

## Northern California Sound & Communications JATC Policy Regarding Workplace Violence Prevention

### Policy, Purpose, and Scope

It is the policy of the Northern California Sound & Communication JATC (“JATC”) to promote a safe environment for our employees and students, as well as visitors, and to work with our employees to maintain a work environment that is free from violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. Violence and threats of violence — in all forms — are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The primary purpose of this document is to provide JATC employees with a concise reference regarding the JATC’s program on managing actual and/or potentially violent situations. The JATC has also adopted a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan (“Plan”), which should be consulted together with this Policy.

In particular:

**Acts of violence** are prohibited. Acts of violence include any physical action, whether intentional or reckless, that harms or threatens the safety of another individual in the workplace. Acts of violence include, but are not limited to, punching, striking, shoving, use of weapons, or other physical attack.

**Threats of violence** are prohibited. A threat of violence includes any behavior that by its nature could be interpreted by a reasonable person as an intent to cause physical harm to another person or to cause a person to fear for their safety or another person’s safety. Examples of conduct that could be considered threats include, but are not limited to:

- Direct threat of physical or aggressive conduct (e.g., “I’ll kick your ass”)
- Indirect threats of physical harm or similar intimidation (e.g., “I know where you live”; “I’d be more careful if I were you”)
- Threat of destruction of JATC or an individual’s property
- Harassing or threatening communications by phone, email, text, social media, or in person
- Possession, threat of use, or brandishing of a gun, knife, or other weapon, including toy or facsimile weapons, or common items that could be used as weapons
- Stalking

Firearms and other weapons are prohibited on the JATC premises.

All JATC employees, instructors, and management, as well as students, are covered by the policies contained in this document. Employees may experience workplace violence as described in this policy when interacting with coworkers or students at JATC-related events that are not held on JATC premises, or may become aware of risk factors for workplace violence at such events. For example, a physical altercation among coworkers or students at JATC graduation dinner would be a violation of this policy. Similarly, an employee might observe behavior from a coworker or student at a graduation dinner that raises concerns about possible workplace violence risks. Employees are encouraged to notify JATC management about such incidents even if they do not occur on the JATC's premises.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The goal of this Policy and the Plan is to support a work and classroom environment in which violent or potentially violent situations are effectively addressed, with a focus on prevention and understanding the nature of workplace violence and how to respond to it.

Employees are responsible for:

- their own behavior by interacting responsibly with coworkers, management, and students;
- being familiar with the JATC policy regarding workplace violence;
- promptly reporting actual and/or potential acts of violence;
- cooperating fully in investigations/assessments of allegations of workplace violence; and
- informing the Training Director about restraining or protective court orders related to domestic situations so that assistance can be offered at the work site.

JATC management and leadership are additionally responsible for:

- informing employees about the JATC workplace violence policy and Plan;
- investigating all acts of violence, threat, and similar disruptive behavior in a timely fashion and taking the necessary action(s);
- providing feedback to employees regarding the outcome of such investigations;
- imposing discipline where appropriate;
- obtaining restraining orders where appropriate;
- requesting assistance from subject matter experts where appropriate;
- being cognizant of situations that have the potential to produce violent behavior and promptly addressing them with all concerned parties;
- encouraging employees who show signs of stress or evidence of possible domestic violence to seek assistance, for example through mental health or employee assistance services available under the JATC's medical plan;
- assisting in assessing and investigating allegations of workplace violence raised by employees, supervisors, and/or managers, as requested; and

- offering appropriate training for employees.

### **Preventing Workplace Violence**

This section will focus on awareness and preventive measures that can be taken to deal with threatening, intimidating, and/or potentially violent behavior.

Becoming familiar with the JATC's Policy and Plan is an important step in preventing workplace violence. Annual training will be provided for all employees regarding how to handle intimidating, threatening, or violent incidents, as well as understanding the consequences of such behavior (such as disciplinary and/or adverse action up to and including termination).

