
VIOLENCE REDUCTION MANUAL



AUGUST 2015

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THREAT ASSESSMENT COMMUNICATION TEAM

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SECTION I

Introduction

Administrators, faculty, staff, and students often experience anxiety and confusion over what to do when they encounter potential or actual threats and acts of violence on campus. In an effort to take a proactive approach to preventing violence on campus and to help educate the University community, this manual has been created as a resource for administrators, faculty, staff and students on campus violence prevention, response, and the availability of resources.

The manual is a result of a collaborative effort between University departments including Human Resources, Life, Student Government Association, WVU Police, Environmental Health and Safety, the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program, General Counsel, and the Carruth Counseling Center. This manual not only focuses on West Virginia University's Violence and Deadly Weapon/Destructive Devices Policies, but it also recognizes and supports the following University statements and commitments:

University Violence Prevention Policy

http://www.wvu.edu/~adminfin/policies/facilities_policies/WVU-PS&TS-05.html

University

Deadly Weapons/Destructive Devices Policy

http://www.wvu.edu/~adminfin/policies/facilities_policies/WVU-PS&TS-03.html

BOG POLICY 44: POLICY REGARDING DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, SEXUAL & DOMESTIC MISCONDUCT, STALKING AND RETALIATION

<http://diversity.wvu.edu/ea/policies/policy-44>

Questions or comments about the contents of this manual, or training requests, may be directed to the Support Services Unit, Captain WP Chedester, at William.Chedester@mail.wvu.edu or 293-2677 (COPS).

SECTION II

Policy

The West Virginia University Violence Prevention Policy http://www.wvu.edu/~adminfin/policies/facilities_policies/WVU-PS&TS-05.html was approved on 9/10/98.

It states,

“Violent conduct, actions, or behavior directed to other University employees, customers, students, members of the public or University property that occurs during the course of an employee’s duties or on the basis of work-related issues during off-duty hours is prohibited. This includes actions, both verbal and physical, that threatens, harasses, coerces, or inflicts harm or damage.

All University community members should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Community members are expected to refrain from fighting, horseplay, or other conduct that may be dangerous to others.

All University community members should immediately report any incident (s) of potentially threatening, harmful or criminal behavior of community members, customers, or visitors that may affect the safety or security of others or property to their immediate supervisor or University official as appropriate. Suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor or WVU Police.

In emergency situations or criminal acts, the University Police Department should be contacted at **9-911 or 293-3136**.

This policy applies to the personal conduct of an employee while functioning in the course and scope of employment, whether on or off-campus, and to any off-duty violent conduct that adversely impacts a University employee’s ability to perform his or her assigned duties and responsibilities. The personal conduct of students involving actions in the community will be addressed under University Policies for Student Life, if University officials decide that University interests are involved. Student employees, including graduate students with assistantships, may also be covered under relevant employee policies.

It is intended that all useful management strategies be employed to identify and prevent incidents of workplace and campus violence, reduce the effects of violence on victims, and provide consequences to those who threaten or perpetrate violence. University managers, employees, and students are responsible for reporting indications of possible threatening behavior (<http://police.wvu.edu/Warning.cfm>) and must not be subjected to any acts of retaliation for reporting concerns.

The University will use available resources such as the Faculty/Staff Assistance Program, University Police, the Carruth Counseling Center, relevant offices within the Division of Student Life, the division of Human Resource Department, and applicable personnel and student programs and policies in responding to alleged acts of violence.

Definitions

Campus: Any location, either permanent or temporary, owned or leased by WVU. This includes, but is not limited to, Extension Services, divisional campuses, WVU farms, buildings, grounds, and surrounding perimeters, including the parking lots, field locations, classrooms, residence halls, alternate work or class locations.

Violence: Includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, threats, physical attacks, domestic violence or property damage and includes acts of violence committed by University employees, students, clients, customers, relatives, acquaintances or strangers against University community members on the campus, but does not include lawful acts of self-defense or the defense of others.

Goals of this Manual

1. Provide a clear definition of campus and workplace violence.
2. Provide some personal, job, and relationship factors associated with violence.
3. Identify how to recognize early signs of violence and to assess the potential of violence in a given situation.
4. Identify ways to prevent campus violence.
5. Explain what to do if confronted with violence.
6. Inform community members about what to do (both personally and professionally) after a hostile or violent encounter.
7. Inform community members about resources available to assist in preventing and/or responding to campus violence.

