Corporate Health & Safety Procedure

Personal Safety Policy
Managers Guidance

CONTENTS

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1. **Managers 3 Step process for implementation**

As a manager you have a key role to play in managing personal safety risk to the staff you are responsible for. This is a straightforward three stage management process intended to help you identify which staff are at risk and develop appropriate personal safety procedures in your service area or workplace. As the needs of each workplace will be different it is not intended to be prescriptive.

Step 1 Find out if there is a problem

Step 2 Take action

Step 3 Check what you have done

It is important to remember that these three stages are not one-off actions. If Stage 3 shows there is still a problem then the process should be repeated. Stages 1 and 2 are completed by carrying out a risk assessment. There are documents at the end of this section to help you, including a flow chart, staff questionnaire, personal safety risk assessment and risk assessment significant findings record. Feel free to adapt them to suit your own working practices.

2. **Step 1 – Find out if there is a problem**

The first step in the risk assessment process is to identify the hazards. You may think violence in not a problem in your team or that incidents are rare. However, your employees' view may be very different so asking your staff is the first step. Do this informally via team meetings or use the questionnaire provided to find out what your staff think. Tell your staff the results of your survey so they realise that you acknowledge their concerns.

You can also have a look at records of past incidents. If you haven't kept records – start to do so now – including any verbal abuse and threats. Record the following information:

- An account of what happened
- Details of the victim(s), the assailant(s) and any witnesses
- The outcome, including working time lost to both the individual(s) affected and the team/organisation as a whole
- The details on the location of the incident

Some employees may be reluctant to report incidents of aggressive behaviour which make them feel threatened or worried. There are various reasons for this including:

- Feeling they will be ridiculed for what might be viewed as trivial by colleagues
- Feeling that something they did or didn't do contributed to the incident
- Feeling that they will be seen as not being able to do the job or cope with aspects of the job
- Too busy – perceived lack of time to complete the reporting paperwork
- No point – nothing will happen anyway
- Accepting abuse as part of their job

You will need a record of all incidents to be able to build up a full picture of the extent of the problem. Encourage your staff to give you a full report of any incidents immediately after they occur – let them know that this is what you expect.

3. **Step 2 – Taking action**

Having discovered that violence could be a problem for your staff you now need to decide what needs to be done. Continue with your risk assessment approach by deciding who might be harmed and how – identify which of your staff are at risk – those who deal with the public, work in isolation, carry out inspection or enforcement duties, handle money, or who deal with difficult client groups will be most at risk. Carry out a more detailed Personal Safety Risk Assessment on specific roles within your team or specific situations or on all individuals. Get your staff involved in the risk assessment process – make it part of the culture of your team.

Evaluate the risk – check what arrangements and precautions are already in place – are they adequate or could more be done? It is usually a combination of factors which contribute to an incident taking place. Factors which you can influence are:

The level of information provided and training given -

Facilitate access to relevant training courses for your staff so that they can gain the skills to be able spot the early warning signs in a potential aggressor and avoid it or defuse it.

Provide your staff with the information they need to fully understand any systems you or the Council has set up for their protection.

Where appropriate, identify potentially violent people/ clients with a history of violence in advance so that the risks from them can be minimised.

The environment -

If you have to have waiting areas for the public ensure these are provided in accordance with the H&S Personal Safety Public Interface Guide 4 attached.

Review the physical security of your staff – do you have coded security locks on doors to keep the public out of staff areas? Would you benefit from installing an alarm system or video cameras?

Consider using alternative venues for meetings should attending people homes prove hazardous.

The design of the job -

Just because a task has always been undertaken in a certain way doesn't mean this is necessarily the best way - small changes to working practices can be really effective.

Cash handling – could you use cheques or credit cards for payments to reduce the amount of cash involved and make robbery less attractive? Bank money more frequently and vary the route taken when visiting the bank premises.

Home visits – can staff go in pairs if they have to meet a suspected aggressor?

Staff whereabouts – do you know where your staff are going – get staff who work away from the workplace to keep in touch regularly – utilise the Voiceconnect Loneworker System.

The threat of violence does not stop when the work period is ended. It is good practice to make sure that your staff get home safely too especially if they live alone. The Voiceconnect Loneworker system can be utilised for this purpose.

Try to take an overall view and consult with your staff over any preventative measures. Your staff are more likely to be committed to any measures you put in place if they helped to develop them and put them into practice.

Keep a record of your risk assessment – it will provide a working document for the future for you and your staff. If there is an incident which requires a full investigation – it will be one of the first things asked – "where is your risk assessment?"

4. **Stage 3 – Check what you have done**

Monitor and review on a regular basis to check how well any arrangements you have put in place are working, consulting with staff as you go. If your measures are working well, ensure they are kept up – don't let complacency creep in. If they aren't working - be prepared to change them or to add new measures – particularly important where a job or role changes. If violence is still a problem, go back to stages 1 & 2 and identify other preventative measures that could work and try those.

