# IMPORTANT
# SAFETY INFORMATION
# ATTACHED

Read this material carefully.

**EMPLOYEE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST**

**SAFETY GUIDE**

**EMPLOYEE NOTICE OF PRE 1979 BUILDINGS WITH ASBESTOS**

**WHAT EVERY WORKER SHOULD KNOW -**
**Facts about Workers' Compensation**

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AWARENESS POLICY**

*Need Help?*

Risk Management can provide you with safety regulations and assistance.
Call us at 781-5959

# COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
# NEW EMPLOYEE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST

*"It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors to establish guidelines for the maintenance of an ongoing Occupational Injury and Illness Prevention Program in compliance with the California Code of Regulations. This is accomplished through safety and health inspections, accident investigations and employee training. Response to safety concerns will be given the highest priority at every level of the county.*

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____ SSN: _____

DEPARTMENT: _____ DIVISION: _____

JOB CLASSIFICATION: _____ HIRE DATE: _____

*(Supervisor: Please review this with new employee(s) and check the box as you complete each item).*

☐ **Know what to do in an emergency.** Explain the fire and emergency evacuation procedures. Tell employees what the fire alarm sounds like. Walk them through the exit route and show them where to assemble outside.

☐ **Report accidents promptly.** Let employees know they are to report any occupational injury, illness, or vehicle accident to you immediately. Point out the locations of the first aid kit and CPR trained personnel.

☐ **Know the location of the County's Occupational Injury and Illness Prevention Program (Green Binder).** Tell employees the location of the IIPP Binder, where there are detailed safety procedures, and they have access to it at all times.

☐ **Follow established rules, procedures, and safety signs.** Emphasize the County's commitment to safety and point out that safe work practices will be enforced.

☐ **Wear required personal protective equipment (PPE).** Go over the PPE that is required and the hazards the protective equipment will protect against. Explain what is expected: Wear it right. Wear it every time.

☐ **Handle hazardous materials according to instructions.** Discuss substances employees use, go over labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs). Describe safe handling procedures, PPE and where the MSDSs are located. Point out emergency showers and eye wash stations.

☐ **Operate equipment correctly.** Tell employees they should only use equipment or machines for which they have been trained. Instructions should be followed, including no jewelry around moving machinery parts and exact compliance with lockout/tagout procedures. Point of Operation guards are to remain in place.

☐ **Follow ergonomic guidelines to set up your workstation to fit you.** Show employees how to adjust the chair, keyboard and monitor to be comfortable. Promote task variety and keying rest breaks.

☐ **Remove, repair, or report safety hazards right away.** Emphasize everyone has personal responsibility to correct safety problems.

☐ **Contribute to work area safety.** Communicate your expectations that individual work areas be kept neat and clean, and that all employees help keep common areas free from clutter and minimize overhead storage.

☐ **Take training seriously.** Inform employees that safety training is an important, ongoing process.

Trained Employee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Distribution: Original- Personnel File Duplicate: Department File

# SAFETY GUIDE

## County of San Luis Obispo

### Risk Management

### 2014

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**NOTE:** For more details on CAL/OSHA safety programs and training, please refer to the County's Injury and Illness Prevention Program Manual available from your Department Safety Representative.

# SAFETY GOALS

The County of San Luis Obispo values its employees and clients and will provide healthy, safe and secure County work environments for them.

Safety is everyone's responsibility, and the County supports and encourages employees to identify and resolve safety problems.

Response to safety concerns will be given the highest priority at every level of County Government.

## I. WHEN AN INJURY OCCURS

**1** Report all on the job injuries, no matter how minor they may be to your supervisor without delay.

**2** Seek first aid or medical treatment. Then complete the Employee Report of Injury or Illness form and give it to your supervisor. Your supervisor shall complete the Supervisor's Investigation Report and fax both forms to Risk Management within 24 hours. (If the employee cannot fill out the Employee Injury or Illness Report the supervisor will then complete and submit the form for you.)

**3** If the injury requires care from a physician, the supervisor shall notify the department head and Risk Management immediately.

**4** If the injury is life threatening: CALL 9+911.

## II. SAFETY COMMISSION

The County Safety Commission meets bimonthly to oversee the County's Safety Programs and review injury statistics. Generally, departments have one member attend Commission meetings. Any department may be represented on the Safety Commission. Additionally an Employee Representative is elected by all permanent employees to serve a two year term on the Commission.

## III. SAFETY COMMITTEE

Some departments have their own Safety Committee. Get to know the members of your safety committee. Safety issues should be brought to the attention of your supervisor or department head first, then to the Safety Committee for follow-up action.

## IV. ILLNESS AND INJURY PREVENTION

Each department has an Illness and Injury Prevention Program (IIPP), as mandated by state law. You should discuss the IPP with your supervisor and become familiar with your mutual responsibilities to comply with this program.

# V. GENERAL SAFE PRACTICES

## A. ALL DEPARTMENTS

**1** In order for you to act quickly and without confusion in cases of emergency, you should learn the location and correct operation of all exits and emergency equipment which you may be called upon to use.

**2** Do not try to lift or push an object that is too heavy for you. Ask your supervisor for help when you need it. Use care when lifting objects. Remember, when you lift the right way, the most powerful muscles in the body -those in the legs -take the load. Always lift with the back straight, both legs bent and lifted weight close to the body.

**3** To avoid accidents caused by litter or spills, place in proper container or wipe it up.

**4** Horseplay in work areas will not be tolerated. It could cause serious injury to you or your fellow employees and will result in disciplinary action.

**5** Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, safety glasses, ear protection, hard hats, safety clothing, etc. may be required in certain operations. Your supervisor will know what type of personal protection is necessary. When required, it shall be worn for your own protection.

**NOTE:** Care and maintenance of provided personal protective equipment are the responsibility of each employee using the equipment.

**6** If a fellow worker is careless, bring it to his/her attention before he/she hurts him/herself or endangers someone else. The employee may not realize the actions are unsafe. If he/she continues to work unsafely, report the situation to your supervisor.

**7** Repeated unsafe actions or violations of safety rules are cause for disciplinary action in accordance with Cal/OSHA Standard, Section 3302.

**8** No employee is expected to take chances or endanger the lives of others in the performance of his/her job duties. **Do not take chances or guess!** When in doubt, ask your supervisor to explain any job. (See Safety and Health Protection Poster -CAL/OSHA posted on the safety center bulletin board.)

**9** Lock-out or Danger tags attached to machinery or starting switches mean that another employee is working on the equipment. Never remove these tags or start a machine that has a Lock-out or Danger tag attached. Removal and/or unauthorized starting of a machine that has a Lock-out or Danger tag attached is cause for disciplinary action up to and including instant dismissal.

**10** Walk safely at all times and be aware ice or wet walkways.

**11** Familiarize yourself with the firefighting equipment available, but use this equipment only if trained. **DO NOT BLOCK ACCESS TO FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT.**

**12** Offer suggestions to your supervisor and/or safety committee that will assist in the safe performance of work

**13** **EMPLOYEES SHALL WEAR SAFETY VESTS OR SHIRTS** when working on special assignments which are in close proximity to moving traffic.

**14** Smoking in the workplace is prohibited.

**15** Accident prevention tags differ from signs in that they are used as a temporary means of warning employees of existing hazards such as defective tools or equipment.

## ***SIGN SELECTOR GUIDE***

**DANGER** White letters on red oval surrounded by a rectangular field. Danger signs should be used only where an immediate hazard exists. There shall be no variation in the type or design of signs posted to warn of specific dangers and radiation hazards.

**CAUTION** Yellow letters on black field. Caution signs shall be used only to warn against potential hazards or to caution against unsafe practices.

**SAFETY FIRST** White letters on green field. Safety instruction signs shall be used where there is a need for general instructions and suggestions relative to safety measures. Examples are signing the locations of emergency showers and eye washes.

**NOTICE** White letters on blue field. Blue shall be the standard color for information signs. It may be used as the background color for the complete sign or as a panel at the top of such Notice signs which have a white background.

**BE CAREFUL-** White letters on green field. Safety reminder advising personnel of hazards and safety practices.

## B. MACHINES

Each of us, in our day-to-day work, comes in contact with electrical and mechanical equipment, including power and hand tools. These are particular sources of injuries to the inexperienced or untrained. The following are general suggestions to reduce accidents:

**1** Do not operate a machine or piece of equipment until you have been instructed in its safe operation.

**2** Make absolutely certain that all personnel are clear of the machine or equipment before you start it. Walk around it, if necessary, and/or give the proper warning signal before start-up.

**3** Machine repairs or adjustments must never be made without first shutting it off and, if necessary, installing a Lock-Out or Danger tag on the starting switch. Any exception to this safe practice will be specifically outlined by your supervisor.

**4** Do not operate any machine without an appropriate guard. Machine guards have been installed for safety. Keep them in place when the machine is running and replace any guards that you have removed for repair or adjustment. (See California Labor Code 6406(a) quoted below.)

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***6406 -No person shall do any of the following:***

- ✓ *Remove, displace, damage, destroy or carry off any safety device, safeguard, notice, or warning furnished for use in any employment or place of employment.*
- ✓ *Interfere in any way with the use thereof by any other person.*
- ✓ *Interfere with the use of any method or process adopted for the protection of any employee, including him/herself, in such employment or place of employment.*
- ✓ *Fail or neglect to do every other thing reasonably necessary to protect the life, safety and health of employees.*

***Missing or inadequate guards should be reported to your supervisor immediately.***

## C. LOCKOUT / TAGOUT

Lockout/tagout procedures are for your safety. They are designed to prevent accidents and injuries caused by the accidental release of energy. The use of these procedures prevents workers from accidentally being exposed to injurious and even life-threatening situations with electrically powered machinery.

OSHA regulates lockout/ tagout through the Control of Hazardous Energy standard, found in California Code of Regulations, Title 8, and General Industry Safety Orders.

This standard mandates training, audits and record keeping ensuring that workers will not be unintentionally injured by electrically powered equipment.

**LOCKOUT**:
The process of blocking the flow of energy from a power source to a piece of equipment, and keeping it blocked out.

Lockout is accomplished by installing a lockout device at the power source so that equipment powered by that source cannot be operated. A lockout device is a lock, block, or chain that keeps a valve or lever in the off position.

Locks are provided by the County and can be used only for lockout purposes. They should never be used to lock tool boxes, storage sheds, or other devices.

**TAGOUT**:
This is accomplished by placing a tag on the power source. The tag acts as a warning not to restore energy -it is not a physical restraint. Tags must clearly state: Do not operate or the like, and must be applied by hand.

Both locks and tags must be strong enough to prevent unauthorized removal and to withstand various environmental conditions.

## D. HAND TOOLS

It is important that the proper hand tool be used for each job. Since hand tool requirements may vary greatly among departments, check with your supervisor to learn which ones are needed to do the job safely and effectively.

**1** Chisels, hammers, etc. are to be kept dressed. Avoid mushroom heads and keep points clean and sharp. Hammer and ax handles should be checked frequently and are to be replaced when split or loose at the head.

**2** Wrenches, pliers, etc. should be repaired or replaced when grip surfaces become worn.

**3** Hand knives are to be kept in knife sheaths when not in use. (Many serious injuries have resulted from carrying open knives in the pockets.)

**4** Banders, cutters, drills and similar tools should be checked frequently. Defective tools are to be repaired or reported to your supervisor.

**5** Frayed or defective electrical cords, unsafe welding-rod holders, trouble lights, etc., are to be repaired or replaced. They should be checked each time you use them.

**6** Tools should be cleaned and stored in a safe place after use, thus reducing the chance of loss or damage. Also, be sure to clean up any scrap or unused material left over from the job.