SECTION III

Program Responsibilities

The University shall:

- Endeavor to provide a reasonably safe and secure environment for University employees, students, and visitors.
- Share preventive measures.
- Hold perpetrators accountable.
- Provide assistance and support to victims.
- Work with at-risk students and employees and their supervisors to develop safety plans that address the specific risks they face.
- Ensure those that report hostile behavior remain free from retaliation.

University community members shall:

- Abide by the University and department policies and procedures.
- Abide by state and federal laws.
- Conduct themselves with courtesy toward colleagues and customers.
- Educate themselves and abide by all safety regulations and laws.
- Report any indication of possible hostile behavior.
- Make their supervisors, appropriate University officials, and the University Police Department aware of any court issued protective order that lists any University location as being a protected area. A copy of the order should be retained with the person in the event the order is violated and recent photograph of the individual for the police.

Supervisors/University officials shall:

- Abide by University and department policies and procedures.
- Abide by state and federal law.
- Conduct themselves with courtesy toward colleagues and customers.
- Educate themselves and assigned personnel on, and abide by all safety regulations and laws.
- Inform community members of the Violence and Deadly Weapons/Destructive Devices Policies and emphasize a zero tolerance stance.
- Establish a professional, supportive and fair working, living, and learning environment built on mutual respect, communication, and supportive of a team atmosphere in which problems can be aired and solutions identified and enacted.
- Ensure acts of hostile behavior are addressed and reported to the applicable Office.
- Ensure those that report hostile behavior remain free from retaliation.

SECTION IV

Violence Prevention Issues

Prevention - These preventative measures can be used to minimize the risk of violence:

- Departmental staff should work together to devise specific strategies for implementing safety and violence prevention guidelines.
- Careful and thoughtful management of people is the best tool to avoid incidents of violence. Handle problems with and between community members quickly, fairly, and consistently using standard University procedures by bringing in support units as needed.
- Maintain open lines of communication with community members. Keep all community members informed of pertinent issues. Conduct open meetings with staff when practical. Ask community members for safety suggestions and implement them as soon as possible.
- Lock doors that lead to non-public areas. Only lock non-public doors from the outside, so that emergency exits are functional.
- Design areas so that there is an unobstructed secondary escape exit, whenever possible.
- Coordinate all phases of the student suspension/expulsion process through the Office of Judicial Affairs; coordinate all phases of the employee termination process through the Division of Human Resources. Improperly handled suspensions/ expulsions/terminations can cause serious humiliation and anger.
- Plan ahead and contact the University Police for added coverage prior to a visit from an individual who is a known threat.
- Establish a code word/distress signal that can be used to convey the need to summon University Police officers.
- Take all threats of violence very seriously. Watch for and document the "warning signs." at <http://police.wvu.edu/Warning.cfm>
- Make use of all psychological counseling services available through the Carruth Counseling Center and the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program.

- Utilize available resources to conduct educational training programs.

SECTION V

Behavior Examples/Triggers/Warning Signs

The prevention of violence can be maximized by the careful observation of behavior. Specific stress factors, behaviors, and personality traits have been associated, after the fact, with almost every incident of violence. The presence of several of these indicators greatly increases the likelihood of violent actions. Most people will not just "snap." An escalating series of clues usually precedes an act of violence. The prevention of a violent outburst is greatly increased when the following warning signs are monitored.

- Boundary crossing includes an individual's pushing the limits of acceptable behavior and continual testing of established rules.
- Chemical dependence upon alcohol and/or drugs may agitate or create paranoia and aggressive behavior.
- Concentration problems such as difficulty recalling instructions, forgetfulness, repetition of errors and staring into space indicate a troubled individual.
- Depression causes nearly one in seven sufferers to commit a violent act either upon themselves or others. Symptoms of depression include; despair, ambivalence, slowed work pace, continually sad or blank facial expressions, withdrawal, self-condemnation and self-destructive behavior, hopelessness, helplessness, inappropriate guilt/shame, and poor personal hygiene.
- A history of violence, including domestic abuse, is the best predictor of violent behavior.
- Inconsistent work/academic patterns and attendance problems, including periods of very high and very low productivity or enthusiasm, as well as unexplained or improbable excuses for absences.
- Obsessive interest in weapons and violent incidents may be revealed in casual conversations, subscriptions to magazines such as Soldier of Fortune, and by preoccupation with hobbies such as marksmanship. An obsession with an impending apocalypse, or destruction of the world, is also common among unstable individuals.
- Obsession with job/coursework may cause a deeper sense of loss in the case of a poor performance review/grade or termination/suspension/expulsion. These individuals may be loners, having little else of importance in their lives.

