

**ORDER**

SW 3750.14

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES  
FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE POTENTIAL  
FOR VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**



May 15, 1996

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

**SOUTHWEST REGION**

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## FOREWORD

Accounts in the media continue to remind us of the increasing number of violent incidents in the workplace. Our goal in the Southwest Region is to provide a safe and secure work environment for our employees. A cross-functional Regional work group developed this order as a first step in addressing this complex issue in the Region.

All managers and supervisors have a responsibility to maintain an environment in which employees are free from direct or indirect threats of violence from coworkers. Supervisors should ensure that employees understand that such threats are disruptive and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Also, employees should be instructed to report any acts or threats of violence of which they are aware or may be the target of.

This order will serve as a tool for use in identifying and addressing potentially violent situations. Because of the nature of workplace violence it is difficult, if not impossible, to address every situation that might occur. This order will serve as a guide and is not intended to provide all the answers to every occurrence. At a minimum it will aid supervisors in determining when they need to seek assistance and where within the region they can find support.



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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

**1-1. PURPOSE.** This order establishes policies, procedures, and responsibilities for the identification and management of potential and/or actual instances of workplace violence; provides general guidance for the reporting of potentially dangerous behavior and/or the actual communication of threats against individuals, and establishes a Regional Resource Support Group.

**1-2. DISTRIBUTION.** This order is distributed to all members of the Southwest Region FAA Regional Management Team, managers and supervisors in all divisions, directorates, staff offices and all FAA field facilities throughout the Southwest Region.

**1-3. APPLICABILITY.** The provisions of this order are applicable to all FAA Southwest Region employees and support the FAA Southwest Region's policy on Violence in the Workplace (Appendix 1).

**1-4. BACKGROUND.** With the increasing number of violent occurrences in the public and federal sector, it has become necessary to develop a proactive approach to the assessment and management of the potential for workplace violence within the FAA, Southwest Region. National statistics support the contention that workplace violence, as an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issue is approaching widespread proportions. Often, the potential for violence is mitigated through a common-sense approach of recognition, assessment, and informed decisionmaking.

## CHAPTER 2. IMPLEMENTATION

### 2-1. MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS.

Supervisors, upon becoming aware of a potentially violent situation, shall assess the need for intervention by applying the guidelines that are included in this section. Supervisors shall coordinate through their supervisory chain to determine the need to notify the region's Resource Support Group (RSG). These guidelines should not preclude immediate intervention or a common-sense approach to situation management. In the event of an emergency that precludes coordination through the parent division, the Southwest Regional Operations Center shall be notified immediately. Managers/supervisors are responsible for the following:

**a. Recognize.** The emergence of threat indicators normally precedes the actual act of violence. Although a profile cannot predict who will be the perpetrator of workplace violence, it can be used with other indicators and background information to help identify a potential problem. Management officials should become familiar with potential violent behavior, see Appendix 2. It is incumbent upon management to be sensitive to extreme employee behavior and to recognize that everyone involved in a potential violent situation may experience extreme feelings of fear, anger, guilt, and/or humiliation, coupled with a sense of vulnerability and incompetence to deal with the situation. Employees shall be referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) when the supervisor determines that a referral will not exacerbate the situation. One of the keys to successful management of a potential violent situation is to avoid denial and address potential problems early. Appendix 3 identifies enabling behaviors that should be avoided when dealing with a potential violent employee or situation.

**b. Document.** Managers/supervisors should document the factual circumstances and events precipitating the emergence of a potential threat. It is important to document the basis for the threat in the event disciplinary action is necessary. They should continue to document the pertinent details and conversations for as long as the situation exists. All documents shall be held in strict confidence and shall be disposed of in accordance with FAA Order 1350.15X, Records Organization, Transfer, and Destruction Standards..

(1) Documenting the problem involves the initial organization of a case summary. It could involve coordination, through the parent division, with the Civil Aviation Security Division, Human Resources Management Division, the Civil Rights Staff or others to develop full background information.

(2) The documentation process continues for the duration of the incident, to include an after action assessment.