**7** Files and screwdrivers shall not be used as punches or pry bars.

**8** Adequate distance between workers shall be maintained for safe operation when using picks, shovels, brush hooks, or knives.

## E. WORKING / WALKING AREAS

**1** Do not walk faster than the area surface and/or traffic safely allow. The few seconds you may save are not worth the risk of a bad fall.

**2** Maximum safe footing for prevailing conditions is very important to your safety and well being. Clean up material and spills as soon as possible to reduce exposure to slips and falls. Be alert to surface irregularities or level changes in your working areas. Report tears and separations in floor covering, and flag them pending repair.

**3** Place litter and trash in waste containers provided. Respect others and reduce hazards by keeping work areas orderly enough for safe movement of personnel.

**4** Know the location of the nearest fire exit, fire extinguisher, fire call box, stretcher, first aid kit, and medical facility. Ask your supervisor or safety representative if you do not know where these emergency items are located.

**5** Think safety when selecting workplace attire, especially shoes. Shoes with a minimal heel, good support and a non-skid sole are recommended. Please wear safety shoes if your job requires them. Avoid loose fitting clothes when working around machinery.

## F. MATERIAL HANDLING (LIFTING)

**1** In lifting, remember that your greatest source of strength for raising and lowering is in the LEGS. This is one of the secrets to protecting yourself from back injury while lifting or moving objects.

Do not lift more than you can comfortably handle. Always test your load before lifting. ***Ask for help!***

Get a firm footing with feet at least shoulder width apart.

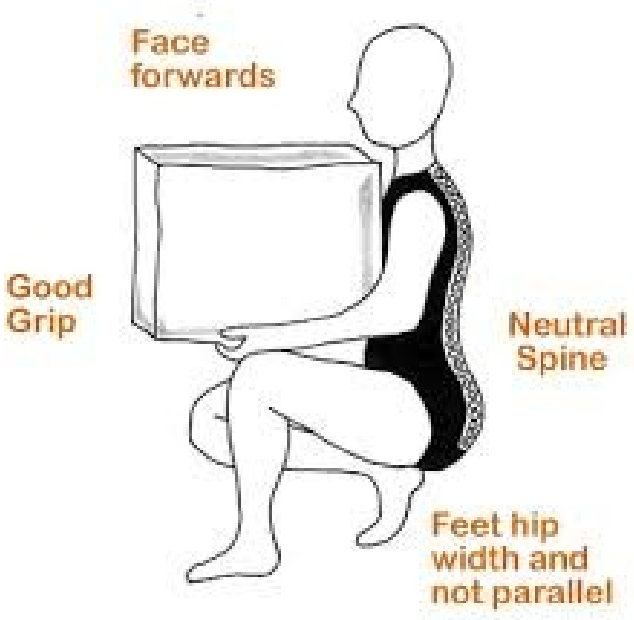
Do not twist or shift your feet with the load. Keep your feet, hips and your load going in the same direction.

**2** Create and maintain ease of access to piles or stacks of materials. Also, pile or stack materials in such a way that the pile or stack is tied in -one level resting securely on the one below it. Use proper blocking when necessary and never exceed a safe height. Report any unsafe stacks to your supervisor.

**3** If you cannot reach materials, stand on a firm work surface such as an appropriate ladder or step stool. Boxes, chairs, pallets, desks, etc. are unsafe work platforms and are NOT to be used to stand on.

**4** Know the type of liquids you may have to handle in connection with your work assignment, and protect yourself in the manner outlined by your supervisor when handling toxic liquids, flammable materials, etc.

**5** Combining and mixing liquids can be hazardous. For example, never mix ammonia and bleach. If you are required to mix liquids, be sure the area is properly ventilated and always follow instructions.

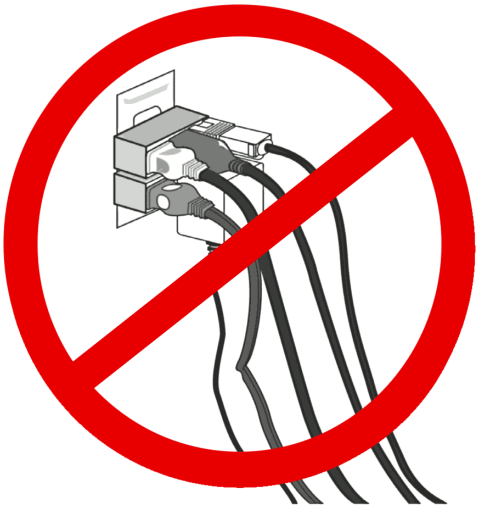


## G. ELECTRICAL

Frayed or damaged electrical cords or extension cords should not be used until repaired or replaced.

**1** Do not stress cords by stretching or pull out plugs by jerking on the wire.

**2** Keep cables and cords protected from oil, chemicals and hot or sharp objects to prevent their· damage.

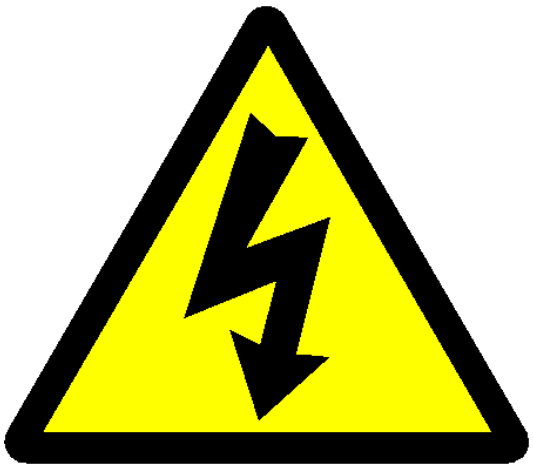


**3** Arrange equipment cords and cables away from foot traffic. Keep them off of stairs and out of aisles.

**4** Unless specifically part of your job assignment, never open panel boxes or change fuses, make connections, etc. Report any electrical problem to your supervisor or maintenance electrician as soon as possible.

**5** Use equipment with grounded (3-wire) cord or double insulated protection. Don't use equipment designed solely for home or light duty use.

**6** Never turn on a switch that has a "Danger" or a "Do Not Use" tag attached, nor remove such tags unless specifically authorized to do so.



**7** In case of an electrical fire, use the proper fire extinguisher (ABC dry chemical or BC).

**8** Never use multiple (3-way) add-on plugs to increase the amount of equipment on a service outlet. Do not construct a wire octopus. Report the need for more circuits.

**9** Use County approved electrical surge protectors.

## H. HAZARD COMMUNICATION

***THE RIGHT TO KNOW LAW***

If you come into contact with hazardous chemicals in your workplace each day, you are definitely not alone. One out of every four workers contacts hazardous chemicals on the job. In many cases, the chemicals you deal with may be no more dangerous than those you use at home. But in the workplace, exposure is likely to be greater, concentrations higher, and exposure time longer. Therefore, the potential danger is greater on the job.

OSHA has issued a regulation to help control chemical exposure on the job. The regulation is called the Hazard Communication Standard, but is more commonly called HazCom or The Right to Know Law (see California Code of Regulations, Title 8, General Industry Safety Orders).

The Standard says you have a right to know what chemicals you are working with or around and mandates that all information relating to these possible physical and health hazards be made available to you. Safety Data Sheets (SDS's) are available to you which describe the hazards and how to handle the material appropriately. Good communication is the top priority. Think about the potential of a hazard situation in your workplace. Would you personally (and other employees) know what to do to respond effectively? Is the hazard reporting procedure a part of the training process in your department? To whom do you go to report a safety problem or hazard? Does the process need to be automated or checked on for improvement?

The Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) is now aligned with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). This update to the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) provides a common and coherent approach to classifying chemicals and communicating hazard information on labels and safety data sheets. The revised standard improves the quality and consistency of hazard information in the workplace, making it safer for workers by providing easily understandable information on appropriate handling and safe use of hazardous chemicals. This update also helps reduce trade barriers and result in productivity improvements for American businesses that regularly handle, store, and use hazardous chemicals while providing cost savings for American businesses that periodically update safety data sheets and labels for chemicals covered under the hazard communication standard.

## I. OFFICE AREAS

**1** Portable electrical equipment and appliances shall be securely placed and guarded so as to preclude injury to employees and damage to the appliance.

**2** Do not use chairs, boxes, desks, tables or unstable material in place of a ladder or step stool. Utilize proper posture and body mechanics when lifting/moving. See Section K for more information.

**3** Utilize proper ergonomics in your office setting. The following areas need consideration when setting-up your office area: seat position, keyboard/monitor position, document position, desktop layout and lighting.

**4** The drawers of desks and file cabinets shall be closed when left unattended.

**5** No more than one file drawer should be opened at any time.

**6** File cabinets should be appropriately loaded from bottom drawer up, to prevent tipping. Keep heavy items in lower drawers.

**7** Do not operate office equipment without proper instructions.

**8** Office equipment and appliances shall be maintained free of slivers, burrs or other conditions which might cause an accident or personal injury.

**9** Exits, hallways and aisles shall be kept clear of all obstructions.

**10** Handrails should be used ascending or descending staircase.

**11** Report all unsafe conditions to your supervisor at once.

**12** Do not block heaters.

**13** Do not store items in front of an electrical panel.

## J. PERSONAL COMPUTER WORKSTATION

It is important to maintain correct posture and position equipment properly to reduce the stress on the body. The following guidelines represent an ergonomically correct posture along with some direction for the proper placement of equipment. If you are still experiencing problems after adjusting your equipment, contact Risk Management for assistance:

1. The neck should be straight or slightly forward, while keeping both the neck and shoulders relaxed.
2. The elbows should be at the same height as the keyboard and mouse.
3. Keep the elbows in close to the body without the forearms rotated inward or outward.
4. The forearms should be roughly parallel to the floor.
5. The hands and wrists should extend naturally to the keyboard from the arms. The wrists should not be bent.
6. Keep the spine in its natural "S" shaped position.
7. The angle between the trunk and thigh should be greater than 90 degrees, while the angle between the calf and thigh should be greater than 60 degrees.
8. Provide adequate room for the legs which should be located directly under the keyboard tray and keep both feet flat on the floor or foot rest.
9. Position the monitor directly in front of the operator so the top or the display screen is a little below the horizontal line of sight while seated. The monitor should also be 18-24 inches from the operator.
10. If working from another document, the document should be at the same height and distance as the monitor.

## K. ERGONOMICS

Use the information in this section to help you use your body correctly while performing your work, thus avoiding injury.

- ✓ **Proper use of your back**
  Keep objects close. Avoid twisting and bending. Maintain the natural curve of the low back. Use your leg muscles to lift and lower. They are larger and better designed for lifting. Push rather than pull when possible. Use mechanical advantage when possible.

- ✓ **Proper use of your neck and shoulders**
  Use good sitting posture. Adjust your chair properly. Avoid long reaches. Keep your arms low and elbows in. Avoid overhead work. Adjust equipment (including computer equipment) to promote proper posture and body mechanics. Use adequate lighting but minimize glare.

- ✓ **Proper use of your wrists and arms**
  Avoid excessive or awkward gripping of tools. Keep your wrist nearly straight. Avoid excessive or repetitive pressure on your wrist. Use a large grip when possible.

- ✓ ***Also remember:***
  1. Limit excessive vibration of the small joints of your wrist and hand. You can shift some of the vibration to larger joints by keeping your elbows slightly bent and shoulders slightly loose. In addition, you can use anti-vibration gloves.
  2. Insulate your hands in cold weather by using gloves.
  3. Limit repetitive motions of your wrist and hand. Involve your elbows and shoulders in the movement and take breaks.

**Note**: You can help prepare the muscles and joints of your body for work by performing gentle stretching and flexibility exercises. These exercises are best performed both before work and as mini-breaks during your work day.

## L. FIRE PREVENTION

Fire extinguishers shall be available in all work areas. All extinguishers must be mounted and visible, with location identification.