- Pathological "blamers" cannot take responsibility for their own actions. They will not admit wrongdoing, even for minor mistakes, always blaming other people, the organization, or the system.
- Personality disorders can result in antisocial behavior such as repeated fighting and domestic violence. These individuals have little remorse about wrongdoing and will find ways to justify their violent behavior. Mood shifts, inappropriate anger, skillful manipulation of others, and preoccupation with self are indicators of personality disorder.
- Personal stress can result in aberrant behavior, excessive personal phone calls, desk pounding or throwing of objects, crying, lapses in attention, and general frustration with the surrounding environment. Debt, course load, romantic problems, separation, divorce, or the death of a relative can all cause excessive stress.
- A pattern of poor interpersonal relationships may result in belligerence, overreaction to criticism, and verbal harassment.
- Psychosis is a loss of contact with reality that may be manifested as paranoia, loss of association during conversations, flat facial expressions, extreme ambivalence, hallucinations, and poor insight, talking to self or bizarre delusions.
- Romantic obsession is a fixation upon and idealized romantic love for another person. Behavioral signs may include stalking, numerous phone calls, spying, and unwanted visits and gifts.
- Safety issues like recklessness and a sudden increase in accident rate reveal lapses in concentration and disregard for personal or other's safety.
- Unusual/changed behavior includes verbal outbursts, inappropriate remarks, and threats such as "they'll regret this." A series of escalating threats is a particularly important indicator of potential violent actions.
- Paranoia - irrational thoughts of being "set-up."

An employment/academic juncture is defined as a situation in which there is a major change in an employee/student's status or perceived status. This is usually a change that will be viewed as a negative action by the individual. Violence is more likely to occur during employment/academic "junctures" than at other times. The most common types of employment/academic junctures are:

- Job/academic reassignment
- Disciplinary action
- Downsizing/workforce cutbacks/reduced course availability
- Non selection for a lateral or promotional opportunity/academic program
- Termination/suspension/expulsion
- Work/academic environment deterioration

SECTION VI

Categories of Incidents

Battery, Intimidating, Harassing and Bias-Based Behaviors

BOG POLICY 44: POLICY REGARDING DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, SEXUAL & DOMESTIC MISCONDUCT, STALKING AND RETALIATION

"West Virginia University is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive culture by promoting diversity, inclusion, equality, and intercultural and intercommunity outreach. Accordingly, the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, marital or family status, pregnancy, veteran status, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, or gender expression in the administration of any of its educational programs, activities, or with respect to admission or employment. This Policy sets forth how discrimination, harassment, sexual and domestic misconduct, certain consensual relationships, stalking, and retaliation will be addressed by West Virginia University."

Behaviors may include, but are not limited to intimidation, harassment, bias based incidents, and other climate based incidents. The purpose of these behaviors is to cause fear. Often these incidents are not reported because it is not clear to the victims whether the behavior or act can be classified as a "crime." Examples of communities who might experience biased related incidents are: Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans-gendered and questioning individuals; People of Color; International students or employees; and People with Disabilities.

Examples of types of behavior include:

- Derogatory remarks
- Verbal harassment or threats
- Graffiti- written comments

- Vandalism of printed material (posters, flyers)
- Threats of physical violence
- Threats of exposure of sexual orientation/gender identity
- Physical assault/battery

While some forms of behavior do not fit the formal definition of a “crime,” they are violations of policies and regulations. The University encourages you to report these behaviors.

