2.1.4 VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

A. Policy

Employees are the State’s most valuable resource and their safety and security are essential to carrying out their responsibilities. Every employee has a reasonable expectation to perform his/her assigned duties in an atmosphere free of threats and assaults. Recognizing the increasing incidence of violence in the workplace, the Governor of the State of Louisiana issued an executive order that workplace for state employees should be free of violence. Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport fully is committed to a violence free workplace.

B. Purpose

The purposes of this plan are to:

- direct implementation of effective security measures and administrative work practices to minimize exposure to conditions that could result in harm to state workers;
- promote a positive, respectful and safe work environment that fosters employees’ security, safety and health;
- require ongoing analysis of the workforce and each work site for hazard prevention and control.

C. Definitions

1. **Assault** is an attempt to commit a battery, or the intentional placing of another in reasonable apprehension of receiving a battery. (Example: I may have a stick raised and know that I have no intention of striking you, but, based on the circumstances, you have a reasonable apprehension that I plan to strike you.)

2. **Battery** is the intentional use of force or violence upon another; or the intentional administration of a poison or other noxious liquid or substance to another.

3. A **credible threat** is a statement or action that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the safety of him/herself or that of another person and does, in fact, cause such fear.

4. **Intentional** refers to conduct when the circumstances indicate that the offender, in the ordinary course of human experience, must have considered the criminal consequences as reasonably certain to result from his act or failure to act.

5. **Violence** is the commission of an assault or battery or the making of a credible threat.

6. The **workplace** is any site where an employee is placed for the purpose of completing job assignments.

7. **Workplace violence** is violence that takes place in the workplace.
D. Responsibilities

1. Managers

Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport shall comply with federal and state statutes, rules, regulations and/or guidelines in making reasonable efforts to:

a. hire, train, supervise and discipline employees;

b. intervene in situations of harassment in the workplace where the employer is aware of the harassment;

c. ensure employees and/or independent contractors are fit for duty, and do not pose unnecessary risks to others;

d. provide security precautions and other measures to minimize the risk of foreseeable criminal intrusion based upon prior experience or location in a dangerous area;

e. maintain an adequate level of security;

f. establish and implement a written policy and plan dealing with violence in the workplace;

g. provide employee training on the agency plan, warning signs of potential for violent behavior, and precautions which may enhance the personal safety of the employee at work;

h. warn an employee of a credible threat made by another to harm that employee;

i. support the application of sanctions and/or prosecution of offenders, as appropriate;

j. accommodate, after appropriate evaluation, employees who require special assistance following incident(s) of workplace violence;

k. cooperate with law enforcement agencies;

l. establish a uniform violence reporting system with regular review of submitted reports;

m. initiate procedures to protect from retaliation employees who report credible threats;

n. keep up-to-date records to evaluate the effectiveness of administrative and work practice changes initiated to prevent workplace violence.

2. Management Commitment

Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport’s management is committed, including the endorsement and visible involvement of top levels of supervision, to provide the motivation and resources to deal effectively with workplace violence, and includes:

a. organizational concern for employee emotional and physical safety and health;

b. commitment to the safety and security of all persons at the workplace;

c. assigned responsibility for the various aspects of the workplace violence prevention program to ensure that all supervisors and employees understand their roles and responsibilities;

d. allocation of authority and resources to all responsible parties;

e. accountability for involved supervisors and employees;

f. debriefing/counseling for employees experiencing or witnessing assaults and other violent incidents;
g. support and implementation of appropriate recommendations from violence prevention committees;

h. treat workplace violence, incidents, complaints and concerns with seriousness, keeping confidential all reports and the identification of parties, except to those who have a legitimate need to know and to the extent required by law.

3. Employee

a. Employees are required to report to the immediate supervisor and/or department head all threats or incidents of violent behavior in the workplace which they observe or of which they are informed. Examples of inappropriate behavior which shall be reported include:

- unwelcome name-calling, obscene language, and other abusive behavior;
- intimidation through direct or veiled verbal threats;
- physically touching another employee in an intimidating, malicious, or sexually harassing manner, including such acts as hitting, slapping, poking, kicking, pinching, grabbing, and pushing;
- physically intimidating others including such acts as obscene gestures, “getting in your face,” fist-shaking, throwing any object.

b. Employee involvement and feedback enable workers to develop and express their own commitment to safety and security and provide useful information to design, implement, and evaluate the program. At Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport employee involvement includes, but is not limited to:

- understanding and complying with the workplace violence prevention program and other safety and security measures;
- participating in employee complaint or suggestion procedures covering safety and security concerns;
- providing prompt and accurate reporting of violent incidents;
- cooperating with the safety and security committee that reviews violent incidents and security problems and makes security inspections; and
- participating in continuing education covering techniques to recognize and abate escalating agitation, assaultive behavior or criminal intent.

E. Workplace Analysis

The process of workplace analysis involves a step-by-step, common-sense look at the workplace to find existing or potential hazards for the occurrence of workplace violence. The workplace analysis entails reviewing specific procedures or operations that contribute to hazards and specific locales where hazards may develop. The workplace analysis program includes, but is not limited to: analyzing and tracking records; monitoring trends; analyzing incidents; analyzing workplace security.

At Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport the responsibility for conducting and maintaining workplace analysis is assigned to the University Police Department.

Workplace analysis for Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport shall be performed by the University Police Department and reviewed by the Workplace Violence Prevention Committee within 90 days of the publication of this policy.

F. Hazard Prevention and Control

After the completed workplace analysis is reviewed and approved, workplace
adaptations, engineering controls, administrative controls, and work practice controls shall be implemented by Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport to prevent or control, to the extent possible, any discovered hazards. If workplace violence does occur, the post-incident response and evaluation section of this policy (Section G) shall be implemented.

Engineering controls and workplace adaptations remove the hazard from the workplace or create a barrier between the worker and the hazard. Administrative and work practice controls affect the way jobs or tasks are performed and, therefore, affect the security of the workplace.

At Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport the responsibility for hazard prevention and control is assigned to Workplace Violence Prevention Committee.

**G. Incident Response and Evaluation**

Assistance for victimized employees and employees who may be affected by witnessing a workplace violence incident will be provided. Whenever an incident takes place, injured employees will receive appropriate medical treatment and psychological evaluation as necessary, in accordance with existing statutes. At Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport this assistance is provided through the Employee Assistance Program.

An employee who has been threatened or assaulted by another at the workplace will immediately report the situation to his/her supervisor. The supervisor to whom the incident is reported will immediately notify the University Police Department, appropriate Administrative Staff and Human Resource Management to discuss further action.

Written statements shall be obtained from all involved; including those who witnessed the incident. Concurrent with obtaining the written statements or as soon as possible thereafter, the University Police Department shall interview all parties to the incident, including victims, subjects and witnesses, and prepare written summaries of the interviews. The summaries shall be the basis on which to determine the facts of the event.

The following actions should be taken in accordance with the severity of the incident:

1. **The situation is not dangerous:**
   - separate employees involved and isolate until they are interviewed and their statements are taken;
   - separate witnesses until they are interviewed and their statements are taken;
   - document all actions and statements.

2. **The situation is dangerous:**
   - contact the University Police Department at 6165;
   - do not attempt to physically remove an individual (leave it to the University Police Department);
   - document all actions and statements.

**H. Records**

Records associated with violence in the workplace need to be kept in a permanent, secure, and confidential manner. It shall be the responsibility of the University Police Department to help evaluate security, methods of hazard control, and identity training
needs. The following records are important and shall be maintained in accordance with pertinent statutes as part of the violence prevention program:

a. reports of work injury, including workers’ compensation injuries, if necessary;
b. reports for each reported assault, incidents of abuse, verbal attack, or aggressive behavior occurring between persons in the workplace;
c. police reports of incidents occurring in the workplace;
d. minutes of safety meetings, records of hazards’ analysis, and corrective actions recommended;
e. violence in the workplace training, including subjects covered, attendees, and qualifications of trainers;
f. other appropriate reports.

I. Evaluation

Regular evaluation of safety and security measures affecting the violence prevention program shall be conducted at least annually. At the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-Shreveport this evaluation shall be the responsibility of the University Police Department.

The evaluation program consists of, but is not limited to:

• reviewing reports and minutes from staff meetings on safety and security issues;
• analyzing trends in illness/injury or fatalities caused by violence;
• measuring improvement based on lowering the frequency and severity of workplace violence;
• surveying employees before and after making job or workplace changes such as, installing security measures or new systems to determine their effectiveness;
• requesting periodic outside review of the workplace for recommendations on improving employee safety.

J. Communication

At Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-Shreveport we recognize that to maintain a safe, healthy and secure workplace, we must have open communication among employees, including all levels of supervision, on these issues. The open communication process includes but is not limited to:

• periodic review of this policy with all employees;
• discussions of violence in the workplace during scheduled safety meetings;
• posting or distributing information on violence in the workplace; and
• procedures to inform supervisors about violence in the workplace, hazards, or threats of violence.

The supervisor shall provide an appropriate place for employees to discuss security concerns with assurance that necessary confidences will be maintained.

K. Training and Education

1. At Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-Shreveport, all employees, including all levels of supervision, shall have training and instruction on general, job-specific, and work site-specific safety and security practices;
• training and instruction shall be provided within one year of policy implementation and regularly thereafter.
• training shall begin with orientation of new employees within three months of employment and regularly thereafter.

2. At Louisiana State University Medical Center-Shreveport, workplace violence training shall be the responsibility of the Workplace Violence Protection Committee.

3. General violence in the workplace training and instruction address, but are not limited to, the following areas:

• explanation of the violence in the workplace policy as established by Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-Shreveport;
• measures for reporting any violent acts or threats of violence;
• recognition of hazards including associated risk factors;
• measures to prevent workplace violence, including procedures for reporting workplace hazards or threats to appropriate supervision;
• ways to defuse hostile or threatening situations;
• measures to summon others for assistance;
• routes of escapes available to employees;
• procedures for notification of law enforcement authorities when a criminal act may have occurred;
• procedures for obtaining emergency medical care in the event of a violent act upon an employee;
• information on securing post-event trauma counseling for those employees desiring or needing such assistance.