

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

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| <b>FSIS NOTICE</b> | 67-10 | 11/4/10 |
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**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY STATEMENT**

**I. PURPOSE**

This notice provides guidance to employees for reporting workplace violence incidents of assault, harassment, interference, intimidation, or threat against employees while performing or as a result of performing their official duties and responsibilities. All workplace violence incidents, whether instigated by internal or outside sources, must be reported.

**II. POLICY**

A. It is the Agency's policy that all employees and clients (**examples:** customers, contractors, and visitors) enjoy a safe, positive, respectful, and productive, working environment. The worksite environment must remain free of behavior, action, or language causing or contributing to workplace violence. Assault, harassment, interference, intimidation, or threat by or against any Agency employee or client at the worksite is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

B. It is a violation of Agency policy to have, use, or threaten use of a firearm, explosive, or other dangerous weapons at a worksite or in a vehicle used for official business. Knives, hooks, box cutters, letter openers, or other job related tools are appropriate when used for their intended purpose. It is inappropriate to refer to or threaten the use of these items in a violent act or manner contrary to their normal use. Such a threat is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

C. All employees have a responsibility to report and prevent, if possible, workplace violence. Employees should always treat each other and clients professionally, equitably, and with dignity and respect.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**  
Electronic;  
All Field Employees

**NOTICE EXPIRES:**  
November 1, 2011

**OPI:**  
OCHRO – Mediation & Work/Life  
Services Division

### III. **BACKGROUND**

A. Agency employees represent USDA. Employees must perform their official duties and responsibilities in a manner that upholds high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality. Employees must be able to perform their duties and responsibilities in a safe and professional working environment, free of unreasonable distractions, including distractions that pose a risk to personal safety.

B. This notice supplements guidance for reporting workplace violence incidents in FSIS Directive 4735.4, Reporting Assault, Harassment, Interference, Intimidation or Threat.

### IV. **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

A. In case of an emergency or imminent danger, Agency employees should immediately relocate to a safe place and report the violent act directly to law enforcement officials, any available security personnel, or the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) (if criminal activity) and follow the guidelines in FSIS Directive 4735.4.

B. For further guidance on appropriate actions in an emergency situation, employees, supervisors or managers may contact the Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program (WVPRP) 24-hour toll-free number at 877-987-3747 (877-WVP-FSIS).

### V. **DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INCIDENTS**

A. Agency employees must promptly report all acts or threats of workplace violence involving their official duties and responsibilities at once to their immediate supervisor, manager, or appropriate management office and WVPRP. Those witnessing such acts or threats and those who are aware of such acts or threats also may file reports.

B. To file a report, the employee must:

1. Complete Section A of FSIS Form 4735-4, Reporting Form for Assault, Harassment, Interference, Intimidation, or Threat.
2. Forward the completed original form to the immediate supervisor (unless the supervisor is the perpetrator, then send to the next higher-level supervisor).
3. Forward a copy of the completed form to the appropriate Agency management official(s) (**example:** district manager or designee if Office of Field Operations, or program manager or director).
4. Forward a copy of the completed form to WVPRP.

C. The following methods can be used to submit FSIS Form 4735-4 to WVPRP:

1. Fax all documentation to 202-690-1814.

2. Scan documentation and email to:  
[workplaceviolenceprevention@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:workplaceviolenceprevention@fsis.usda.gov).

3. Mail documentation to:

USDA, FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT, OCHRO  
MEDIATION & WORK/LIFE SERVICES DIVISION  
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION & RESPONSE PROGRAM  
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVE, SW, RM 2158-S BLDG  
WASHINGTON, DC 20250-3700

## VI. RESPONDING TO VIOLENT INCIDENTS

A. Management officials must apprise WVPRP of any potential workplace violence incident. This can include incidents occurring outside the employee's tour of duty or away from the worksite.

B. Management officials must act immediately on each reported workplace violence incident and follow the guidelines in FSIS Directive 4735.4. If an employee believes that a management official has failed to take action on a workplace violence incident reported to that management official, the employee should contact the next higher-level supervisor and WVPRP.

C. Under no circumstances should a supervisor or Agency management official who has been reported as a possible instigator of an incident participate **in any way** in the inquiry or investigation and resolution of the reported incident. Therefore, if the employee's supervisor is provided with a workplace violence incident report that names the supervisor as one of the instigators of the incident, the supervisor must immediately remind the employee to report the incident to the next higher-level supervisor **not involved in the incident** or to contact WVPRP for assistance.

## VII. WITHHOLDING AND SUSPENDING INSPECTION

A. The Agency can withhold the mark of inspection and suspend employee assignments, according to 9 CFR Part 500, Rules of Practice, when employees are not able to perform their duties and responsibilities due to assault, harassment, interference, intimidation, or threat by regulated industry personnel. Management officials coordinate withholding and suspension actions through the district manager or designee.

B. Withholding and suspension actions are designed to protect employees. Withholding or suspension actions may be held in abeyance and the establishment allowed to operate under the conditions agreed to by FSIS and the establishment when the Agency determines that the regulated industry took the necessary steps to ensure employees are safe and able to perform their official duties and responsibilities without assault, harassment, interference, intimidation, or threat.

#### VIII. **CRIMINAL PENALTIES**

A. The Federal Meat Inspection Act, Poultry Production Inspection Act, and Eggs Product Inspection Act each provide criminal penalties.

B. Assaults of or threats to Government officials can also violate the provisions of Title 18 of the United States Code.

C. Allegations of criminal violations or information requiring investigation are referred to OPEER or OIG.

#### IX. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Employees with questions regarding workplace violence may contact the WVPRP Program Coordinator at 202-690-1999 or by the WVPRP 24-hour toll-free number at 877-987-3747 (877-WVP-FSIS).



Assistant Administrator  
Office of Management