If you are a victim of this type of behavior, or you know someone who is/has been, there are a number of resources available. Whether it is to report the incident or to seek guidance or support, the following University resources are available:

Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (304) 293-5600 <http://diversity.wvu.edu/>

Division of Human Resources (304) 293-5700 <http://hr.wvu.edu/>

Student Center of Health - Carruth Counseling Center (304) 293-9355
<http://well.wvu.edu/ccpps>

WVU Police (304) 293-2677 <http://www.police.wvu.edu/>

Division of Student Life (304) 293-5611 <http://www.studentlife.wvu.edu/>

Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (304) 293-5590 <http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/fsap/>

Levels of Violence

Behaviors as well as responses vary in threat level and intensity. Below are examples of types of behaviors according to severity and possible responses depending on the actual behavior. It is important that all identified behaviors are addressed, as behaviors often escalate. Documentation is critical and responses may prevent future incidents.

Behavior (least severe)

- Refuses to cooperate with supervisor or University official
- Spreads gossip and rumors with the intent to harm others
- Consistently swears at others
- Consistently argues with coworkers, employees, or students
- Acts belligerently toward students or coworkers
- Makes bodily gestures that are threatening or abusive
- Throws items such as papers, telephones or other office equipment, although not aimed at anyone

Response

If the behavior is non-threatening physically (acts are not directed at a specific person and may be interpreted as “just blowing off steam”), the following responses are appropriate.

- Contact immediate supervisor, instructor, department head or other University official as appropriate.
- Documentation is critical as the problem may become an on-going issue.
- If a student is displaying the behavior, you may contact the Office of Student Conduct (304) 293-8111, the Student Life Office (304) 293-5611 or the Carruth Counseling Center (304) 293-4431 for students.
- For employees: refer to Human Resources-Employee Relations (304) 293-5700 extension 5 or the Faculty/Staff Assistance Program (304) 293-5590.

If the behaviors are threatening (**threats of physical violence or property damage**), then following responses are appropriate.

- Call the WVU Police at 293-2677
- Follow procedures for confronting an angry person (see page 13)

Behaviors (moderately severe from a threat standpoint)

- Argues increasingly with students, vendors, coworkers, and management
- Intimidates coworkers and/or students
- Refuses to obey University policies and procedures
- Sabotages equipment and steals property for revenge
- Writes sexual or violent notes to fellow students, coworkers, professors and/or management
- Verbalizes wishes to hurt fellow students, coworkers, professors and/or management
- Threatens to destroy University/Personal property
- Sees self as victimized by others.

Response

For behaviors that are non-threatening physically, the following options can be used to report the incident:

- Contact immediate supervisor, department head or other supervisor as appropriate.
- Documentation is critical as problem may become an on-going issue.
- If a student is displaying the behavior, the employee may contact the Office of Judicial Affairs or the Student Life Office.
- Refer to Human Resources-Employee Relations or the Faculty/Staff Assistance Program for employees or the Carruth Counseling Center for students.

Threatening--**When the behavior involves threats or acts of physical violence or property damage**, the following steps should be followed:

- Call the WVU Police at 293-2677 **immediately**:
- Contact immediate supervisor, department head or other supervisor as appropriate.
- Documentation is critical.
- Follow procedures for confronting an angry person (see page13)

Behavior (most severe)

- Recurrent suicidal threats
- Recurrent physical fights
- Destruction of property
- Use of weapons to harm others
- Commits murder, rape, and/or arson
- Employee or student is a victim of dating or domestic violence, sexual assault,
- Harassment, or stalking/cyber stalking
- Throwing items at people

Response

Threatening: When the behavior involves threats or acts of physical violence or property damage, the following steps should be followed:

- Call the WVU Police at (304) 293-2677 (COPS) **immediately**:
- Contact immediate supervisor, department head or other supervisor as appropriate.
- Follow procedures for confronting an angry person (see page 13)
- Refer to Human Resources-Employee Relations
- If a student, refer to Carruth Counseling Center and Student Life Office in the event of suicidal or homicidal thoughts
- If an employee, they may be referred to FSAP in the event of suicidal or homicidal thoughts
- Documentation is critical.

SECTION VII

Crisis Management

When confronted with an angry person:

During an event, use the following steps as means to attempt to diffuse the situation:

- Put departmental plan into action.
- Try to stay calm. Raising your own voice may increase the anxiety of the potentially violent person.
- Speak slowly, softly, and clearly to reduce the momentum of the situation.
- Ask the belligerent person to leave and come back at a time when they feel more calm.
- Move away from any objects, such as scissors or heavy objects, which may be employed as a weapon.