**1** Passageways and work areas around fire-fighting equipment must be kept unobstructed at all times.

**2** Care should be exercised in the proper location and selection of a fire extinguisher. Learn the location of, and the proper use of fire extinguishers.

**3** Fire extinguishers which appear to be in doubtful condition should be reported immediately. Report any used fire extinguishers for recharging.

**4** Fire extinguishers of the C02 or dry chemical type shall be provided in all areas used for dispensing, mixing, or handling of flammable liquids. In the event that circumstances require the use of C02 fire extinguishers in enclosed spaces, extreme caution shall be exercised to ensure that no one enters the enclosed space until the C02 has been expelled by ventilation.

**5** No open flames or smoking shall be permitted in areas where flammable gases or liquids are stored or used.

**6** Flammable liquids, such as duplicating fluid, solvents or gasoline, shall be stored in metal safety cans. Storage is regulated by the Uniform Fire Code and California Code of Regulations, Title 19.

**7** The dispensing of flammable liquids shall be done in the open and well away from open flame and other sources of ignition, and all containers shall be grounded and bonded.

**8** Oil and paint-soaked rags shall be stored in approved safety containers. Disposal of such rags shall be only in safe receptacles placed outside the building daily, or in approved safety containers.

**9** Open-flame heaters, as well as electric heaters, shall be properly guarded and located. No clothing or combustible material shall be stored in close proximity to any open-flame or electric heater in such a manner as to permit ignition.

**10** Exit doors must be unlocked when the building is occupied, and free passage to and through these exits must be maintained at all times. Know the points of exit from the building in which you work.

**11** Report fires promptly to the Fire Department and Risk Management; do not risk your life in trying to extinguish a fire which may get out of control.

**12** Remember, a clean work area seldom has a fire. For any assistance in recognizing fire hazards, or fire prevention procedures, contact your supervisor / or Department Safety Representative.

**13** Fire extinguishers are marked by color coding to indicate the classes of fire on which they should be used.

- **Class "A"** (green triangle)-Suitable for fires in ordinary combustible materials (wood, cloth, paper, rubber)
- **Class "B"** (red square)-Suitable for fires in flammable or combustible liquids, gases, greases, and some rubber & plastic material
- **Class "C"** (blue circle)-Suitable for fire in energized electrical circuits or equipment, requiring a non-conductive fire suppressant
- **Class "D"** (yellow star)-Suitable for fire in combustible metals (magnesium, titanium, zirconium, sodium, potassium)

**14** Immediately report any discharged fire extinguishers.

## M. EMERGENCY EVACUATION

The Department Emergency Evacuation Plan is in writing and covers the following actions the department and employees must take to ensure employee from fire and other emergencies. Elements of the plan are:

1. Emergency escape procedures and emergency escape route assignments.
2. Procedures to be followed by employees who remain to operate critical site operations before they evacuate.
3. Procedure to account for all employees after an emergency evacuation has been completed.
4. Rescue and medical duties for those employees who are to perform them.
5. The preferred means of reporting fires and other emergencies.
6. Names or regular job titles of persons or departments who can be contacted for further information or explanations of duties under the plan.

Ask your supervisor about the emergency action plan and your responsibilities.

## N. COUNTY VEHICLES

1. Do not operate a County vehicle unless authorized by your supervisor. All operators must have a legal operators' license. Selected job classifications are required to attend the County's driver training class.
2. It is the operator's responsibility to be familiar with operation of an assigned vehicle.
3. Seat belts will be used at all times while operating a County vehicle.
4. Drive with caution at all times.
5. Every vehicle operator must obey all traffic laws. All accidents must be reported to Risk Management. If you are involved in an accident, stop and call the local law enforcement agency. Do not discuss accident causes other than with your immediate supervisor, or local law enforcement agency.
6. Prepare and submit County Vehicle Accident Report in accordance with County policy. Obtain the Accident Report from your supervisor or Risk Management.
7. See "Rules for the Use of Vehicles on County Business" for more information.

## O. BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

The blood borne pathogen standard was designed to provide a set of practices to follow when rendering first aid to help protect you against infections caused by blood borne pathogens.

Regulations governing exposure to blood borne pathogens have been issued by OSHA, specifically in the California Code of Regulations, Title 8, General Industry Safety Orders. It is the employer's responsibility to: develop an exposure control plan; provide training to those workers potentially exposed to blood borne pathogens; implement engineering and work practice controls; enforce the use of personal protective equipment; offer a hepatitis B vaccine and exposure evaluation; and follow-up and implement use of signs and labels to warn of potential hazards.

*Key Definitions:*

***Blood borne Pathogens:*** Microorganisms present in human blood that cause disease in humans. These include, but are not limited to: Hepatitis B virus; Human Immunodeficiency Virus, HIV.

***Exposure Incident:*** "Exposure Incident" means a specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that result from the performance of an employee's duties.

***Occupational Exposure:*** A reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that may result from doing one's job.

***Parenteral:*** A piercing of mucous membranes or the skin by means of a needle stick, human bite, cut, and/or abrasion.

***Universal Precautions:*** An infection control approach whereby all human blood and certain body fluids are treated as if they were known to be infectious for HIV, HBV or other blood borne pathogens.

***Personal Protective Equipment:*** Employers will provide, and employees shall use personal protective equipment when the possibility exists of exposure to blood or body fluids.

Personal protective equipment may include:

1. *Single use gloves*
2. *Eye protection*
1. *Face and mouth protection*
2. *Body protection*

You need to know this standard if you are a designated first responder or first aid provider, or involved in maintenance or housekeeping work that could potentially expose you to blood borne pathogens. Other types of workers covered by the standard include health care workers, law enforcement, probation officers, and firefighters.

Depending on your job classification, specific training on Blood borne Pathogens will be provided. See your supervisor, department safety representative and the County's Blood borne pathogen Policy in the IPP manual.

## P. CONFINED SPACES

Confined spaces deserve special consideration because they are so deadly. Confined space accidents often involve multiple deaths - as both victims and would-be rescuers are overcome by unbreathable air. A confined space is defined as a work area that is not intended for continuous occupation and has the following characteristics:

1. Limited room for movement.
2. Difficult access in and out.
3. Unfavorable natural ventilation.
4. Other conditions that could adversely affect air quality.

Sometimes a confined space is not what it may seem. For example, people have died from toxic fumes in empty swimming pools. Therefore, ***recognizing a confined space is extremely important.***

Entering a confined space requires special training and there are specific procedures that must be followed including, in some cases, the issuance of a permit to enter the space. ***If you suspect that the work area you are required to enter is (or might be) a confined space, ask your supervisor about confined space procedures.***

If you see that someone has collapsed in a confined space, ***do not attempt a rescue***- call 9+911. Unless you are properly trained and fully equipped, you will quickly become another victim.

## Q. COMPRESSED GAS CYLINDERS

Compressed gas cylinders must be handled by trained personnel who fully understand the hazards involved. The following guidelines are designed for routine, daily practices. For special situations, ask you supervisor.

**1** There are many different types of gas regulators, each designed for a specific use and a specific gas. Do not interchange fittings or regulators or try to adapt them to gases which they are not designed to handle.

**2** Do not at any time by-pass the regulator when discharging gas from a compressed gas cylinder.

**3** Do not use adaptors to connect regulators to gas cylinders.

**4** Always open cylinder valves slowly, using the standard wrench designed for the valve.

**5** To keep cylinders from falling or rolling, make sure both full and empty ones are secured by chains, straps or other devices to a work bench, wall or other stationary object. Never drop cylinders or allow them to strike each other.

**6** Keep the valve protection cap securely in place whenever the cylinder is not connected for use.

**7** Do not move cylinders by hand - **use a proper hand cart**.

**8** Cylinders should have signs indicating the name of the gas they contain. Rooms or cabinets where the cylinders are stored should have signs indicating the hazards (ie., poison, flammable, etc.)

**9** Store full and empty cylinders separately, with the empties clearly marked.

**10** Remove empty cylinders from the area as soon as possible.

**11** Cylinders should not be exposed to temperatures above 125F. They should not be stored in direct sunlight or near sources of heat.

**12** When cylinders are used infrequently, watch for expiration dates of unstable gases

## R. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AWARENESS

Occasionally, you may be faced with a volatile situation where a member of the public acts in a threatening or irrational way. To prevent injury to yourself and others, you should know in advance how you will respond to such a situation. Before any confrontation happens, each work site would have a plan as to who will act as back up or provide assistance. Try to assign two or more people to that task-preferably people who are not in the front reception area.

In areas where some danger is anticipated, a silent "alarm" or other system may be placed in the reception area which will alert the back-up team.

If you should be confronted with a situation beyond your control:

1. Stay Calm. Courteously try to find out who they are and what they want
2. As soon as possible, notify the back-up team or alternate
3. Do not try to physically restrain or stop any individual yourself unless absolutely necessary. Notify proper law enforcement agencies as soon as possible.

Please see the "Workplace Violence Awareness Policy", found on the County Intranet Site, for more information.

## S. EARTHQUAKES

### BEFORE

1. Check workplaces, rest areas and corridors for hazards, such as hanging plants, books on high shelves and unsecured furniture and equipment. Complete a Work Request Form and send to General Services if brackets, etc. need to be installed
2. Discuss the floor or office disaster plan. Participate actively in drills.
3. Know where emergency equipment and exits are.
4. Store a few emergency supplies in your desk or car. Items might include a flashlight (with extra batteries), storable food and drink, needed medications, and comfortable shoes for the long walk home.

### DURING

1. If indoors, yell, "get under your desk!", then do so yourself. Watch for falling and sliding objects. Stay away from windows, outer walls, and outside doorways.
2. If you are in an elevator, stop at the nearest floor; take cover against the interior wall.
3. If you are in a hallway, brace yourself against the wall. Duck and cover your head with your arms.
4. If you are outdoors, move to an open area. Stay away from trees, power lines and other structures.
5. If you are driving, pull over, stop (but not under a bridge), and stay inside.

### AFTER

1. Take a deep breath. Stay calm-there may be an after-shock.
2. Move to the center of the building. Do not evacuate until instructed, unless there is immediate danger.
3. Check for injuries and administer first aid.
4. Assist employees with special needs.
5. Check for fire hazards. Do not smoke or light matches. Do not use elevators.
6. Replace telephone receivers on cradles, but do not use them unless there is a fire or serious Injury
7. Cooperate with County Emergency Response Team members.
8. Listen for emergency information over a battery-operated radio.
9. Remain calm. Don't spread rumors. Reassure and help others.

## T. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Depending on your work assignment, various types of protective equipment may 'be issued and required. The County may issue you goggles; face shields, hard hats, ear plugs, gloves, safety shoes, respirators, protective clothing, or other items to protect your body. Use Them.

**1** Protective equipment must be worn where required. Your supervisor will tell you what equipment you need for your particular job.

**2** Always wear protective clothing when working with chemicals

**3** Sunglasses and regular prescription glasses do not protect your eyes as well as safety glasses. Therefore, you must wear safety glasses in all areas and jobs which require their use.

**4** Contact lenses increase the danger of eye damage when used in areas of potential eye injury. Don't wear contact lenses in any area where chemicals are used or when welding.

**5** Avoid handling chemicals or immersing your hands in chemical solutions without wearing the correct type of gloves, goggles, and other protection.

**6** If hazardous chemicals come in contact with your skin, immediately remove contaminated clothing and rinse the exposed area with water for 15 minutes. Seek medical attention. Removing the chemical quickly is the important factor.

**7** Under no circumstances may you eat, drink or smoke in laboratories or work areas where radioactive materials, toxic chemicals or flammables are used or stored. Wash hands thoroughly before eating, drinking or smoking.

