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**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY  
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33601**

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**BOARD POLICY - SECTION NUMBER: 07.12.00.00**

**SUBJECT:** WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 22, 1999

**SUPERSEDES:** NEW

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**Purpose:** To establish a policy and procedures for the protection from workplace violence for classified and unclassified employees of the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator and the County Attorney and elected officials of the Board of County Commissioners. The County Administrator and the County Attorney may supplement this policy with policies and procedures that are not inconsistent.

**Policy:** Hillsborough County Government recognizes the need for a violence-free work environment for all County government employees and elected officials. The County will not condone, permit or tolerate violence in the workplace and is committed to maintaining an environment that has zero tolerance for all forms of violence, including verbal or physical threats as well as all forms of intimidation such as harassment or abusive language. Employees will report all threats and acts of violence, either physical or verbal, to a supervisor who is not the source of such action and to the Director of Human Resources. (See Attachment 1 for definitions).

**Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator and the County Attorney to prevent or defuse actual or potential violent behavior at work and to ensure compliance with the provisions of this policy within their respective organizations. All employees and elected officials, are responsible for using safe work practices, for following all relevant directives, policies and procedures, and for assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

Violence or the threat of violence, by or against any County employee or elected official is intolerable and contrary to this policy. The County will take any steps deemed necessary to protect its work force from violence.

Employees who commit or encourage violence in the workplace will be considered for serious disciplinary action, up to and including termination and possible criminal charges. Elected officials are subject to Article 4, Section 7 of the Florida Constitution that gives the Governor authority to suspend any County officer for inappropriate conduct or the commission of a felony. The County will fully cooperate with law enforcement personnel in the prosecution of anyone who subjects its employees or elected officials to violent acts or threats of violence.

Immediate threats of violence should be reported by calling the Tampa Police Department or Hillsborough County Sheriff at 911 and for the County Center and Court House Complex also to the Security Services Dispatcher at 272-5395. In addition, all threats, harassment, and violent acts that may impact the workplace, whether by co-workers or members of the public, must be promptly reported to the appropriate supervisory officials and Director of Human Resources (Attachment 2). If the Director of Human Resources is the source of the threat or act of violence,

report should be made to the Assistant County Administrator for Management Services, who will act in the place of the Director of Human Resources. Failure to report such behavior may result in disciplinary action. Employees who report in good faith, actual or threatened violent behavior, will not be subject to retaliation or harassment based upon their report. Individuals who report lies, false or malicious rumors or who use this policy to unfairly harm another are subject to discipline and civil law suit for their actions

**Procedures:**

1. Early intervention is crucial in assuring a safe and secure work environment and handling workplace violence situations. All reports of violence in the workplace are to be made on the form at Attachment 2, which are to be forwarded to the Director of Human Resources. Supervisors and employees are encouraged to seek assistance and consultation from the Human Resources Department. The Director of Human Resources or designee will be available at all times to ensure that resources such as the Employee Assistance Program, Employee Benefits, and other County personnel are coordinated in response to a report of an incident of workplace violence.
2. All incidents of workplace violence shall be expeditiously investigated by an experienced investigator obtained by the Director of Human Resources. For perpetrators who are employees of the County Administrator or the County Attorney or are elected officials of the Board of County Commissioners, the results of the investigation will be reduced to a written report and referred to an independent hearing officer obtained by the Director of Human Resources. This hearing officer will give the person accused of violating this policy notice of the allegations and any supporting evidence and an opportunity to respond thereto.
3. The hearing officer shall make a written report with findings and specific recommendations. For classified employees, the findings and recommendations will be forwarded to the employee's Appointing Authority for action, if any, deemed appropriate under Civil Service Rules. For unclassified employees, the findings and recommendations will be forwarded to the employee's Appointing Authority for action the Appointing Authority deems appropriate. For elected officials, the findings and recommendations will be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration of referral to the Governor.
4. Any person may refer an incident of workplace violence to law enforcement authorities at anytime. The Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator or the County Attorney may decide to suspend the hearing officer procedure set forth above in cases where such procedures would interfere with a criminal investigation.

**Approved By:** Board of County Commissioners

**Approval Date:** July 22, 1999

## **Attachment 1**

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Assault** - The intentional threat of use of physical force against another coupled with an apparent ability to carry out such threat and doing some act, with or without a weapon or dangerous instrument, which creates a well founded fear in the other person that such violence is imminent.

**Battery** - The intentional, unlawful, and nonconsensual touching of another person.

**Employee** - Any person employed by the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator or the County Attorney.

**Perpetrator** - 1. An employee or elected official inflicting acts or threats of violence on his/herself or another employee. 2. An employee or elected official inflicting acts or threats of violence on a third party. 3. A third party engaging in violent acts or threats against his/herself, an employee, an elected official, or another third party

**Third Party** - Any visitor to a County workplace, including a former employee.

**Workplace** - All property (including parking lots) owned by the County and any non-county property where work is being performed by County employees or elected officials in an official capacity for the County.

**Workplace Violence** - The attempted, threatened or actual conduct of a person that endangers or is likely to endanger the health and safety of an employee including, any threatening statements, harassment or behavior that gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee's health and safety is at risk.

**Weapon** - Any object used to threaten, injure, or kill.

**Attachment 2**

**Hillsborough County Government  
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

*This form is to be used to document and report all acts of workplace violence including physical and verbal threats. After completing this form, FAX to (813) 276-2197, Department of Human Resources, Attention: Director of Human Resources. Do not include any medical information on this form.*

**Employee Data**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Location(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (work/pager) \_\_\_\_\_  
Specific Job Function(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Threat Information**

Subject Data:  Employee  Former Employee  Non-Employee  Other:  
Type Data:  Act of Violence  Threat of Violence  Act of Sabotage  Other:  
Date & Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and/or description of perpetrator: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Description of Act or Verbatim Language of Threat:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Describe any additional comments made by the perpetrator or explanation of the threat or the workplace violence:

**Known Factors Which May Increase Credibility of Threat**

Financial debt                       Known to have weapons                       Obsessive behavior  
 Domestic difficulties                       Death of family member                       Previous violence or  
 Work related problems                       Significant behavior changes                      disruptive behavior

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_