- Avoid challenging body language such as placing your hands on your hips, moving toward the person, or staring directly at them. Remain seated and do not turn your back on the individual.
- Position yourself, if possible, so that an exit route is readily accessible.
- Listen empathetically by really paying attention to what the person is saying. Let the person know that you will help them within your ability to do so or you will send for additional help.
- Remain helpful while you summon your supervisor for assistance. Sometimes, the opportunity to talk to a supervisor will help satisfy an irritated client.
- Neither agree with distorted statements nor attempt to argue - REMAIN CALM.
- Avoid defensive statements. This is not the time to place blame back on the enraged person.
- Ask questions to help regain control of the conversation.
- Ask uninvolved parties to leave the area if this can be done safely. Use the prearranged code word to alert your coworker to call University Police at 293-2677.
- Never challenge, try to bargain, or make promises that you cannot keep.
- Describe the consequences of any violent behavior.
- Do not physically touch an outraged person, or try to force them to leave.
- Calmly ask the person to place any weapons in a neutral location while you continue to talk to them.
- Never attempt to disarm or accept a weapon from the person in question. Weapon retrieval is only to be done by a University Police Officer.
- Observe Who, What, Where, When, and How for reporting purposes

Steps to take in violent situations:

- Recognize the reality of what is happening, remembering that it may seem unreal because it is so far removed from your normal experience.
- Remain calm and proceed in a logical, rational manner.

- Take shelter, assisting others if necessary and possible.
- Assess the situation in terms of the degree of threat, injury, or damage.
- Summon help as appropriate using the following guidelines.

IF the situation...

Is threatening in any way,

THEN...

Call for help as soon as possible: 9-1-1 or University Police at 304-293-2677 (COPS).

Make sure you stay on the line to answer questions.

IF the situation...

Includes injuries.

THEN...

Call 9-1-1 or 304-293-2677 (COPS).

Locate and support first-aid providers.

Send someone out of the building to wait for the EMS squad, and then direct them to the proper location, if possible.

Reporting an Incident by telephone:

- Tell the contact person
 - Your name
 - The exact location of the traumatic incident
 - Your telephone number and extension
- Give a clear, complete description of the incident
- Describe the condition of the victim(s) or offender, including whether the injuries are life threatening
- Identify any remaining hazards at the scene

- Remain on the line for further questions or instructions. DO NOT hang up until told to do so by the contact person

Help in an Emergency

An emergency is an urgent, sudden, or unforeseen situation that requires immediate action to protect life and/or property. There is a continuum of situations in which immediate help is needed, from situations that just “don’t feel right” to actual emergencies where, for example, someone is threatening to do harm to others or himself/herself.

IF the situation....

Is threatening or frightening, but not yet damaging to property or a life-threatening emergency

THEN...

Call assistance as determined by departmental policy, which is likely to be:

University Police 304-293-2677 (COPS) or 9-1-1

IF the situation....

Causes property damage or if there is immediate danger of property damage or of life-threatening behaviors or physical harm.

THEN...

Call University Police immediately! 304-293-2677 (COPS) or 9-1-1

Students/Employees-giving and gathering information

Supervisors, professors, and University officials can prepare community members for emergencies that include violence by:

- Giving the information below, and
- Gathering information on a personal data sheet

Community members should know

- Bomb threat procedures
- Departmental chain of command/protocol
- Student and Employee orientation handbooks
- Evacuation routes

- Basic listening skills and signs of stress in others
- Warning signals for violence
- How to promote awareness of the services provided by the Carruth Counseling Center and the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program
- How to create awareness of possible perpetrators who should not be allowed in work areas
- What steps to take to practice general safety

SECTION VIII

Resources

Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (304) 293-5600 <http://diversity.wvu.edu/>

Division of Human Resources (304) 293-5700 <http://hr.wvu.edu/>

Students' Center of Health - Carruth Counseling Center (304) 293-9355
<http://www.wvu.edu/~cocenter/>

WVU Police (304) 293-2677 <http://www.police.wvu.edu/>

Division of Student Life (304) 293-5611 <http://www.studentlife.wvu.edu/>

Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (304) 293-5590 <http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/fsap/>

Sexual Assault Prevention and Education (304)293-9355
http://well.wvu.edu/sexual_assault

WVU Police are available 24 hours/every day; in case of emergency call 9-1-1.