**8** Never store food in the same refrigerator as medications, specimens or chemicals.

## U. HAZARD REPORTING

Employees are encouraged to report safety hazards without fear of reprisal. The County's goal is to assure a safe environment for all who use our facilities. Most hazards can be corrected at the departmental level.

If you identify a hazard, report it to your supervisor. If the hazard is not corrected you may submit an Employee Hazard Report (Form SAF-l) available from the Departmental Safety Representative or Risk Management.

## *REVIEW OF GENERAL SAFE PRACTICES*

**ELECTRICAL HAZARDS** -Do not stand on wet floors while using electrical apparatus. Keep cords in good repair. **Don't make unauthorized connections or repairs.**

**GAS-FIRED APPARATUS** -Be surefire box is clear of gas before lighting. Use paper or cloth on a long wire or stick to light burner. Stand to the side to avoid flashbacks.

**IF INRJRED** -Report all injuries to Risk Management no matter how slight. Prevent infection - get first aid for punctures, cuts and scratches.

**HORSEPLAY** -Scuffling, practical jokes and tricks are not allowed.

**TRAFFIC CONTROL** -Traffic control is needed, proper warning signs at-an appropriate distance from the work area must be used. All workers in or near the roadway wear reflective vests and required protective' equipment. Safety rules for working on roadways must be followed.

**CONFINED SPACE** -All safety procedures shall be followed when entering a permit or non-permit confined space.

**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EOUIPMENT** -Personal protective equipment shall be provided to all County employees and shall be worn when required and maintained properly.

**FIRE PREVENTION** -The best defense against fire is prevention. Practice good housekeeping. Use and store flammable chemicals properly now what to do in case of fire emergency.

**HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS** -Seek information about hazardous chemicals used in the workplace and the personal protection required. Do not use any hazardous chemicals without proper personal protection.

**WORK SAFELY** -Safety is everyone's business. Use only safe work methods. Accidents can be stopped.

**WHEN LIFTING** -Hold back straight bend knees, get a firm grip on object and hold close to your body, space feet apart for good balance; lift, exerting the lifting force with your strong leg muscles, not the weaker back muscles.

**MATERIAL HANDLING** -Do not throw objects. Always carry or pass them. Use hand trucks or other equipment when possible. Get help with heavy or awkward objects.

**TRASH DISPOSAL** -Keep sharp objects and dangerous substances out of the trash can. Use only approved contain**ers.**

**PREVENT FALLS** -Keep aisles, work places and stairways clean, clear and well lighted. Report slippery or faulty floor surfaces. Walk -don't run. Watch your step. Wear safe shoes.

**TOOLS** -Handle and store knives and other tools carefully. Do not use burred, defective or greasy tools. Use the right tool.

**FALLING OBJECTS** -Handle objects and tools carefully and store in a safe manner.

**WORK AREA CONDITIONS** -Protruding nails and sharp comers can cause serious cuts and bruises. Remove or pad them. Close all drawers.

**LADDERS** -Use a safe and secured ladder, not a box, chair, table or any makeshift device.

**MACHINE GUARDS** -Keep guards in place at all times. Don't clean machinery while it is running. Lock all disconnect switches while doing repairs or cleaning.

Chances are good that you will someday be present during a first aid emergency. The quick actions of those present could help prevent greater injury and could even save a life. Several County departments have instructors certified to teach both First Aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). By receiving this training, you can be prepared for first aid emergencies.

# FIRST AID MEASURES

***When a person is injured:***

1. Call for help or have someone else do it while you attend to the victim. (Dial 9 + 911 if in the County phone system; outside the County phone system dial 911)
2. Act immediately but avoid panic. Reassure the victim as you quickly examine him or her. Look for:
   - Open Airway
   - Breathing
   - Circulation
   - Bleeding
   - Neck/ Spinal Cord injuries
     (do not move any part of the victim)
   - Poisoning (save container for identification. Call Poison Control and follow their instructions.)
   - Broken bones
   - Shock
   - Burns

3. Don't move the victim unless necessary to prevent further injury or to perform life saving measures

***OTHER FIRST AID CONDITIONS***

| | |
|---|---|
| ***Fever:*** | *Give fluids, reduce clothing, cool with a sponge.* |
| ***Fainting:*** | *If victim is unconscious, place in the side-lying position; loosen clothing. If victim is conscious, have him or her sit with head lower than heart.* |
| ***Electric Shock:*** | *Make sure the electrical current is off before touching the victim. Check for breathing and circulation; treat for shock.* |
| ***Heat Exhaustion:*** | *Apply cold sponges to skin give weak (tsp. salt in glass of water) salt solution.* |
| ***Bee Stings:*** | *Cold compress/ calamine lotion may soothe; watch for signs of allergic reactions (rash, swelling, breathing problems).* |
| ***Nose Bleeds:*** | *Seat victim, tip head back, squeeze nostrils firmly. Apply cold pack to nose or back of neck.* |

# Human Resources Department
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

***Tami Douglas-Schatz, Director***

County Government Center, 1055 Monterey Street • Ste. D-250, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408-2110
Human Resources Department • Telephone 805.781.5959 • Fax 805.781.1044 • Email hr@co.slo.ca.us
Risk Management • Telephone 805.781.5959 • Fax 805.781.1044


**To:** County Employees

**From:** John Schwind, Safety Officer

**Date:** January 1, 2010

**Subject:** Employee Notice of Pre-1979 Buildings with Asbestos

As a result of Assembly Bill 3713, passed in 1989, the state **Health and Safety Code (Section 29515 (a)** requires all employers with employees occupying buildings constructed prior to 1979 to notify employees of:

- The existence of, conclusions from, and the contents of any survey conducted to determine the existence and location of asbestos-containing construction materials **(ACMs)**.
- Specific locations within the building(s) where ACMs are present in any quantity. General procedures and handling restrictions necessary to prevent and minimize disturbance, release and exposure to ACMs.
- A summary of the results of any bulk sample analysis or air monitoring conducted, including information describing where the specific monitoring data and sampling procedures are available.
- Potential health risks or impacts that may result from exposure to the ACMs.

The County of San Luis Obispo surveys buildings where suspected ACMs are present, to determine the specific location of ACMs in the building. These locations are summarized in Exhibit B. Current information on specific locations can be obtained from Risk Management, General Services, or your department's Safety Representative.

The general procedure necessary to prevent or minimize disturbance of the ACMs is to avoid contact with the areas indicated in Exhibit B where possible. If employees notice evidence of physical damage, i.e. water damage or any contact that causes the materials to crumble, flake, or chip, the County Safety Officer should be notified at **781-5959.**

Summaries of any testing, monitoring, or analysis are available for review by making an appointment with the County Safety Officer.

Potential health risks or impacts are discussed in Exhibit A, attached.

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## Exhibit A

The health risks associated with exposure to asbestos have been recognized for a long time, especially in the shipbuilding and mining industries. Most asbestos-related illness is the result of long term exposures (on the order of years) to high levels of asbestos (levels above the Permissible Exposure Limit – PEL). While asbestos may be present in some buildings, it exists primarily as a component of solid building materials such as certain plasters or adhesives. The level of asbestos in most buildings is low to none, and therefore represents little or no health risk. However, there are a number of steps which may be taken for protection when exposure to asbestos is suspected.

Asbestos is a generic term that applies to a number of naturally occurring, hydrated mineral silicates incombustible in air and separable into filaments. The most widely used in industry in the United States is chrysotile (3MgO.2SiO2.2H20), a fibrous form of serpentine. Asbestos is a strong durable material with a variety of uses in industry and manufacturing. In buildings it is contained in plasterboard, insulation, roofing, flooring, siding, and ceiling plaster. Other uses of asbestos include friction products such as clutch facings and brake linings**,** caulking materials, theater curtains, fire-protective clothing and some concrete-like products.

The health problems associated with asbestos exposure are due to its physical properties. Asbestos can decompose into a friable form, creating microscopic, airborne fibers which can be inhaled or ingested. As long as the asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) are bonded into durable tiles, slats, mastics (adhesives) or panels, asbestos does not pose a significant health risk. However, if the ACM becomes crumbly, as in water-damaged tiles, or because of physical damage caused by improper maintenance, they can become a hazard. Friable ACMs can spread through the environment. In a building, for example, ACMs can get into the ventilation system and travel to other parts of the structure, contaminating the air breathed by the occupants.

When inhaled, asbestos fibers can cause several health problems. Asbestosis, for example, produces shortness of breath and permanent lung damage. Mesothelioma, a rare cancer of the lining around the lungs, heart or abdominal organs, is an example of damage caused by exposure to ACMs. Bronchiogenic cancers like pneumoconiosis may also occur as a result of ACM exposure. Asbestos exposure via ingestion may also be related to certain cancers of the stomach, large intestine, kidney, larynx, and rectum.

If you have been exposed to asbestos in the workplace, promptly inform your supervisor or Risk Management. Appropriate steps can then be taken to limit further exposure and to address health risks associated with the exposure. Regular medical examinations, potentially including such about ten years after the first exposure, are important to aid in the early detection and treatment of any asbestos-related problems that may arise. In this examination, your physician will take a detailed family history of you, and your family's asbestos exposure.

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The following are County-owned buildings identified to contain asbestos materials. If there are sample results or air analysis reports available, an asterisk (*) is indicated next to the location.

| BUILDING | LOCATION |
|---|---|
| Old Courthouse | Office floor tiles |
| Old Courthouse | Center section of plaster ceiling |
| Annex building, government center | Office floor tiles |
| Annex building, government center | Clerk and D.A. break rooms - counter tops |
| Building 1200 | Pipes - pipe wrap |
| Atascadero Health building | Roofing materials, linoleum, wallboard joint compound, all floor tiles except off-white tiles* |
| General Hospital | Fire doors - core material |
| Lopez Lake | Treatment plant - roofing materials |

For information on specific locations of asbestos and the method of management being used to control it, call Risk Management at 781-5959.

# Division of Workers' Compensation

Factsheet

## What is workers' compensation?

If you get hurt on the job, your employer is required by law to pay for workers' compensation benefits. You could get hurt by:

One event at work. Examples: hurting your back in a fall, getting burned by a chemical that splashes on your skin, getting hurt in a car accident while making deliveries.
—or—
Repeated exposures at work. Examples: hurting your wrist from doing the same motion over and over, losing your hearing because of constant loud noise.

## What are the benefits?

- **Medical care:** Paid for by your employer, to help you recover from an injury or illness caused by work.
- **Temporary disability benefits:** Payments if you lose wages because your injury prevents you from doing your usual job while recovering.
- **Permanent disability benefits:** Payments if you don't recover completely.
- **Supplemental job displacement benefits** (if your date of injury is in 2004 or later): Vouchers to help pay for retraining or skill enhancement if you don't recover completely and don't return to work for your employer.
- **Death benefits:** Payments to your spouse, children or other dependents if you die from a job injury or illness.

## What should I do if I have a job injury?

### Report the injury to your employer

Tell your supervisor right away. If your injury or illness developed gradually (like tendinitis or hearing loss), report it as soon as you learn or believe it was caused by your job.

Photos by Robert Gumpoert

*Minimizing the impact of work-related injuries and illnesses*

*Helping resolve disputes over workers' compensation benefits*

*Monitoring the administration of claims*

**Get emergency treatment if needed**
If it's a medical emergency, go to an emergency room right away. Your employer may tell you where to go for treatment. Tell the health care provider who treats you that your injury or illness is job-related.

**Fill out a claim form and give it to your employer**
Your employer must give or mail you a claim form (DWC 1) within one working day after learning about your injury or illness. Use it to request workers' compensation benefits.

**Get good medical care**
Get good medical care to help you recover. You should be treated by a doctor who understands your particular type of injury or illness. Tell the doctor about your symptoms and the events at work that you believe caused them. Also describe your job and your work environment.

