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Communiqué

...a technical reference bulletin by the Risk Control
Services Department of the Glatfelter Insurance Group

Weapons in the Workplace – Risk Management for Management Liability / Employment Practices

Hospice and community care organizations must address concerns about weapons and violence in their work environments. At a time when nearly all states have passed concealed weapon laws, it is recommended that employers consider implementing a Weapons in the Workplace policy. Employers are responsible for taking reasonable measures to protect their employees and volunteers from workplace violence. This Communiqué offers risk management guidelines to implement and administer a Weapons in the Workplace policy fairly in your organization and generally protect against violence in the workplace.

Sample “Weapons in the Workplace” Policy

XYZ Hospice prohibits and does not tolerate weapons on XYZ Hospice property, or during any XYZ Hospice-related activity. Weapons include, but are not limited to, visible and concealed weapons, including those for which the owner holds the necessary permits. Weapons can include firearms/guns, knives or swords with a blade longer than three inches, explosive or chemical materials, or any other objects that could be used to harass, intimidate, or injure another individual, employee, volunteer, manager, or supervisor.

Employees or volunteers who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including employment termination.

Reporting Procedure

Any employee or volunteer who is subject to, or observes, violent behavior or a threat of violent behavior, a firearm or other weapon, or any situation that appears to be potentially dangerous, must immediately report such action to his/her supervisor, department director, human resources department, or administrator. The reporting person is not required to directly confront the person who is the source of the report, question, or complaint before notifying any of the individuals listed. Nevertheless, the reporting person is required to make a reasonable effort to report policy violations or make workplace violence or threats of violence known should they exist.

This is a sample guideline furnished to you by Hospice and Community Care Insurance Services. Your organization should review this guideline and make the necessary modifications to meet your organization's needs. The intent of this guideline is to assist you in reducing exposure to the risk of injury, harm, or damage to personnel, property, and the general public. For additional information on this topic, contact your Hospice and Community Care Insurance Services Representative at (800) 233-1957.



Risk Management Tips for Violence Prevention

Instituting a Weapons in the Workplace policy is part of a larger program to prevent violence in the workplace. Consider the following risk management tips for maintaining a comprehensive program for violence prevention for your organization:

- Conduct criminal background checks for all employees and volunteers (both current and potential members and applicants).
- As part of the selection and hiring process, conduct criminal background checks for all employees and volunteers.
- Provide periodic training and education for all members regarding preventing violence in the workplace, including domestic violence.
- Encourage members to promptly report threats and incidents of violence both within and outside the organization.
- Develop an emergency response plan pertaining to workplace violence.
- Complete a worksite risk analysis/assessment to identify where the organization may be vulnerable and determine what steps can be taken to reduce risk.
- Make an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available that can help personnel appropriately deal with personal and professional issues that can lead to reduced work productivity, stress, depression, violence and other problems.
- Advertise the EAP or other resources for victims of domestic violence.
- Take precautionary measures when a member is terminated from the organization (i.e., conducted in a secure setting with a witness present; when necessary develop a strategy for exiting the premises with concern for security and the departing member's dignity).
- Post signs around the organization's facilities warning members and visitors that weapons should not be carried onto the property unless needed for law enforcement, or other official job duties.
- Consider implementing visitor procedures.