If an incident occurs, look back at your assessment, evaluate it and make any necessary changes. Keep records of all incidents and examine them regularly – they will show what progress you are making and if the problem is changing.
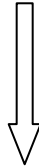
MANAGERS IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FOR PERSONAL SAFETY

STAGE 1

**FINDING OUT IF THERE IS A PROBLEM**

Encourage staff input by:

- Talking about personal safety at team meetings
- Conducting a staff survey by using the ***Personal Safety Questionnaire***
- Look at records of past incidents

STAGE 2

TAKING ACTION

- Work with staff on any issues raised in STAGE 1
- Conduct ***Personal Safety Risk Assessments*** on selected operational roles or specific situations or individuals with your team
- Develop local policies and procedures
- Change working practices
- Change the working environment
- Improve the risk assessment culture
- Improve incident record keeping
- Improve incident reporting and investigation
- Facilitate access of staff to relevant training
- Ensure that staff support mechanisms are accessible
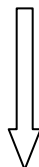
STAGE 3

MONITOR & REVIEW

Review with your staff

- Work done in STAGES 1 & 2
- What measures have worked well
- What measures haven't worked and need changing/adding to
- If any aspects of the job have changed?
- Any new incidents that have occurred
- Any changes needed to working practices / procedures / environment

FEEDBACK & SHARE BEST PRACTICE THROUGH YOUR DIRECTORATE H&S RISK MANAGER OR CORPORATE PERSONAL SAFETY GROUP REP

PERSONAL SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE - FOR STAFF

1.   Personal details

Are you?:		Male	or	Female
What is your job title?				
Where do you work?				
How long have you worked in this post?				
Do you have a line management role?		Yes	or	No

2.   What do you see as your personal safety risks at work?   (Tick all that apply)

	Risk Level (determined by frequency/severity/likelihood)			
	None	Low	Medium	High
Verbal abuse				
Threats/intimidation				
Physical abuse				
Sexual harassment				
Theft of personal items				
Theft of employers items				
Vandalism				
Any other issues including stress				

3.   Areas of concern about personal safety   (Tick all that apply)

	Risk Level (determined by frequency/severity/likelihood)			
	None	Low	Medium	High
Dealing with complaints				
Handling valuables				
Working in other peoples homes or premises				
Travelling by car				
Lone working				
Use of public transport				
Challenging behaviour from clients etc.				
Premises security				
Any other issues including stress				

4.   Whilst working for NYCC have you suffered: (Tick all that apply)

Nature of incident	How many	How serious	Who did this (client/public/colleague, etc.)
Physical assault			
Threats/intimidation			
Verbal abuse			
Sexual assault			
Racial harassment			
Theft of personal items			
Vandalism			
Fear of any of above			
Any other issues including stress			

5.   If you did not report the incident, why not? (please circle)

unprofessional to report	No reporting system
no physical injury	Not important enough
fear of reprisal	Sign of inadequacy / weakness
other reason (please give detail)	

6.   Work situation - at your base location

Situation	yes./no
Are you alone at work at all (example late working/remote)	
Do you feel vulnerable when lone working?	
Are there lone working safety arrangements in place?	
Are there procedures in place for dealing with violence?	
Do you report incidents that threaten personal safety?	
Do you have procedures for summoning help?	

7.   Work situation - working away from your base location

Situation	yes./no
Does someone know where you are	
If your plan changes, do you inform someone?	
Do you know the guidelines for working away from the base location?	
Do you know how to get help?	

Are there any issues regarding personal safety linked with your job that you need help with?

If yes, give brief details.

Are there any improvements you would like to see to reduce the personal safety risks in your job?

If yes, give brief details.

For managers only

Issue	yes/no
Do you have procedures/arrangements for lone working?	
Do you have procedures/arrangements for dealing with challenging behaviour, violence & aggression?	
Do you know if staff follow these procedures?	
Do you monitor the tracking system of your lone workers and know how to respond if people do not return or respond when expected?	
Are your employees trained in how to deal with challenging behaviour/violence and aggressive behaviour?	
Are staff warned about, know about "troublemakers"?	
Do you test your security systems such as visitor control, panic buttons, code words and emergency response?	
Do your staff report incidents of aggressive behaviour?	
Do you investigate and monitor these reports?	

This questionnaire is confidential and will be used to assess areas in which your personal safety could be improved.

