated, and submitted to County contact

**Designated contact:**

**Broome County Department of Personnel**

**Thomas Behan, Personnel Officer**

**[Thomas.Behan@broomecounty.us](mailto:Thomas.Behan@broomecounty.us)**

**(607) 778-2222**

Employees will not be discriminated against for bringing forth a safety and health concern, for filing a complaint, or for participating in or causing any proceeding or inspection to this program.

# Broome County Government Workplace Violence Incident Report

**IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY CONTACT THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.**

Broome County Government is committed to providing a work environment free from violence for all employees and visitors. Any employee who experiences a harmful event, becomes aware of one, or receives a threat shall first consult his or her supervisor. The employee shall then report the same to the Broome County Department of Personnel at (607) 778-2222.

Time is of the essence – Do not delay reporting an incident because you do not have all the information. Any additional information can be provided later. Use multiple reports if needed.

## Victim's Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor Notified? Yes  No   
Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Offender's Information (Complete all that is applicable)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor Notified? Yes  No   
Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Witness Information

#1 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1 \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Incident Details

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

## Description of Incident (Use additional pages if needed)

Please Include - events leading up to the incident / specific language of the threat / specific details of the threat or act of violence / how the incident ended.

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## Additional Comments:

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Reporter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Reporter's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_