

Institution Policy: Respectful Workplace and Violence Prevention

Policy Information

- Issue Date: August 3, 2000
- Primary Contact: Director of Human Resources
- Responsible Member of Directorate: President and Director
- Responsible Office: Human Resources

Contents

[Policy Information](#)

[Overview](#)

Overview

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution is committed to providing a positive working and learning environment free from violence and threatening behavior. Individuals should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times.

Prohibited Conduct

The Institution will not tolerate threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace. This policy covers employees, postdocs, students, guests, and other individuals who have a relationship with the Institution which enables the Institution to exercise some control over their conduct in places and activities that relate to the Institution's business (e.g., Trustees, Corporation members, contractors, vendors, customers, etc.) In addition, this policy applies to all work-related settings and activities, whether inside or outside the workplace, and includes time at sea or in the field, business trips and business-related social events.

This list of behaviors, while not inclusive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited.

- Causing physical injury to another person;
- Making threatening remarks;
- Behaving in an aggressive or hostile manner that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress;
- Intentionally damaging Institution property or property of another employee;
- Possessing (whether or not the individual is licensed) firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances* while on Institution property or while on Institution business (except as expressly authorized on Institution vessels by the Ship Operations Manager);
- Committing acts of harassment including, but not limited to, harassment that is based on an individual's gender, race, color, national origin, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability or any characteristic protected by federal, state or local law.

*Legal, chemical dispensing devices sold commercially for personal protection (i.e. pepper sprays) are not prohibited by this policy provided they are being carried for the express purpose of self-defense and are not being used in an instigative, aggressive or threatening manner.

Responsibilities & Reporting

Individuals are responsible for:

- refraining from acts of violence or threatening behavior and seeking assistance to resolve personal issues that may lead to acts of violence in the workplace; and
- reporting to the appropriate Institution authority (i.e., immediate supervisor, department head, Human Resources, Ombuds/EEO Officer, Security) any dangerous or potentially dangerous or threatening situations that occur at the Institution. No one should attempt to handle a dangerous situation alone.

Although not mandatory, individuals are encouraged to report situations that occur outside of the Institution that may affect Institution safety, i.e., instances involving individuals affiliated with the Institution when law enforcement has been involved in a dispute, orders of protection have been issued, etc.

Investigation and Enforcement

The Institution will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of (or actual) violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as is practical and reasonably possible. Any individual determined to be responsible for conduct that is in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or appointment, arrest and prosecution

Risk Reduction Measures

Information regarding warning signs and risk reduction measures may be found at <http://www.who.edu/HR/page.do?pid=22079>.

The Institution provides the services of an outside, independent, confidential Employee and Student Assistance Program (ESAP) for all employees, postdocs and students. You are encouraged to use these services should you feel the need for guidance. Up to eight visits are covered at no cost to the employee, postdoc, student or family member. The ESAP may be contacted directly at (800) 828-6025 or (508) 842-2780.

[\[go back\]](#)

Last updated: July 5, 2012

Copyright ©2007 Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, All Rights Reserved.

Mail: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, 266 Woods Hole Road, Woods Hole, MA 02543, USA.

E-Contact: info@who.edu; press relations: media@who.edu, tel. (508) 457-2000

Problems or questions about the site, please contact webdev@who.edu