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| County of Schuylkill Personnel Policy and Procedure | | |
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| Date Issued: May 2000 | Subject: Physical and Verbal Abuse | Policy Number: 2007-02 |
| Revised: March 2007 | Supersedes: Policy of May 10, 2000 | Page: __1__ of __3__ |

Related Policies: Conduct and Disciplinary Action 2005-19, Sexual Harassment 2005-18,
Violence in the Workplace 2005-17

This policy applies to all departments and employees except if superseded by
bargaining unit agreement or court-appointed policy

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to define physical and verbal abuse, provide for the investigation of physical and verbal abuse claims, and ensure that violations are remedied fully. To ensure both safe and efficient operations, the County of Schuylkill expects and requires all of its employees to display common courtesy and engage in safe and appropriate behavior on the job at all times. Any involvement in incidents of physical violence or verbal abuse is considered dangerous and unacceptable behavior that violates this standard of appropriate behavior in the County of Schuylkill workplace.

Unacceptable Behavior

Racial or ethnic slurs, sexually harassing remarks, threats of violence, and any other provocative comments, language, or actions are not tolerated. Employees who make provocative comments or otherwise engage in provocative conduct towards co-workers or other individuals ordinarily are held at least equally culpable for any ensuing physical abuse, even if they do not strike the first blow or otherwise initiate a physical confrontation.

Off-Duty and Off-Site Conduct

Employees are responsible for their conduct on the County of Schuylkill premises, whether they are on or off duty. The County of Schuylkill's general rules of conduct and behavior expectations also apply when employees are traveling on the County of Schuylkill business, as well as any time employees are working for or are representing the County of Schuylkill away from the premises.

Discipline

The County of Schuylkill promptly investigates any physical or verbal abuse, threats of violence, or other conduct by employees that threatens the health or safety of other employees or the employees or the public or otherwise might involve a breach of or departure from the conduct standards enunciated in this policy. All incidents of physical and verbal abuse are treated as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Pending the results of its investigation, the County of Schuylkill can suspend employees who are involved in physical altercations that result in injuries, create a significant risk of injury, or have a significant adverse impact on, safety, or morale.

Employee Responsibilities

An employee who feels that he or she is a victim of physical or verbal abuse, by any supervisor, management official, other employee, client, visitor, or any other person in connection with employment at Schuylkill County should do the following:

- • Make it directly and immediately known to the harasser of the unease or disapproval of his/her actions;
- • Make a written record of the date, time and nature of the incident(s) and the names of any witnesses; and
- • Report the incident to the immediate attention of the Supervisor/Manager or Human Resources or County Administrator

All incidents of physical and verbal abuse must be reported regardless of the seriousness. Publicizing information about alleged physical and verbal abuse without following the reporting procedures or filing a formal complaint might be considered evidence of a vexatious intent on part of the accuser.

An employee who is uncomfortable for any reason in bringing such matter to the attention of his or her supervisor, or is not satisfied after bringing such matter to the attention of his or her supervisor, should report the matter to the Director of Human Resources (Personnel) or County Administrator.

Any questions about this policy or potential physical or verbal abuse should also be brought to the attention of the same persons.

Supervisor/Manager Responsibilities

Supervisor/Managers must deal promptly and fairly with the allegation of physical or verbal abuse within their respective departments. They should do the following:

- Act promptly to investigate physical or verbal abuse or inappropriate conduct;
- Ensure that physical or verbal abuse is reported to the Director of Human Resources; and County Administrator
- Take corrective action to prevent prohibited conduct from reoccurring.

Supervisors/Managers who knowingly allow or tolerate physical or verbal abuse are in violation of this policy and are subject to discipline.

Director of Human Resources/County Administrator Responsibilities

The Director of Human Resources and/or County Administrator will promptly investigate all allegations of physical or verbal abuse in as confidential a manner as possible and recommend appropriate corrective action, if any, within Seven (7) Working Days, to the Schuylkill County Board of Commissioners. This investigation will include one or more of the following actions:

- Discuss the allegations with the charged employee;
- Discuss the allegations with the reporting employee;
- Discuss the allegations with the supervisor receiving the complaint;
- Refer the charged employee for disciplinary action, if warranted; and/or
- Take other corrective action.

Any person who is determined, after investigation, to have engaged in physical or verbal abuse in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate sanctions, up to and including termination. Further, if any complaining employee is dissatisfied with the action of the Supervisor, Director of Human Resources or County Administrator, he or she may appeal this decision via the county grievance procedure (Grievance Policy 2005-09) or via grievance procedures described in their respective collective bargaining agreement.

Retaliatory action against anyone complaining of physical or verbal abuse is prohibited. Employees who believe they have been subjected to physical or verbal abuse may use the above procedures without fear of coercion or reprisal, and with confidence that complaints will be investigated and adjudicated in a confidential and fair matter.

First Published: April 20, 2000

Revised March 2007

Approved:

Attest: Chief Clerk

Frank Staudenmeier, Commissioner

Date

Robert S. Carl Jr., Commissioner

Mantura Gallagher, Commissioner

**OFFICIAL SIGNED DOCUMENT IS MAINTAINED IN THE
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OFFICE**