

Domestic Violence in the Workplace

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POLICY

King County will not tolerate domestic violence in the workplace. King County may not be aware of circumstances of domestic violence that an employee has experienced. The intent of this policy is to encourage employees who have experienced domestic violence or who are at risk of experiencing domestic violence to notify their supervisor or human resources representative so that the County may support the employee and assist the employee with obtaining needed resources.

When circumstances of domestic violence are known to human resources or an employee's supervisor or manager, the County will make reasonable efforts to:

- Encourage the employee who has experienced domestic violence to seek assistance via King County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP);
- Have EAP coordinate creating a workplace safety plan in collaboration with the employee's department, when appropriate;
- Have EAP provide referrals, as appropriate; or
- Take other reasonable measures, as needed.

The County shall take corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, against an employee where it is determined that the employee:

- Used County resources to perpetrate domestic violence;
- Threatened, or committed an act of domestic violence in the workplace; or
- Perpetrated off-duty domestic violence that affects job performance or has an employment-related nexus.

This policy applies to all executive branch departments, offices, divisions and agencies, including the Assessor's Office, King County Elections, and the Sheriff's Office.

DEFINITIONS

Domestic Violence means:

- Physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or the infliction of fear or imminent physical harm, bodily injury or assault, between family or household members;
- Sexual assault of one family or household member by another;
- A pattern of behavior in which a family or household member, or someone in a dating relationship uses physical violence, coercion, threats, intimidation, isolation and emotional, sexual or economic abuse to control and change the behavior of another family or household member, or other person in a dating relationship; or
- Stalking as defined in RCW 9A.46.110 of one family or household member by another family or household member.

Family or Household Members means:

- Spouses or former spouses;
- Partners or former partners;
- Persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they have been married or have lived together at any time;
- Adult persons related by blood or marriage;
- Adult persons who are presently residing together or who have resided together in the past;
- Persons sixteen years of age or older who are presently residing together or who have resided together in the past and who have or have had a dating relationship;
- Persons sixteen years of age or older with whom a person sixteen years of age or older has or has had a dating relationship; and
- Persons who have a biological or legal parent-child relationship, including stepparents and stepchildren and grandparents and grandchildren.

Dating Relationship means a social relationship of a romantic nature. Factors that may be considered in making this determination include:

- The length of time the relationship has existed;
- The nature of the relationship; and
- The frequency of interaction between the parties.

Workplace is defined as county facilities, county vehicles, county premises, employer-sponsored events, or while conducting county business.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ISSUES

If imminent danger exists, consider all safety options. A call to 911 may be necessary for police intervention. Otherwise, employees, supervisors, managers and human resources (HR) professionals must contact the **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** when dealing with domestic violence issues. EAP is a free county resource that provides all county employees with counseling and coaching, including for instances of domestic violence. Our EAP providers have master's degrees in counseling and are credentialed mental health counselors. The EAP providers will coordinate creating a workplace safety plan in collaboration with the employee's department, if needed, in addition to any additional resources the employee may need.

As trained and credentialed counselors, the EAP providers know that each domestic violence situation is different and that the individual facts should be considered to best assist an employee with what is needed in an employee's particular situation. In addition to facilitating a workplace safety plan for the employee, if needed, EAP can:

- Discuss how the employee can obtain a protection order and how that might impact the employee's life;
- Counsel the employee on what to do with the protection order once the employee receives it;
- Discuss whether the employee should go to a shelter, and if so, assist the employee with locating and getting into a shelter;
- Guide the employee on how to look at the different aspects of their daily life and routine and how to create a safety plan around those activities; and
- Recommend that the employee seek counseling either through [Making Life Easier](#) (another free benefit for employees) or through a provider of the employee's choice and support the employee through the process.

To contact EAP, call 206-263-8733 or email HRDEAP@kingcounty.gov.

Employees who are experiencing domestic violence are encouraged, as appropriate, to take the following steps:

1. If imminent danger exists, consider all safety options. A call to 911 may be necessary for police intervention.
2. Ask for assistance from a supervisor, manager, human resources professional, or EAP.
3. Notify a supervisor, manager, human resources professional or EAP of any safety or security concerns related to your employment, including your work assignment or work location.
4. Request leave, if needed, under the [Leave for Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking](#) policy.

Domestic Violence Resources can be found at <https://kingcounty.gov/audience/employees/safety-claims/ML-EAP/resources.aspx>

Confidentiality and Anti-Retaliation Policy

The county must keep the matter confidential, including if an employee requests Domestic Violence leave.

The county may not refuse to hire an otherwise qualified individual or discharge, threaten to discharge, demote, deny a promotion to, sanction, discipline, retaliate against, harass, or otherwise discriminate against an employee with regard to compensation, or other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because the employee is actually experiencing or perceived to have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or because the employee took domestic violence leave.

QUESTIONS

Refer all questions or comments to your department's [Human Resources Manager](#) or to the Department of Human Resources.