ANNUAL PERSONAL SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT
FOR USE BY MANAGERS

Role or Situation being assessed:

Section 1.   Checklist to help identify the working situations where there may be a problem

Is the member of staff involved in any of the following:

Giving a service	yes	no	Teaching	yes	no	Caring	yes	no
Representing authority	yes	no	Cash transactions	yes	no	Reception duties	yes	no
Caretaking &/or looking after premises	yes	no	Lone working	yes	no	Home visiting	yes	no
Controlling/supervising/disciplining	yes	no	Evening working	yes	no	Enforcement/inspection duties	yes	no
Working with people with challenging behaviour	yes	no	Driving for work	yes	no	Other (ie Stress)		
Dealing with members of the public	yes	no	Off site working	yes	no	Other		

WORK SITUATION ASSESSMENT - Have you answered YES to any of the above?	yes	no

If <u>yes</u> - provide some detail and record what you will do to remove or reduce the risk.

Section 2.   Checklist to help identify any 'human factors' or interactions that may pose a risk

Are any of the following characteristics likely to occur which could cause a problem?

History of violent or unsociable behaviour	yes	no	Frustration with staff or organisation	yes	no	Immaturity	yes	no
Confrontational situations	yes	no	Inappropriate reaction	yes	no	Inexperience	yes	no
Under the influence of a substance	yes	no	Dangerous or threatening animals	yes	no	Shock or anxiety	yes	no
Mental instability	yes	no	Personal / Physical appearance	yes	no	Difficult to deal with	yes	no
Unpredictable behaviour	yes	no	Expectations	yes	no	Temperament	yes	no
Threatening behaviour	yes	no	Other (ie difficult relatives)					

ASSESSMENT OF 'HUMAN FACTORS' RISK - Have you answered YES to any of the above?	yes	no

If <u>yes</u> - provide some detail and record what you will do to remove or reduce the risk:

Section 3.   Checklist to help identify how people can be placed at risk by their working environment

Are any of the following work environment situations likely to cause a problem?

Working practices & patterns	yes	no	Waiting or queuing	yes	no	Handling valuables	yes	no
Locality of the workplace to the customer	yes	no	Poor interior design &/or layout	yes	no	Privacy or lack of it	yes	no
Mode of transport – either private or public	yes	no	Dark or poorly lit areas	yes	no	Visitor control	yes	no
Visits on other person's locality/territory	yes	no	Overgrown foliage & vegetation	yes	no	Security measures	yes	no
Remoteness of workplace	yes	no	High risk times of day	yes	no	Lone working	yes	no

WORKING ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT - Have you answered YES to any of the above?	yes	no

If <u>yes</u> - provide some detail and record what you will do to remove or reduce the risk:

Section 4.   Checklist to identify if existing controls are adequate or if more needs to be done - look at:

Regular review of past incidents	yes	no	Regular review of security measures	yes	no	Admissions criteria	yes	no
Regular staff discussions on problem areas	yes	no	Cashless payment methods	yes	no	Sharing of information	yes	no
Provision of specialist & generic training	yes	no	Avoiding lone working where possible	yes	no	Improve environment	yes	no
Provision of information to enable staff to anticipate potential issues	yes	no	Staff making use of Voiceconnect Loneworker system	yes	no	Possible changes to working patterns	yes	no
After incident staff care and support	yes	no	Consideration of issues when recruiting	yes	no	Reporting procedures	yes	no

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONTROLS – ARE YOUR EXISTING CONTROLS ADEQUATE?	Yes	No

Section 5.   Detail here your overall findings of the issues raised and what actions will be taken to eliminate, reduce and control the identified risks.

Signature of person carrying out this Personal Safety Risk Assessment: ……………………………………………

Name and job title :………………………………………….……..Date of Risk Assessment:……………………

RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD OF SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

RISK ASSESSMENT SHEET FOR:				OPTIONAL ELEMENT			(to be used if you want to determine which risks to prioritise)
				RISK SIGNIFICANCE with current controls (add together for total)			
WHO MIGHT BE HARMED	HOW MIGHT THEY BE HARMED	CURRENT PRECAUTIONS	Severity 0-4	Likelihood 0 – 4	Exposure 0-4	RISK LEVEL L, M ,H	WHAT MORE SHOULD BE DONE
Completed by:		Severity rating		Likelihood rating		Exposure rating	
		0 = none		0 = none		0 = none	
Date:		1 = minor injury or minor personal safety issue		1 = low likelihood of injury or personal safety issue		1 = staff exposed to the hazard infrequently (ie one or more time annually)	
		2 = lost time injury or an unpleasant personal safety issue		2 = moderate likelihood		2 = staff exposed to the hazard frequently (ie one or more times monthly)	
Next Review Date:		3 = injury needing hospital stay or serious personal safety issue		3 = high likelihood		3 = staff exposed to the hazard most weeks	
		4 = life threatening injury or significant personal safety issue		4 = certain likelihood		4 = staff exposed to the hazard most of the time	

NB Electronic versions of all these forms can be found on the H&S Matters Website