

## Section 4.15

### Dealing with Threats to Staff

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#### 1. Purpose

*The purpose of this procedure is to provide and maintain so far as is practicable a working environment for employees that is safe and without risks to Health. Council believes staff has a right to feel safe at work.*

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#### 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all employees whose role requires them to interact with the public.

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#### 3. References

1. Section 21 of The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

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#### 4. Responsibilities

##### Managers/Supervisors

Managers/Supervisors shall ensure that all workplace threats to staff are reported immediately to their Director who will determine whether the police should be contacted immediately.

Managers/Supervisors shall ensure that Risk Assessments are conducted and Safe Work Procedures developed for their own areas of responsibilities – **see Attachment 2, Section 4.02 – Safe Work Procedures.**

Managers/Supervisors to maintain a register of all incidents and forward a copy to Human Resources.

##### Employees

Employees shall report all threats (that make them feel uncomfortable or fearful for their personal safety) to their immediate Manager/Supervisor.

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#### 5. Definitions

##### Threatening Behavior Includes but not limited to:

**Verbal Abuse (use of obscene or threatening language)**

**Threats to inflict serious injury or kill**

**Behaving in a riotous manner**

**Physical contact without consent**

**Racial or sexual harassment**



## **6. Method**

### **6.1. Procedure**

When an employee receives a threat of any kind (that makes them feel uncomfortable or fearful for their personal safety) they must immediately report this to their Manager.

### **6.2. Reception / Customer Service Counters**

Assistance should be sought from the staff member's Supervisor or Manager soon as the staff member feels that the situation is getting out of their personal control. It is important to try to deal with the issue before it escalates and is to be done at the discretion of the staff member.

#### **Duress Button – Customer Service Counters**

If the staff member is unable to control the situation or feel threatened, they should press the red duress button under the counter.

- The call will be directed to the Customer Service Coordinator.
- If no response, the call will go through to 700.
- The officer who picks up the call will see if the situation can be diffused.
- The officer will ring nominated backup trained officers.
- If the staff member is in physical danger, the police should be called Immediately on 000.
- The staff member shall excused themselves and seek safe refuge in the office.
- An Incident report is required to be completed.

### **6.3. Staff members out on site**

#### **Employees**

Employees that go out on site are to either carry a mobile phone or have access to a 2-way radio at all times.

#### **Managers/Supervisors**

Managers and Supervisors are to ensure that their staff has access to a mobile phone or a 2-way radio before going out on site.

If a staff member feels threatened while out on site, they are advised to leave the site area immediately and telephone their Manager once they have returned to their vehicle or a safer place.

### **4. Police Contact**

If the Police are contacted, consultation with the Police will occur as soon as practicable after the incident.



- May involve asking the Police for advice on how to handle the issue.
- May involve employees making statements to the Police where warranted.

Protection of employees will be the utmost consideration in determining whether a statement to the police is warranted.

The employee and their Manager are to follow up with the police where it has been recommended that statements be made. This should be done within the first week after the incident.

**6.5. Debriefing/Counseling**

The employee is to be debriefed about the incident with their Manager including the work team where they may be impacted by the threat. Council's Employee Assistance Program will be available to assist one on one or for team debriefing sessions.

It is also recommended that a follow up three months later be undertaken to ensure the threat has been dealt with appropriately from their staff member's point of view.

**6.6. Known Threats**

Where person or persons making the threat are known to employees, a protocol is to be established between the Customer Service staff and that all future enquiries from that person(s) be directed to a Director or nominated Manager.

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**7. Related Documents**

1. Section 4.02 *Manual Handling – Attachment Safe Work Procedures*
2. Section 4.18, *Staff working alone or in remote areas*