*Call 1-800-736-7401 to hear recorded information on a variety of workers' compensation topics 24 hours a day, or go on line to www.dwc.ca.gov to find the I & A office near you.*

## I'm afraid I might be fired because of my injury. Can my employer fire me?

It's illegal for your employer to punish or fire you for having a job injury, or for filing a workers' compensation claim when you believe your injury was caused by your job.

If you feel your job is threatened, find someone who can help. Note that there are deadlines for taking action to protect your rights.

The California Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) is the state agency that oversees the delivery of benefits for injured workers and helps resolve disputes over benefits between injured workers and employers.

DWC information and assistance (I & A) officers can help you navigate the workers' compensation system, and can provide claim forms or other forms you need to receive benefits.

*The FREE publication, "A Guidebook for Injured Workers," can be downloaded from www.dwc.ca.gov.*

*Please visit the*
***Division of Workers' Compensation***
*Web site at: www.dwc.ca.gov*
*or call 1-800-736-7401*

Department of Industrial Relations 455 Golden Gate Avenue, 10th Flr., San Francisco, CA 94102 www.dir.ca.gov
July 2010

# TIME OF HIRE PAMPHLET

This pamphlet, or a similar one that has been approved by the Administrative Director, must be given to all newly hired employees in the State of California. Employers and claims administrators may use the content of this document and put their logos and additional information on it. The content of this pamphlet applies to all industrial injuries that occur on or after January 1, 2013.

## WHAT IS WORKERS' COMPENSATION?

If you get hurt on the job, your employer is required by law to pay for workers' compensation benefits. You could get hurt by:

One event at work. Examples: hurting your back in a fall, getting burned by a chemical that splashes on your skin, getting hurt in a car accident while making deliveries.

—or—

Repeated exposures at work. Examples: hurting your wrist from using vibrating tools, losing your hearing because of constant loud noise.

—or—

Workplace crime. Examples: you get hurt in a store robbery, physically attacked by an unhappy customer.

**Discrimination is illegal**

It is illegal under Labor Code section 132a for your employer to punish or fire you because you:

- File a workers' compensation claim
- Intend to file a workers' compensation claim
- Settle a workers' compensation claim
- Testify or intend to testify for another injured worker.

If it is found that your employer discriminated against you, he or she may be ordered to return you to your job. Your employer may also be made to pay for lost wages, increased workers' compensation benefits, and costs and expenses set by state law.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- **Medical care**: Paid for by your employer to help you recover from an injury or illness caused by work. Doctor visits, hospital services, physical therapy, lab tests and x-rays are some of the medical services that may be provided. These services should be necessary to treat your injury. There are limits on some services such as physical and occupational therapy and chiropractic care.
- **Temporary disability benefits**: Payments if you lose wages because your injury prevents you from doing your usual job while recovering. The amount you may get is up to two-thirds of your wages. There are minimum and maximum payment limits set by state law. You will be paid every two weeks if you are eligible. For most injuries, payments may not exceed

104 weeks within five years from your date of injury. Temporary disability (TD) stops when you return to work, or when the doctor releases you for work, or says your injury has improved as much as it's going to.

- **Permanent disability benefits**: Payments if you don't recover completely. You will be paid every two weeks if you are eligible. There are minimum and maximum weekly payment rates established by state law. The amount of payment is based on:
    - Your doctor's medical reports
    - Your age
    - Your occupation

- **Supplemental job displacement benefits**: This is a voucher for up to $6,000 that you can use for retraining or skill enhancement at an approved school, books, tools, licenses or certification fees, or other resources to help you find a new job. You are eligible for this voucher if:
    - You have a permanent disability.
    - Your employer does not offer regular, modified, or alternative work, within 60 days after the claims administrator receives a doctor's report saying you have made a maximum medical recovery.

- **Death benefits**: Payments to your spouse, children or other dependents if you die from a job injury or illness. The amount of payment is based on the number of dependents. The benefit is paid every two weeks at a rate of at least $224 per week. In addition, workers' compensation provides a burial allowance.

## OTHER BENEFITS

You may file a claim with the Employment Development Department (EDD) to get state disability benefits when workers' compensation benefits are delayed, denied, or have ended. There are time restrictions so for more information contact the local office of EDD or go to their web site www.edd.ca.gov.

If your injury results in a permanent disability (PD) and the state determines that your PD benefit is disproportionately low compared to your earning loss, you may qualify for additional money from the Department of Industrial Relation's special earnings loss supplement program also known as the return to work program. If you have questions or think you qualify, contact the Information & Assistance Unit by going to www.dwc.ca.gov and looking under "Workers' Compensation programs and units" for the "Information & Assistance Unit" link or visit the DIR web site at www.dir.ca.gov.

| Workers' compensation fraud is a crime |
| --- |
| Any person who makes or causes to be made any knowingly false statement in order to obtain or deny workers' compensation benefits or payments is guilty of a felony. If convicted, the person will have to pay fines up to $150,000 and/or serve up to five years in jail. |

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE AN INJURY?

**Report your injury to your employer**

Tell your supervisor right away no matter how slight the injury may be. Don't delay – there are time limits. You could lose your right to benefits if your employer does not learn of your injury within 30 days. If your injury or illness is one that develops over time, report it as soon as you learn it was caused by your job.

If you cannot report to the employer or don't hear from the claims administrator after you have reported your injury, contact the claims administrator yourself.

**Workers' compensation insurance company or if employer is self-insured, person responsible for handling the claim is:**

_____

Address: _____

Phone: _____.

You may be able to find the name of your employer's workers' compensation insurer at www.caworkcompcoverage.com. If no coverage exists or coverage has expired, contact the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement at www.dir.ca.gov/DLSE as all employees must be covered by law.

**Get emergency treatment if needed**

If it's a medical emergency, go to an emergency room right away. Tell the medical provider who treats you that your injury is job related. Your employer may tell you where to go for follow up treatment.

**Emergency telephone number:** Call 911 for an ambulance, fire department or police. For non-emergency medical care, contact your employer, the workers' compensation claims administrator or go to this facility:

_____.

**Fill out DWC 1 claim form and give it to your employer**

Your employer must give you a DWC 1 claim form within one working day after learning about your injury or illness. Complete the employee portion, sign and give it back to your employer. Your employer will then file your claim with the claims administrator. Your employer must authorize treatment within one working day of receiving the DWC 1 claim form.

If the injury is from repeated exposures, you have one year from when you realized your injury was job related to file a claim.

In either case, you may receive up to $10,000 in employer-paid medical care until your claim is either accepted or denied. The claims administrator has up to 90 days to decide whether to accept or deny your claim. Otherwise your case is presumed payable.

Your employer or the claims administrator will send you "benefit notices" that will advise you of the status of your claim.

## MORE ABOUT MEDICAL CARE

**What is a Primary Treating Physician (PTP)?**

This is the doctor with overall responsibility for treating your injury or illness. He or she may be:

- The doctor you name in writing *before* you get hurt on the job
- A doctor from the medical provider network (MPN)
- The doctor chosen by your employer during the first 30 days of injury if your employer does not have an MPN or
- The doctor you chose after the first 30 days if your employer does not have an MPN.

**What is a Medical Provider Network (MPN)?**

An MPN is a select group of health care providers who treat injured workers. Check with your employer to see if they are using an MPN.

If you have not named a doctor before you get hurt and your employer is using an MPN, you will see an MPN doctor. After your first visit, you are free to choose another doctor from the MPN list.

**What is Predesignation?**

Predesignation is when you name your regular doctor to treat you if you get hurt on the job. The doctor must be a medical doctor (M.D.), doctor of osteopathic medicine (D.O.) or a medical group with an M.D. or D.O. You must name your doctor in writing *before* you get hurt or become ill.

You may predesignate a doctor if you have health care coverage for non-work injuries and illnesses. The doctor must have:

- Treated you
- Maintained your medical history and records before your injury and
- Agreed to treat you for a work-related injury or illness before you get hurt or become ill.

You may use the "predesignation of personal physician" form included with this pamphlet. After you fill in the form, be sure to give it to your employer.

If your employer does not have an approved MPN, you may name your chiropractor or acupuncturist to treat you for work related injuries. The notice of personal chiropractor or acupuncturist must be in writing *before* you get hurt. You may use the form included in this pamphlet. After you fill in the form, be sure to give it to your employer.

With some exceptions, state law does not allow a chiropractor to continue as your treating physician after 24 visits. Once you have received 24 chiropractic visits, if you still require medical treatment, you will have to select a new physician who is not a chiropractor. The term "chiropractic visit" means any chiropractic office visit, regardless of whether the services performed involve chiropractic

manipulation or are limited to evaluation and management.

Exceptions to the prohibition on a chiropractor continuing as your treating physician after 24 visits include postsurgical physical medicine visits prescribed by the surgeon, or physician designated by the surgeon, under the postsurgical component of the Division of Workers' Compensation's Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, or if your employer has authorized additional visits in writing.

## WHAT IF THERE IS A PROBLEM?

If you have a concern, speak up. Talk to your employer or the claims administrator handling your claim and try to solve the problem. If this doesn't work, get help by trying the following:

**Contact the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) Information and Assistance (I&A) Unit**
All 24 DWC offices throughout the state provide information and assistance on rights, benefits and obligations under California's workers' compensation laws. I&A officers help resolve disputes without formal proceedings. Their goal is to get you full and timely benefits. Their services are free.

To contact the nearest I&A Unit, go to www.dwc.ca.gov and under "Workers' Compensation programs and units", click on "Information & Assistance Unit." At this site you will find fact sheets, guides and information to help you.

The nearest I&A Unit is located at:

Address: _____

Phone number: _____.

**Consult with an attorney**
Most attorneys offer one free consultation. If you decide to hire an attorney, his or her fees may be taken out of some of your benefits. For names of workers' compensation attorneys, call the State Bar of California at (415) 538-2120 or go to their website at www.californiaspecialist.org. You may get a list of attorneys from your local I&A Unit or look in the yellow pages.

**Warning**

Your employer may not pay workers' compensation benefits if you get hurt in a voluntary off-duty recreational, social or athletic activity that is not part of your work-related duties.

**Additional rights**

You may also have other rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA). For additional information, contact FEHA at (800) 884-1684 or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) at (800) 669-4000.

The information contained in this pamphlet conforms to the informational requirements found in Labor Code sections 3551 and 3553 and California Code of Regulation, Title 8, sections 9880 and 9883. This document is approved by the Division of Workers' Compensation administrative director.

Revised 6/17/14 and effective for dates of injuries on or after 1/1/13

## PREDESIGNATION OF PERSONAL PHYSICIAN

In the event you sustain an injury or illness related to your employment, you may be treated for such injury or illness by your personal medical doctor (M.D.), doctor of osteopathic medicine (D.O.) or medical group if:

- on the date of your work injury you have health care coverage for injuries or illnesses that are not work related;
- the doctor is your regular physician, who shall be either a physician who has limited his or her practice of medicine to general practice or who is a board-certified or board-eligible internist, pediatrician, obstetrician-gynecologist, or family practitioner, and has previously directed your medical treatment, and retains your medical records;
- your "personal physician" may be a medical group if it is a single corporation or partnership composed of licensed doctors of medicine or osteopathy, which operates an integrated multispecialty medical group providing comprehensive medical services predominantly for nonoccupational illnesses and injuries;
- prior to the injury your doctor agrees to treat you for work injuries or illnesses;
- prior to the injury you provided your employer the following in writing: (1) notice that you want your personal doctor to treat you for a work-related injury or illness, and (2) your personal doctor's name and business address.

You may use this form to notify your employer if you wish to have your personal medical doctor or a doctor of osteopathic medicine treat you for a work-related injury or illness and the above requirements are met.