**c. Assess.** During the assessment process, supervisors should determine the seriousness of the situation they are dealing with. This process may require the organization to consult with a variety of specialists, both inside and outside the FAA, prior to reaching a determination. Such aspects as the target/victim's accessibility, the ability to carry out a threat, thoughts/emotions predisposing toward violence versus non-violence as a means to cope and the balance of stresses versus supports are all considered. If there is an imminent risk of violence, take immediate steps through available law enforcement agencies to defuse the situation. Other questions which need to be resolved are as follows:

(1) Is there a possible risk of violence, but the situation appears manageable?

(2) Is the perpetrator's behavior better dealt with through discipline or other corrective actions?

(3) Is this a troubled employee or depressed employee best served by the EAP or private counseling?

(4) Has there been a violation of FAA Order 3750.4A, Conduct/Discipline Order? If so, consider the timing, appropriate action and consequences.

(5) Is the alleged perpetrator remorseful or willing to correct his own inappropriate behaviors?

**d. Confidentiality.** It is extremely important that all parties receiving information relative to a potentially violent individual hold that information confidential, regardless of its source. This is paramount to provide protection for all parties. Information shall be shared on a need-to-know basis.

**e. Threshold.** At this stage the supervisor(s) decides to either continue to monitor the situation, take corrective action, or request the assistance of the RSG through the parent division. This decision should be made well before the threat of violence is seen as imminent, so as to allow the RSG to assist the division and the field facility in managing a potentially violent situation.

**2-2. RESOURCE SUPPORT GROUP.** The RSG will be convened at the request of the manager or designee from the division responsible for the affected facility. The RSG

will be chaired by the Manager, Human Resource Management Division, ASW-10. Nucleus membership will consist of the division manager or designee from the parent division, Civil Aviation Security Division, ASW-700; Assistant Chief Counsel, ASW-7; Aviation Medical Division, ASW-300; and Logistics Division, ASW-50. The nucleus group can be expanded and tailored to meet situational demands by including other division/directorate managers or resource specialists (both internal and external to the FAA) as deemed appropriate in each instance by the management representative of the parent division and the chair of the RSG. Functions of the various members of the RSG may include, but are not limited to:

**a. Management Representative of Parent Division.**

(1) Conducts the meeting of the RSG in managing the specific situation occurring in the field.

(2) Responsible for providing guidance and direction to the field facility manager/supervisor.

**b. Chairperson Resource Support Group.**

(1) Convenes the RSG at the request of the parent division.

(2) Coordinates and provides training and development to the RSG team, managers and supervisors.

(3) Coordinates the execution of all decisions.

**c. Manager, Human Resource Management Division.**

- (1) Labor relations expertise.
- (2) Point of Contact for Employee Assistance Program.
- (3) Conduct/discipline guidance.
- (4) Guidance relative to personnel actions (Reassignment, LWOP, Administrative Leave, etc.).
- (5) Stress reduction programs.
- (6) Termination guidance.
  - (a) Termination Letter.
  - (b) Benefits Counseling.
  - (c) Exit Interviews.
- (7) Post Termination Point of Contact.
- (8) Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD).
- (9) Physical injury and Worker's Compensation.
- (10) Education/training expertise for employees and leaders.

**d. Manager, Civil Aviation Security.**

- (1) Security Awareness/Procedures.

(2) Access Controls, in particular in parking lots and at workstations, which are considered likely locations for workplace violence.

(3) Law Enforcement Coordination.

(4) Investigative/Interviewing Support.

(5) National Crime Information Center (NCIC).

(6) Background Investigations (BI/NACI).

(7) Suitability Determinations (Clearances).

(8) Facility Risk/Threat/Vulnerability Assessments.

**e. Regional Flight Surgeon.**

- (1) When applicable, refer an employee for psychological and/or psychiatric evaluations.
- (2) When applicable, refer an employee for additional medical evaluations.
- (3) Review evaluations and render an opinion for the Resource Support Group or cognizant supervisor(s).