### **Building Security**

Maintaining a secure and physically safe workplace is important to prevent workplace violence. The JATC uses a variety of security measures to help ensure the safety of employees and students. In particular:

- Exterior doors shall be kept locked at all times, except the front entrance during business hours. Classrooms shall be kept locked when not in use.
- Keyfob access is required for all areas beyond the front lobby. Employees shall not share their keyfobs with any other person. Keyfobs must be returned [will be deactivated?] upon the termination of employment.
- Maintain functional security cameras in the lobby and parking area, and functional security lighting in the parking area. Review security devices at least quarterly to ensure that they are functioning properly.
- Visitors are prohibited from entering secure areas beyond the lobby unless escorted by an employee.
- Firearms are strictly prohibited on the JATC premises. A sign is posted at the front entrance to notify employees, students, and visitors of this prohibition.

Employees should notify the Training Director or other person in management of suspicious or unauthorized individuals on JATC property

Law enforcement assistance is available through the San Leandro police department for emergency situations. If you believe a situation is an emergency, call 911 immediately and attend to your own safety first.

### **Work Environment**

Another aspect of our violence prevention strategy is effective communication between management and employees, and providing a professional working and school environment for all employees and students where everyone who is part of the JATC community feels respected.

For more information, please see the JATC's policy regarding prevention of discrimination and harassment.

### **Education and Training**

Education and communication are also critical components of our prevention strategy. The JATC will provide annual training for all employees regarding the JATC's policy and Plan and recognizing and responding to risk factors for workplace violence.

### **Performance/Conduct Indicators**

Being aware of performance and/or conduct problems which may be warning signs of potential trouble is an effective prevention strategy. These warning signs may show up in perpetrators or victims of violence. All factors may not occur in all cases, but it is common to see a pattern of several of these factors that represent a change from a person's normal behavior. The presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean a violent act will occur. They may be indicators of other kinds of problems such as illness, depression, grief, and so forth.

Some examples of performance and/or behavior indicators that individuals are under stress, and that may signify an increased risk of violence, are listed below. This list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- attendance problems
- decreased productivity – e.g., making excessive mistakes, poor judgment, missed deadlines
- mood swings, inappropriate reactions/overreaction, making excuses or failing to accept responsibility for mistakes
- concentration problems
- safety issues – e.g., more accident prone, disregard for personal safety or the safety of others, taking unnecessary risks
- noticeable changes in health, hygiene, or personal grooming habits
- unusual/changed behavior
- evidence of possible substance abuse
- evidence of serious stress in the employee's personal life
- depression

### **Workplace Violence Warning Signs**

One of the common types of workplace violence is that among co-workers. In addition, a high percentage of violent incidents are perpetrated by individuals from outside the workplace. This includes situations involving violence perpetrated by the abuser in a domestic violence situation or by persons outside the workplace, such as former students or unsuccessful applicants.

It can be difficult to determine whether or not any particular workplace situation is potentially violent. Actual threats should always be taken seriously and responded to immediately. When there is not an imminent threat, trust your judgment and instincts. If you believe that someone may be dangerous, take appropriate precautions.

Even though recognizing the warning signs of violence is not an exact science, there are some common early warning signs. Also, potential or actual violent situations among employees often escalate if they are not defused early. This section discusses three levels of warning signs, and appropriate responses. Any one or combination of warning signs at the three levels may be indicative of a potentially violent situation.

### Level One (Early Warning Signs)

The person is:

- intimidating/bullying
- discourteous/disrespectful
- uncooperative
- verbally abusive

### Response When Early Warning Signs Occur at Level One

- Observe and document the person's behavior.
- Report concerns to the Training Director to seek help in assessing/responding to the situation. (If your concerns are about the Training Director, notify another supervisor.)
- The Training Director or their designee should meet privately with the employee or student (with union representation, as appropriate) to discuss concerns. The discussion should include explaining the problem with the employee's behavior, asking the employee for their input, and discussing how to correct the behavior and what supports the employee may need. The discussion should also include goals and time frames for correcting the behavior, and review of the JATC's policies.