### NOTICE OF PREDESIGNATION OF PERSONAL PHYSICIAN

**Employee: Complete this section.**

To: _____ (name of employer) If I have a work-related injury or illness,

I choose to be treated by: _____
(name of doctor)(M.D., D.O., or medical group)

_____
(street address, city, state, ZIP)
_____(telephone number)

Employee Name (please print):_____

Employee's Address: _____

Name of Insurance Company, Plan, or Fund providing health coverage for nonoccupational injuries or illnesses:

_____

Employee's Signature _____Date: _____

**Physician: I agree to this Predesignation:**

Signature: _____ _____Date: _____
(Physician or Designated Employee of the Physician or Medical Group)

The physician is not required to sign this form, however, if the physician or designated employee of the physician or medical group does not sign, other documentation of the physician's agreement to be predesignated will be required pursuant to Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9780.1(a)(3).

**§ 9783.1. DWC Form 9783.1 Notice of Personal Chiropractor or Personal Acupuncturist.**

## NOTICE OF PERSONAL CHIROPRACTOR OR PERSONAL ACUPUNCTURIST

If your employer or your employer's insurer does not have a Medical Provider Network, you may be able to change your treating physician to your personal chiropractor or acupuncturist following a work-related injury or illness. In order to be eligible to make this change, you must give your employer the name and business address of a personal chiropractor or acupuncturist in writing prior to the injury or illness. Your claims administrator generally has the right to select your treating physician within the first 30 days after your employer knows of your injury or illness. After your claims administrator has initiated your treatment with another doctor during this period, you may then, upon request, have your treatment transferred to your personal chiropractor or acupuncturist.

**NOTE**: If your date of injury is January 1, 2004 or later, a chiropractor cannot be your treating physician after you have received 24 chiropractic visits unless your employer has authorized additional visits in writing. The term “chiropractic visit” means any chiropractic office visit, regardless of whether the services performed involve chiropractic manipulation or are limited to evaluation and management. Once you have received 24 chiropractic visits, if you still require medical treatment, you will have to select a new physician who is not a chiropractor. This prohibition shall not apply to visits for postsurgical physical medicine visits prescribed by the surgeon, or physician designated by the surgeon, under the postsurgical component of the Division of Workers’ Compensation’s Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule.

You may use this form to notify your employer of your personal chiropractor or acupuncturist.

**Your Chiropractor or Acupuncturist's Information:**

_____

**(name of chiropractor or acupuncturist)**

_____

**(street address, city, state, zip code)**

_____

**(telephone number)**

Employee Name **(please print)**:

_____

Employee's Address:

_____

Employee's Signature _____ Date: _____

# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AWARENESS POLICY

*County of San Luis Obispo*

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# COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AWARENESS POLICY

***-IF THERE IS IMMINENT DANGER-***

Call 911 (or 9+911) if the situation poses imminent danger to employees and the public.

Then notify Personnel at 781-5959 to activate necessary members of the Crisis Management Team.

~~o00o~~

INTRODUCTION

San Luis Obispo County is committed to serving a wide range of citizens, some of whom can be under severe stress and have nowhere else to turn. Providing services to these and other persons can place County employees in a position of vulnerability to violence or threatening behavior. The County values its employees and clients and, with this Policy, the County affirms its commitment to providing work environments and facilities that are free from violence. Authority for this Policy is Title 8, Section 3203 of the California Administrative Code.

POLICY

As a matter of policy the County of San Luis Obispo will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence, either verbal, written or implied, toward employees by other County employees, clients or members of the public.

For the purposes of this policy, “violence” includes any willful touching of a person in a harmful or unwanted way, and a “threat” of violence includes any statement, course of conduct or other action that would cause a reasonable person to believe that violence may occur. Some examples:

- Grabbing, pushing or striking another person.
- Pinching, groping or fondling another person, either sexually or otherwise.
- Fighting, challenging another person to fight.
- Stalking or following another person.
- Accosting or harassing another person in an intimidating way, either face to face or by telephone, fax, mail, computer or other form of communication.
- Displaying, threatening to use or using a firearm, or other weapon in the work environment.

## TYPES OF PERPETRATORS

### STRANGERS

To help protect employees from violent strangers in the community, the County will provide crime prevention educational material and workshops to employees and will address security issues involving work sites and facilities.

### CLIENTS

As a matter of policy, the County of San Luis Obispo will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence towards employees by clients or other members of the public.

Employees in many departments deal with clients who are distressed and who may make threats or commit acts of violence. The County will provide support and guidance to employees so that threats of violence can be recognized and prudently addressed, and so that acts of violence can be prevented if possible.

Client violence may be difficult to control, and employee exposure to such violence may be a result of working with special client/patient populations. The handling of some client violence situations may properly be the primary function of local law enforcement agencies.

### FAMILY MEMBERS OR ACQUAINTANCES

If the workplace is affected by a violent act or threat of violence by an employee's family member or acquaintance, the County will provide support and guidance for the victim and his or her co-workers.

### EMPLOYEES

The County of San Luis Obispo will not tolerate validated violent acts or threats of violence (either verbal, written or implied) by employees. The County will not discriminate or retaliate against employees who express a concern regarding threats of violence in the workplace. In such cases, the County endorses immediate and definitive use of the disciplinary process up to and including discharge from County employment, consistent with ensuring the safety of co-workers. Criminal prosecution will be pursued as appropriate. The County also advocates a preventive approach whereby Civil Service rules and regulations are fairly and consistently administered, and where troubled employees receive guidance and, if necessary, professional assistance.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

The County Administrator shall ensure that this Policy is fully implemented and adapted to unique needs at the agency/department level, and that the County organization maintains an effective support structure for responding to acts and threats of workplace violence.

The Office of the County Administrator, Risk Management Division will maintain and include this Policy as part of the County's written Occupational Injury and Illness Prevention Program and will administer claims.

### PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

The Personnel Department has overall responsibility for identifying resources that agencies and departments can use in developing their training plans and violence prevention measures. The Personnel Department will also administer workplace violence prevention measures involving Labor Relations (including compulsory medical or “fitness for duty” examinations) and the Employee Assistance Program, and will coordinate post-incident activities involving employee services.

### CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Crisis Management Team is a resource to be used by County Departments. In most instances, Team members will be called on individually for advice. Only in rare cases will the Team be required to meet as a unit. The Team will consist of the following:

- Administration: County Administrator or his/her designee
- Affected Department: Department Head or his/her designee
- Facilities: General Services Director or his/her designee
- Fire: Fire Department of Jurisdiction
- Health: Health Agency Director or his/her designee
- Law Enforcement: Sheriff or his/her designee
- Legal: County Counsel or his/her designee
- Personnel: Personnel Director or his/her designee
- Psychological: Mental Health Director or his/her designee
- Risk Management: Risk Manager or his/her designee
- Victim Witness: District Attorney or his/her designee

The Risk Manager (or his/her designee) or Personnel Director will convene selected members of the County Crisis Management Team as necessary to assess the seriousness of any situation reported by a department.

Team Members are responsible to report changes in telephone numbers to Risk Management. Risk Management will verify the accuracy of Team information (names and telephone numbers) every six months and will update the Team Member List as necessary.

### DEPARTMENT HEADS

Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that this Policy is implemented in their respective organizations and that the unique needs of their organizations are addressed through procedures and training. Each agency and/or department must develop a plan for preventing and responding to acts of workplace violence. These plans need not be lengthy, but they shall contain as a minimum an Emergency Plan attachment that includes facility-specific procedures (such as alarm buttons and escape routes), notification lists, and a time line for training designated employees.

### MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to make safety their highest concern. When made aware of a real or perceived threat of violence, management shall conduct a thorough investigation, provide support for employees, and take specific actions to help prevent acts of violence. Managers and supervisors shall also provide information and training for employees as needed. Management shall document investigation facts and the training provided.

### EMPLOYEES

Employees should learn to recognize and respond to behaviors by potential perpetrators that may indicate a risk of violence. Employees shall also place safety as the highest concern, and shall report all acts of violence and threats of violence.

## PHYSICAL SECURITY

Since the County is a public organization that wishes to remain accessible to its clients to the fullest extent possible, it is not the County's intent to implement a widespread “fortification” of its facilities. The County prefers to train its employees to be the primary means of reducing workplace violence. However, certain facilities, due to the nature of the service provided, may need barriers, cameras, metal detectors, better locks, and the like. Where such structures are necessary, they should be constructed in the least obtrusive way feasible.

## TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Although acts of workplace violence cannot be precisely predicted, a knowledge of how to respond to perpetrators can help County employees minimize the risk of violence or injury. The County will provide designated employees with training that will help them take appropriate precautions and respond wisely when confronted with a potentially violent individual. Departments will structure this training to meet the unique needs of each operation.

Since the vast majority of violent acts perpetrated by employees and employee family members are preceded by a number of behaviors that signal an escalating situation, the County will provide employees with written materials that will help them recognize the warning signs of violence, and will recommend professional consultation or initiate intervention measures before a violent act occurs.

## INVESTIGATION

The County will investigate all threats, regardless of the nature of the threat to verify the source of information. The purpose of the investigation is to establish a probable cause and a good faith belief the potential for violence is real. The investigation may intrude into the perpetrator's private matters and to prevent defamation claims it should be prompt, thorough and confidential before warning other employees.

If the investigation reveals the threat is genuine and perhaps imminent, the County will take immediate action. Safety or security measures may have to be provided for the intended victim. Depending on the circumstances, security measures might be necessary before meeting with the person making the threat. The investigation will be non-threatening and non-confrontational. The facts and County action taken will be documented to demonstrate that the County took prompt and reasonable steps based on the evidence available.

## DOCUMENTATION

Incidence of violence and the appropriate disciplinary measures are to be thoroughly documented and retained in the employee's personnel file. In case of a current employee being hired, transferred or otherwise employed by another County department, it shall be the responsibility of the hiring department to review the employee's personnel file to acquaint themselves with any documentation of past violent incidents.

# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AWARENESS

## INTRODUCTION

Workplace violence is a concern to many San Luis Obispo County employees. This booklet provides information that will be useful to you as a supervisor when questions or issues arise regarding workplace violence involving a stranger, a client, an employee or an employee family member or acquaintance. The Workplace Violence Awareness Policy is available from your department Safety Representative.

## PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE

### PROTECTION THROUGH PLANNING

Work with your Department Head, Safety Representative, Safety Committee and General Services Liaison to prepare a Workplace Violence Awareness section to your Department Emergency Plan. This section does not have to be lengthy, but it should reflect the unique needs of your individual operations. As a minimum, the section should include the following elements:

Specific roles and responsibilities, such as who goes to the front desk, who calls police, who directs incoming emergency response vehicles, who handles media relations, etc.

- Evacuation routes and safe assembly areas.
- Means of communication, such as portable radios, cordless telephones, cellular telephones, silent alarms, buzzers, and intercom systems.
- Liaison with other agencies and organizations. This may include some of the resources listed at the end of this booklet.
- Notification of relatives and next of kin. (Make sure your plan includes how phone numbers can be obtained.)
- Counseling resources for victims, witnesses, and others affected by the incident.
- Media relations. You may want to involve your department or agency public relations manager (if you have one) or coordinate in advance with the County's Administrative Office at 781-5011.
- Training, both initial and ongoing, for designated supervisors and employees. Include a time line and the types of training (videos, guest speakers, etc.) that will be used. Training may involve a short video and a limited discussion, or for employees who are at greater risk, it may involve a longer video combined with written handout material or even an all-day seminar. Try to assess the specific training needs of your employees and find appropriate training materials to address these needs. See the back of this booklet for a list of training resources.
- Protective measures for employees who perform tasks such as cash handling that may involve a greater risk of stranger violence.
- Reception desk procedures.