**f. Assistant Chief Counsel.**

- (1) Provide legal counsel to the RSG on all relevant matters including potential agency liability regarding any actions proposed or taken.

(2) AGC-400/U.S. Attorney/local District Attorneys coordination when appropriate.

**g. Manager, Logistics Division.**

(1) Provide support for contracting services and equipment.

(2) GSA coordination when appropriate.

**h. Regional Operations Center.** Upon notification from FAA field elements, forward to the management designee of the parent division any reports of potentially dangerous behavior and/or threats or acts of violence against individuals or groups of individuals located within the Southwest Region.

**i. Others.** As determined by the RSG Chairman.

**2-3. EMPLOYEES.** Should notify their supervisor immediately of any threats of violence or violent actions made by or toward any other employee(s).

**2-4. EDUCATION.**

**a. The Regional Support Group (RSG)** will oversee the development and delivery of the initial Violence in the Workplace (VWP) awareness training to all managers and supervisors.

**b. The RSG** will periodically assess the ongoing VWP training needs in order to maintain an effective level of awareness.

**c. Each organizational division** shall be responsible for communicating the Regional Workplace Violence Statement contained in Appendix 1 to each employee.

## CHAPTER 3. STRATEGIES

**3-1. GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH VIOLENCE.** This has been developed for managers and supervisors to use as a tool in the event an incident occurs at your facility. This is only guidance and should not be considered a substitute for applicable Orders and directives, or common sense.

a. **Know** your security division, local law enforcement and other emergency agencies.

b. **Be aware** of your surroundings; who's around you, what's around you. Use your senses.

c. **Trust** your instincts --- don't dismiss your fears.

d. **Discuss** your concerns about violence with your colleagues. This will help lessen fear and increase awareness about how pervasive a problem violence has become

e. **Use** EAP services proactively. A prompt EAP referral might preclude an act of violence.

f. **Know** the "Warning Signals of Potentially Violent Behavior" (Appendix 2)

### 3-2. DO'S AND DON'TS.

#### a. Don'ts.

(1) **Don't** isolate yourself and go it alone.

(2) **Don't** assume anything.

(3) **Don't** minimize or underestimate the potential danger.

(4) **Don't** over-react, become emotional or part of the problem.

#### b. Do's.

(1) **Do** treat threats seriously.

(2) **Do** apply consistent standards (don't "interpret" or make excuses).

(3) **Do** respond in a timely manner.

(4) **Do** be sensitive to individual rights, fears, and concerns.

(5) **Do** use the system: coordinate, cooperate, communicate, and document.

### 3-3. SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH VIOLENCE.

a. **Stalker.** A supervisor or manager should consider the following steps when an employee is being harassed by a stalker:

(1) **Take** the threat seriously.

(2) **Coordinate** with appropriate supervisory levels.

(3) Increase security awareness and improve security to limit the stalker's access to FAA facility and parking lot. (Consult with Security).

(4) Advise employee to obtain a restraining order for the workplace. Keep a copy of the order at the workplace.

(5) Advise the employee to scatter his/her work hours and entrances/exits to the building. Consider having someone accompany the employee in and out of the building.

(6) Coordinate a rapid response with local law enforcement. This can be initiated by the Security Division.

(7) If necessary, confer with Human Resource Management Division regarding leave status and relocation issues.

**b. Weapons.** In accordance with FAA Order 1600.6C, Appendix 11, the carriage and possession of privately owned firearms in or on FAA-owned or leased property, including

vehicles is strictly prohibited. In addition, Federal law, Title 18 United States Code, Section 930, states: Whoever knowingly possesses or causes to be present a firearm or other dangerous weapon in a Federal Facility (or attempt to do so) shall be fined or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both. If you see or have reason to believe that an employee has a firearm in/on FAA property, which could include the parking lot, you should:

(1) Immediately report the incident to the nearest Security Division office through the facility's parent division.

(2) Remind the employee of FAA policy.

(3) Order the employee to remove the firearm from FAA property.

(4) Consult with Labor Relations, through the facility's parent division, regarding appropriate disciplinary action for the violation of security regulations.