### Level Two (Escalation)

The person:

- is argumentative with co-workers, management, students, or visitors
- refuses to obey JATC policies and procedures
- sabotages or steals JATC equipment or property
- verbalizes desire to hurt co-workers, students, or management
- sends threatening note(s) to co-worker(s) or management
- sees self as victimized by co-workers or management

### Response When the Situation Has Escalated to Level Two

- If appropriate, call 911 and other appropriate emergency contacts, particularly if the situation requires immediate medical and/or law enforcement personnel.
- Immediately contact the Training Director or their designee to seek help in assessing/responding to the situation.
- Secure your personal safety first and the safety of others, if necessary, including leaving the area if you can do so safely. The JATC will make sure that emergency contact numbers are kept up-to-date and accessible to all employees.
- Document the observed behavior.
- The Training Director or their designee should meet with the employee or student (with union representation, as appropriate) to discuss concerns and, if appropriate, begin or continue progressive discipline. This discussion should follow these procedures:
  - Call for assistance in assessing/responding, if needed.
  - Discuss concerns with the employee in private.
  - Remain calm, speaking slowly, softly, and clearly.
  - Ask the employee to sit down; see if they are able to follow directions.
  - Ask questions relevant to the employee's complaint such as:
    - What can you do to try to regain control of yourself?
    - What can I do to help you regain control?
    - What do you hope to achieve by committing violence?
    - Why do you believe you need to be violent to achieve that?

### Level Three (Further Escalation – Usually Resulting in an Emergency Response)

The person displays intense anger resulting in:

- suicidal threats
- physical fights
- destruction of property (e.g., hitting a wall or window, damaging a vehicle)
- display of extreme rage
- using weapons, or using common items as weapons, to harm others

### Response When Situation is a Level Three Emergency

Any person observing violent or threatening behavior which poses an immediate danger to persons or property is expected to:

- Call 911 and other appropriate emergency contacts, particularly if the situation requires immediate medical and/or law enforcement personnel.
- Secure your personal safety first and the safety of others, including leaving the area if you can do so safely.
- Remain calm and contact the Training Director.

- Document the observed behavior.
- Cooperate with law enforcement personnel when they respond. Once law enforcement personnel are on the scene, they will assume control of the situation. Witnesses should be prepared to provide a description of the violent or threatening individual, details of what was observed, and the exact location of the incident.
- The Training Director should meet with the employee or student (with union representation, as appropriate) to discuss concerns and, if appropriate, begin or continue progressive discipline.
- The Training Director should consult with subject matter experts and legal counsel regarding further appropriate action, including criminal charges or seeking a restraining order.
- Training or counseling may be offered for employees.

### **Other Forms of Workplace Violence**

Workplace violence often involves co-workers or former employees. In addition, when an employee is a victim of domestic violence, it is not uncommon for the perpetrator to show up at the work site to carry out threats or acts of violence against the employee or anyone trying to protect that person.

Because the JATC is a school, there may also be incidents of workplace violence perpetrated by students – particularly a person who has been terminated from the program, is facing discipline, or is going through a personal or mental health crisis – or by unsuccessful applicants to our program.

### **Domestic Violence**

Except when those involved in domestic violence are co-workers, most domestic violence-related workplace violence incidents involve a non-employee, such as an abuser who shows up at the workplace with the intent to harm an employee. Nevertheless, there may be early warning signs that this type of violence is escalating outside the workplace. For example, an employee who is experiencing domestic violence may show symptoms such as increased fear, emotional episodes, or signs of physical injury. Victims, as well as perpetrators, may show signs of work performance deterioration. By intervening when the early warning signs occur, even though violence may not yet have been committed at work, a serious incident may be prevented.

If the perpetrator shows up at work with the intent of harming the employee and any others who happen to be in the way or involved, follow the procedures described in Level Three to respond to the immediate crisis.

If it is known that an employee is experiencing domestic violence, it is important to provide support and assistance. Not only is the person at risk for more and usually escalated violence,

but that risk also affects the safety of other employees. The Training Director may speak with the employee about resources that are available to them, including mental health services or employee assistance services through the health plan. In consultation with the affected employee, develop a workplace safety plan in case an incident occurs at the workplace that considers the safety of that person as well as other employees.

The Company will maintain a copy of all workplace violence incident investigations for five years.

#### DEFINITIONS:

**Intimidation:** Inspiring fear in a person by a show of force or a promise of force.

**Physical Fighting:** The act of aggression or initial force in physically contending with another with the intent to overpower and/or to cause harm.

**Threat:** An expression of a direct (intent to take an action) or indirect (what could happen or that something could happen) intention to inflict pain, injury or punishment upon another person or property.

**Violence:** Aggressive acts or initiation of physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging or abusing others.

**Weapons:** An instrument, article or substance, which in the possession of an employee or under the circumstances of which it is used or is threatened to be used, is readily able of causing physical injury or death.