Additional elements of the Emergency Plan should encourage employee use of counseling resources such as the Employee Assistance Program, and the use of supervisory techniques to enhance communication and promote peaceable social interactions. Once it is written, your Workplace Violence Awareness section should be read, understood and discussed by all employees.

## PROTECTION THROUGH BUILDING SECURITY

Since the County's policy is to keep its facilities as accessible as possible to its clients, the County prefers to not rely on physical security measures as the primary means of preventing workplace violence. However, there are certain measures that will not affect the open appearance of the facility nor greatly impact your department's budget.

- Install a central reception area for each facility. This will enable you to better identify strangers and screen clients. This can help control client access to employee work areas.
- Provide an escape route for reception personnel. Do not set up your reception area in such a way that the receptionist is blocked in by the client, but have a clear escape route to the back of the desk or to the side so that the receptionist can make a hasty retreat if necessary.
- Check exterior lighting, especially in areas where employees walk to their cars. Consult with the Crime Prevention Unit (781-4547) for preventing crime through environmental design. Discuss lighting needs with your General Services Liaison, who can discuss improvements with the General Services Facility Manager.
- If necessary, ask General Services (781-5200) to prune landscaping to eliminate hiding places near entrances, walkways, and parking areas.
- Install a buzzer or silent alarm that alerts employees in the back that a problem exists at the front desk. An alternative is to have a code name to be announced over your intercom, such as "Paging Dr. Green."
- Make sure that all non-public entrances are kept closed and locked, and that signs are posted where necessary directing clients to public entrances. Check with the fire department in your local jurisdiction before locking a door that is not equipped with a "panic bar" on the inside.
- Post emergency numbers for police, fire, and medical services. If your phones require dialing "9" first, be sure the notices say "9+911". Telephone stickers are available from Risk Management (781-5011).
- The Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit (781-4547) conducts risk analysis surveys of County buildings; call them if a survey has not been performed for your facility.

It may be necessary at some facilities to go beyond the minor physical measures listed above. Installation of such equipment as metal detectors, special locks, and bullet resistant glass may be advisable but are beyond the scope of this booklet. If your department feels that such measures are needed, discuss the idea with the Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit (781-4547). General Services Capital Programs (781-5200) can give you an idea of the costs involved. Submit all such ideas to your Administrative Analyst. Be aware that

such measures, although effective, are not a fail-safe protection against workplace violence. Any physical security improvements should also be accompanied by a particularly aggressive implementation of the other suggestions contained in this booklet.

## PROTECTION FROM STRANGERS

The Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit offers educational programs in crime reduction and personal safety. The presentations include robbery prevention/ reduction, personal safety and assault prevention. Crime prevention materials are provided with these programs. To help your employees protect themselves against violent crimes, schedule a presentation and distribute the materials regarding crime prevention.

Work with your employees to address any work practices (such as cash handling) that may involve a risk of violence. Where appropriate, post signs stating that limited cash is kept on hand.

## PROTECTION FROM CLIENTS

Much of what you as a supervisor can do to prevent client violence has to do with training your employees. Consult one of the resources at the back of this booklet for sources of training and/or training materials.

Some procedures that can help prevent client violence include having clients sign in at the reception area, wear a visitor badge, and/or be escorted if they must enter work areas. Talk with your employees, your supervisor, and one or more of the resources listed at the back of this booklet to get their thoughts about measures that could improve the security of your particular operation.

Many employees ask about security guards. In certain controlled situations, properly trained and screened security guards can be effective, but it is not possible to cover every situation, and security guards are quite expensive. The best protection is to have trained staff that know how to respond appropriately in the event of a threat or a violent act.

## PROTECTION THROUGH SELECTION AND HIRING

The best way to reduce violence by employees is to not hire potentially violent employees in the first place. Although applicant’s potential for violence may be the farthest thing from your mind during the selection process, the hiring interview is a prime opportunity to probe an applicant’s approach to potentially volatile situations. You might base your questions on a scenario, preferably one that is related to the specific job opening and describes a situation where a hypothetical employee is treated in a way that would tend to provoke anger.

Pay close attention to the applicant’s responses – they may be subtle, but they may give you valuable information that will help you in your hiring decision.

A second, very important step is to check references and verify employment dates and titles with prior employers before making a job offer. There are a number of legal issues involved with these checks, and many laws restrict what a prospective employer may ask. California law, however, gives law enforcement agencies the right to obtain a peace officer applicant's employment information from previous employers. (California Government Code Sec. 1031.1). If you need advice in this area, contact Personnel.

## THREATS OF VIOLENCE

A threat of violence can take many forms. Verbal comments, phone calls, and letters are common, but a threat can include symbols such as mutilated animals – anything that would make a reasonable person fear for his or her safety.

## THREAT REPORTING

If one of your employees reports a threat of violence, take the threat seriously and tell the employee that reporting the threat was the right thing to do. Assure him or her that the report will be handled discreetly and will only be shared with those who need to know.

Your next steps after receiving a threat report:

- Inform your immediate supervisor and your Department Head
- Notify the Crisis Management Team (Personnel 781-5959 or Risk Management 781-5011.)
- If you think that a violent act is imminent, call the police at 911 (or 9+911)
- Warn employees immediately.

## THREAT INVESTIGATION

Investigate all threats, regardless of the nature of the threat. Ask the following questions, and keep proper notes and records.

- Who made the threat?
- Whom against was the threat made?
- What is the alleged perpetrator's relationship with the victim?
- What was the specific language of the threat?
- Was there any physical contact that would lead you to believe the threatening person will follow through?
- Determine the names, addresses and telephone numbers of witnesses to any threats.
- What was the time and place where the threat occurred?
- Have there been any prior incidents of violence or threats?
- Is there any documentation such as letters or recorded phone messages, or other physical evidence?
- Is there any other information or any suggestions that would help in the investigation?

If you feel you should meet with witnesses, do so immediately. Maintain confidentiality except where the release of selected facts is needed to ensure the security of others.

## THREAT ASSESSMENT

Will the perpetrator actually follow through on a threat of violence? This is a difficult question to answer, and you should not try to answer it on your own. Local police should be called if someone is breaking the law or creating an immediate danger to anyone. County Mental Health Services (781-4700) provide 24-hour coverage to evaluate threats that appear to stem from mental illness and to determine whether psychiatric hospitalization is indicated.

## CONTACT WITH THE PERPETRATOR OF THE THREAT

If you need to make contact with the alleged perpetrator, make sure you are not placing yourself in danger by doing so. When making contact, ask non-threatening open-ended questions. Be supportive in the initial stages of the conversation, but do not suggest that you would be willing to give in to demands made or violate any laws, County policies, contracts, or Civil Service rules.

## BOMB THREATS

Bomb threats are a unique kind of threat because the stakes are so high. The two most common reasons for bomb threats calls are:

- The caller knows about a bomb and wants to minimize injury or property damage. The caller may be the bomber or someone else who has information about the bomb.
- The caller wants to create an atmosphere of anxiety in order to disrupt normal operations at a County facility.

Most bomb threats are made by phone. Any employee who receives calls directly could receive a bomb threat. Copy the Bomb Threat Checklist at the back of this guide for your employees to keep under their telephones.

If you receive information by telephone or other communications that a bomb has been placed in a County facility, follow these procedures:

- Document your conversation on the BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST form.
- Call 911 (or 9+911)
- Notify the County Administrative Office or Risk Management.
- Do not search your work area unless directed.
- If you notice a suspicious item:
  - Do not touch the item
  - Notify your supervisor

- Evacuate your work area if directed by the County Administrator/Department Head
- Proceed to your designated assembly area.
- Wait for further instructions from authorities.

The decision to evacuate after a bomb threat will be based on the amount of detail available and whether the call appears to be a legitimate threat or a prank. If an evacuation is needed:

- Pay attention to specific evacuation directions and follow them.
- Leave doors and windows open to let the blast wave escape.
- Take your brief case, purse, lunch bag, etc. with you to minimize the search.
- The General Services Facility Manager will work with law enforcement to keep anyone from re-entering the building.

The search, if required, needs to be done by people who normally occupy and are familiar with the facility. Law enforcement will help, but they do not have the resources to do it alone.

If your employees help with the search, make sure that they:

- Check their immediate work area and report any suspicious objects to you, their supervisor, or the General Services Facility Manager.
- Do not touch any suspicious object – leave removal and disposal for the Bomb Squad.

LETTER BOMBS

Letter bombs vary in size and shape, and are usually addressed and booby-trapped to reach a specific target.

Be alert for unusual markings:

- Foreign mail or special delivery.
- Excessive postage.
- Handwritten or poorly typed address.
- Addressed to a title only, or the wrong title with a name.
- Unknown or no return address.
- Misspellings of common words.
- Restrictive markings, such as “Personal”, “To Be Opened Only By....”.

Watch for strange packaging:

- Excessive or lopsided weight.
- Rigid, uneven, or sloppy envelope.
- Protruding wires or foil.
- Oil or grease stains; strange odor.
- Excessive tape or string.
- Ticking.

If you suspect a package may be a bomb, DO NOT try to open it. Call 9-911 and notify your supervisor.

## THREATS BY EMPLOYEES

You may encounter a situation where the alleged perpetrator is a County employee. If you become aware of such a situation, conduct an investigation as described above. Keep an open mind. Remember that a report of a threat may have been fabricated in order to retaliate against the alleged perpetrator. To make sure the information you have is first hand, try to talk with several people who directly observed the threatening behavior.

Use common sense in taking any personnel actions, and call Personnel at 781-5959 if you need guidance. They may recommend placing the alleged perpetrator on administrative leave while you investigate further. Ask Personnel how to best obtain additional information, and specifically about a compulsory medical examination to determine fitness for duty. If Personnel recommends that you interview the perpetrator, discuss with them beforehand what, if any, security measures should be taken during the interview.

## WHEN AN EMPLOYEE FRIGHTENS OTHERS

There can be times when a troubled employee becomes a troubling employee. This usually begins when a pattern of behavior escalates to the point where co-workers are afraid of an employee, or it can be a crisis that ultimately leads to a violent act. However, people rarely commit a violent act “out of the blue,” and people don't “just snap.”

A violent act is almost always preceded by a number of warning signs or changes in behavior. Since these changes can be subtle, it is important to observe behavior carefully. Some of these warning signs are listed below.

Use caution when reading this list – it is not intended as an evaluation tool for you to assess the stability of an employee, since a display of one or more of these signs does not necessarily mean that a person will become violent. This list is simply a summary of the kinds of behaviors displayed by individuals who have at times committed violent acts. The purpose of this list is to heighten your awareness and to help you to determine if you have a cause for concern.

Consider these behaviors as a whole, and don't focus on one isolated act.

- Blaming others; inability to accept responsibility. Holding a grudge, especially against a supervisor, or a co-worker who is alleged to have received some “favor” such as a promotion at the perpetrator's expense.
- Paranoia – indicated by statements that everyone is against them, or by panicking easily.
- An increased propensity to push the limits of normal conduct, with disregard to the safety of self or co-workers.
- Veiled or open threats of violence, e.g., predicting “bad things are going to happen,” especially threats that are detailed or appear to be well-planned.
- A history of discipline or litigation; reacting poorly to discipline or performance evaluations.

- Irritability, belligerence, hostility.
- Excessive focus on weapons, police or the military or flashing weapons for reaction.
- Changes in behavior, such as a deterioration of work performance or an increase in concentration problems; becoming inappropriately withdrawn, increasingly angry, or agitated – or out of touch with reality. This may also signal a substance abuse problem.
- A resumption or escalation of drug and alcohol abuse.
- Reacting with great stress to workplace events such as layoffs, discharges, demotions, reorganizations, labor disputes, or to personal/family problems such as divorce, bankruptcy, etc.
- Depression.
- Crossing a co-worker's or supervisor's physical boundaries ("getting in their face") physical posturing or aggressiveness, stalking, excessive phone calls, etc.
- A known personal history of violent, reckless, or anti-social behavior.
- References to or identification with mass murders and infamous incidents of workplace violence. Having a fascination with recent incidents of workplace violence, and expressing approval of the use of violence under similar circumstances.
- An obsessive involvement with the job, which becomes the sole source of identity.
- A "loner," with little or no involvement with co-workers.
- A combination of the use of stimulants, paranoid behavior, and the purchase of weapons can be a particularly risky combination.

If you observe a change in an employee's behavior that fits the overall pattern of this list, it is a cause for concern. It is important that you communicate any concern immediately. Tell your supervisor, and call Personnel at 781-5959. Do not attempt to determine whether or not an employee is going to become violent based on behavior you observed; leave this kind of assessment to the experts. At the same time, do not become complacent nor put off calling the numbers above if you have a concern.

## DISCIPLINE AND DISCHARGE

If one of your employees becomes a troubling employee it is important to start appropriate personnel actions immediately. Remember that the County's Workplace Violence Awareness Policy prohibits any violent or threatening behavior and provides for disciplinary action as needed. This may include suspension or discharge. The progressive discipline process includes a wide range of options. Call Personnel at 781-5959 if you need advice or assistance in any of these areas. Do not let such problems persist unaddressed. The worst thing you can do is to ignore a problem or have an employee transferred to another department, because the problem will just crop up there.

Document all behaviors that contribute to your concern. This includes comments made to you or other employees, threats – either written or verbal, or behaviors that seem either inappropriate or scary.

The investigation may establish that you have reasonable cause to put the employee on administrative leave pending the initiation of discharge procedures. If you decide to place the employee on administrative leave, plan carefully (in consultation with Personnel) before you meet with the employee to inform him or her of your decision. The following steps may help to reduce the likelihood that the employee will resort to violent behavior.

- Always treat the employee with respect.
- Inform the employee prior to the meeting of his or her right to union representation during the meeting.
- Do not dwell on the reasons for your decision.
- Do not negotiate. Your decision is final.

When the discharge process results in the employee's separation from the County, two more steps may be helpful:

- Ask the employee where he or she would like you to forward his or her mail. This will help the employee understand that the discharge is in fact final, but at the same time gives him or her a sense of control.
- Ask the employee what he or she would like you to tell future employers who call regarding references. This again gives the employee some sense of control and helps address one of the primary fears of an employee who is fired – what you say to a prospective employer will affect his or her prospects of getting another job.

## OTHER FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

The investigation may reveal that accusations against the alleged perpetrator were false. In this case, you may have to dig deeper to determine and deal with the root causes of such false accusations.

You may want to consult with County Mental Health Services (781-4700) regarding other actions to be taken if mental illness appears to be involved. If the investigation determines that the employee is not a threat, but still has personal problems that need addressing, work with Personnel to determine the best course of action.

If the threat assessment determines that the employee is a threat, warn all potential victims as soon as possible.

## THREATS BY DOMESTIC PARTNERS OF EMPLOYEES

Whether the violence occurs at home or at the workplace, employees and their coworkers are affected. Increasingly, batterers are seeking out their domestic partners at the workplace because of their accessibility there.

Signs that an employee is being battered include:

- Frequent injuries or injuries inconsistent with the stated cause.
- Frequent use of sick leave; absenteeism and tardiness.
- Frequent “outside” telephone calls, usually in hushed tones
- Decreased productivity, poor concentration, fatigue, depression, crying.
- Appearance and grooming deteriorate.
- Coworkers may “cover” for employee (field incoming calls, etc.).

Many victims of domestic violence are ashamed and embarrassed. Although you must respect their right to privacy, it is also your responsibility to monitor employee work performance and workplace safety.

If you suspect an employee is battered at home and work performance is affected:

- Discuss work performance problems with employee and review expectations.
- Provide information about the Employee Assistance Program (EA.).
- Contact the County’s Victim /Witness Assistance Center for general information about domestic violence (extension 5821).

If an employee tells you they are a victim of violence at home:

- Review security measures, emergency procedures, safety of employee.
- Contact the County’s Victim/Witness Assistance Center for domestic violence information, resources (extension 5821).
- Review, if appropriate, employee’s leave options (sick leave, leave without pay, catastrophic leave).

## THREATS BY “STALKERS”

Stalking is when a perpetrator “willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or harasses another person and makes a credible threat with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear for his or her safety”. (California Penal Code, sec. 646.9). Stalking goes beyond mere harassment in that threats of violence are involved. A stalker can be anyone from an anonymous admirer to an ex-spouse.

If one of your employees becomes the victim of a stalker, take the situation seriously. Provide referrals for expert help, and do whatever you can reasonably do to protect the victim from unwanted calls or contacts at work. Lives have been saved by a supervisor's decisive action. Such actions might include:

- Calling the police at 911 (or 9+911) if the victim is in immediate danger.
- Calling and/or referring the victim to threat assessment consultation from Victim/Witness Assistance Center at (781-5821) or to Mental Health Services (781-4700) for assessment of behavior arising from mental illness .
- Moving the victim's desk to another area.
- Obtaining a Temporary Restraining Order against the perpetrator. California law now permits an employer to seek a temporary restraining order against a perpetrator (including a perpetrator who is also an employee) who is stalking an employee, elected official, volunteer, or independent contractor. (Ch. 29, Code of Civil Procedure sec. 527.8). But experience has shown that these

orders often do not prevent further stalking; instead, they can trigger a violation of the terms of the order – or a violent act. Restraining orders should therefore be used with extreme caution, and only after thorough consultation with threat assessment experts and knowledgeable legal counsel.

## SUPPORT FOR THREAT VICTIMS

In the flurry of activity following a threat of violence, remember to consider the needs of the victim(s). Since threat victims can become anxious or fearful, take the time to listen to their concerns, offer your support and, within the confines of confidentiality, keep them informed. If necessary, arrange for group counseling through the Crisis Intervention Hotline at 549-8989 or 1-800-549-8989.

## INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE

### IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS

Your response to an incident of violence will depend on the situation, and whether or not there are injuries or deaths involved. The Workplace Violence Awareness section of your Emergency Plan can help guide your actions. If you have not prepared such a section, you may want to take the following actions:

- Call 911 (or 9+911)
- Notify your supervisor
- Assign persons to handle:
  - Evacuation (if needed)
  - Directing incoming Emergency Response Vehicles
  - Communication with outside agencies
  - Media relations
- If needed, use Evacuation Routes and go to your Assembly Point(s).
- Decide on means of communication, such as portable radios, cordless telephones, cellular telephones, silent alarms, buzzers, and intercom systems.

### CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING

All those affected by the incident can benefit from a Critical Incident Debriefing. Contact one of the counseling resources listed at the back of this pamphlet for sources of trained counselors. Such services can reduce negative long-term effects of the event. Be sure to arrange for follow-up sessions, as well as additional debriefing sessions if needed.

### NOTIFICATION OF RELATIVES AND NEXT OF KIN

If an employee is severely injured or killed in an act workplace violence, the likelihood of future claims and lawsuits can be reduced if the notification process is carried out professionally and sensitively. Notification of next of kin should be handled at the top levels of the County's organization, thus be sure you or your

supervisor contacts your agency/department head and Risk Management prior to making any such notification.

## SUPPORT FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY THE INCIDENT

All those affected by the incident, including co-workers, supervisors, witnesses, clients and survivors and next of kin will benefit from offers of support – including counseling, transportation, and other logistical assistance that would help ease the pain. In summary, any gesture of kindness during this time will do a great deal to provide comfort and support – and help to prevent future claims and lawsuits by family members. Since expenses for such support can be an issue, especially when out of town family members are flying in, decisions regarding payment should be made by the executive managers involved.

It will help the emotional well-being of co-workers if clean-up procedures required by an incident begin immediately so that the work site is restored to a normal appearance as soon as possible. This may include replacing broken windows, painting, carpet replacement, etc. Ensure this work is done quickly and professionally – ideally within one working day.

Organizations such as the Hospice listed on the back of this guide can provide some additional guidance in this area. You may also want to provide some kind of activity where the deceased or injured can be remembered. This may be a memorial service, a wake, or some other type of activity. One organization provided flowers and blank books in deceased employees' offices so co-workers could record their thoughts and feelings regarding their departed co-workers. It is little touches like these that go a long way toward facilitating the healing process.

## CONCLUSION

Hopefully, you and your employees will never be involved in an incident of workplace violence. But due to the types of services the County provides, and the violent nature of modern society, it is important to understand how to help prevent, prepare for, and respond to such incidents. This booklet has provided a starting point for such an understanding, but you should now discuss specific training and preparedness needs with your employees, and work with your supervisor to fully address those needs.

RESOURCES

CONTACTS:

Crisis Intervention:

- Hotline of SLO County - 549-8989 (24 hours) ~ or ~ 1-800-549-8989
- Incident response - Emergency Dispatch 911 (or 9+911)
- Incident reporting and recovery - Crisis Management Team (Personnel) 781-5959 and Risk Management 781-5011.

Referrals:

Advice regarding labor laws and liabilities - County Counsel 781-4221
Building Modifications - General Services Building Maintenance or Capital Improvements 781-5200
Claims management (in the event of an incident involving injuries or property damage) Risk Management 781-5011
Conflict Resolution Center - 549-0442
Counseling - Employee Assistance Program 1-800 999-7222
Counseling - (incident recovery, debriefing, brief treatment for post-traumatic stress)

- Mental Health Services - 781-4700
- Hospice of San Luis Obispo County, Inc. - 544-2266 or 434-1164

Guidance regarding different cultures; information about the County's Sexual Harassment Policy - Personnel 781-5959
Hiring guidance - Personnel 781-5959
Landscape pruning - General Services 781-5200
Media relations - County Administration 781-5011
Next of kin notification (in the event of serious injury or death) - Contact department head and Risk Management - 781-5011
Personnel action guidance, including compulsory medical/fitness for duty examinations - Personnel 781-5959
Psychiatric assessment - Mental Health Services 781-4700
Training videos - Risk Management 781-5011
Training, Risk Analysis Surveys, Materials - Sheriff's Department 781-4547

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## TRAINING MATERIALS

"Call to Action: Managing Violence in the Workplace:" A video available for free loan from the County Supervisors Association of California Excess Insurance Authority (916) 631-7363.
"Violence in the Workplace" video available from Risk Management 781-5011
The Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit offers a variety of brochures and free crime prevention workshops. 781-4547

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# BOMB THREAT CHECK LIST

Most threats are made by telephone. If you receive a bomb threat call, please remember:

- Remain calm
- Document the call: Date: _____ Time of Call: _____
  Time Call Ended: _____
- Questions to ask:
  - Where is the bomb right now? _____
  - When is the bomb going to explode? _____
  - What kind of a bomb is it? _____
  - Why did you place the bomb? _____
  - Where are you calling from? _____

Exact Words of Call: _____

_____

Next steps:

- Notify a supervisor
- Call 9-911
- Call the administrative office at 781-5011

Describe Caller's Voice:

□ Male □ Female
□ Young □ Middle Aged □ Old
□ Accent/Type: _____
□ Tone of Voice: _____
□ Is Voice Familiar? _____ Whom does it sound like? _____
□ Background Noise? _____ Describe Noise: _____
□ Other Voice Characteristics: _____

Name of Person Receiving Call: _____

Department: _____ Phone No. _____

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**►►SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES, LETTERS OR OTHER OBJECTS◄◄**

**DO NOT TOUCH a suspicious-looking item**
**Warn others to stay away from item**
**Notify a supervisor immediately**
**Call 9-911 for further help**