



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 76.10: Violence and Workplace Threats

DATE: September 25, 2020

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish policy in providing a safe and secure workplace, free from threats and violence, for all those involved in the business of Texas Tech University.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in April of even-numbered years by the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources in conjunction with the Chief of Texas Tech Police and the Managing Director of Emergency Management with substantive revisions forwarded to the Chief of Staff and Associate Vice President and the Vice President for Administration & Finance and Chief Financial Officer.

POLICY/PROCEDURES

1. General Policy

Texas Tech recognizes the high cost of violent incidents and the disruptive effect they have on employees and productivity. Personal harassment (including stalking), abusive behavior, and violence are not tolerated in the workplace.

- a. Threats (including those made by mail, over the telephone, by text message, by fax, by e-mail, or on social media), intimidation, and acts of violence, with or without the presence of a weapon, will not be tolerated at Texas Tech. Reported violations of this policy will be investigated, documented, and may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including immediate suspension and/or dismissal, and the filing of appropriate criminal charges.
- b. All employees, regardless of position, are responsible for the immediate reporting of any threats received, witnessed, or communicated to them. Employees should also report unusual or threatening behavior, even though it may not be in the form of a direct threat, when such behavior makes the employee(s) fearful for their continued safety or the safety of others. Reportable threats include those made by co-workers, students, or outsiders entering the workplace—such as spouse, job applicants, etc. Employees must make such reports regardless of the relationship of the employee to the person who initiated the threat or behavior. Reports should be made immediately, without fear of retaliation, to a supervisor, Human Resources, Texas Tech Police, or to any member of Texas Tech management. Texas Tech management must immediately report all incidents of threatening behavior to the Chief of Police or designee or the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources or designee.
- c. Nothing in this policy relieves a supervisor or manager from taking immediate action when the safety or security of employees is threatened and time is crucial. Such action may include a call to the Texas Tech Police, suspension, or the temporary separation of employees in the workplace. This policy does not replace routine management actions such as counseling,

- corrective action, or changes in work assignments, as applicable. This policy is intended for those cases of immediate and/or continuing inappropriate action(s) or threat(s), including those where normal management and corrective actions have been ineffective and the possibility of violence is such that the Texas Tech Police and others need to be involved.
- d. Following a serious threat or an act of violence in the workplace, employees, witnesses, and families often suffer from stress-related ailments such as depression, anger, headaches, and continued fear. Texas Tech, through a group of administrators identified as the Crisis Management Team, will provide debriefing teams, counseling, and support, as needed, to those affected. These actions, provided within a 24- to 72-hour period following the traumatic event, will help to minimize the impact of an incident and prevent further violence.

2. Procedure

The following procedures will be followed by the Threat Assessment Team in the event of workplace threats or violence:

- a. The Chief of Police or designee should be called immediately when a potentially threatening event is suspected and/or occurs.
- b. A Threat Assessment Team consisting of the Chief of Texas Tech Police or designee, the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources or designee, the Director of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or designee, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Administration, Office of Equal Opportunity or designee, the Chief Marketing and Communication Officer or designee, a member of Texas Tech executive management (i.e., vice president level or above), and a representative from the Office of the General Counsel will review all reports generated relative to this policy. This core team may draft additional members, as warranted.
- c. Team members will gather additional information, as needed, and develop a plan of action that may include specific suggestions to the immediate supervisor, directed counseling, EAP intervention, and police action. Team members and the department head or designee of the affected work area will follow up to assure implementation of suggestions and that protective measures are in place, as needed. Employment decisions that directly affect an accused employee must be made in concert with the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources or designee, with consideration of existing laws, policies, procedures, etc.
- d. Texas Tech understands the sensitivity of the information provided and/or alleged in such reports as it pertains to employees' rights to privacy and confidentiality. Appropriate procedures will be followed to limit the dissemination of reports to a need-to-know basis. Should a report prove to be false or actions misinterpreted as threats of violence, all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure the continued acceptance and effectiveness of the accused employee. The Threat Assessment Team's goal in this regard is to balance the safety and security of students and employees against the need for confidentiality of information. Where appropriate, legal guidance will be requested.
- e. All levels of management at Texas Tech must be familiar with and abide by this policy and procedure. All reports of possible violent behavior, intimidation, or threats should be forwarded to a member of the Threat Assessment Team.
- f. Texas Tech will make available training directed at violence in the workplace for all levels of employees.

3. The Crisis Management Team

The Crisis Management Team provides support services during or after a traumatic event. The team's services are not limited to violent acts.

- a. Crisis Management Team members include the Chief of Texas Tech Police or designee, the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources or designee, the Director of the Employee Assistance Program or designee, the Chief Marketing and Communication Officer or designee, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Administration, Office of Equal Opportunity or designee, a member of Texas Tech executive management (i.e., vice president level or above), and a representative from the Office of the General Counsel. Depending upon circumstances in any particular event, the Crisis Management Team may draft additional members.
- b. Should an act of violence occur, the Crisis Management Team will consider the impact of the incident on the campus community and initiate appropriate debriefing, counseling, and support actions for the victims, co-workers, and families. An incident in this category may include serious or fatal injuries to one or more campus members in a manner that frightens or shocks segments of the community for a continuing period.
- c. The Crisis Management Team will provide timely reports to the Chancellor, President, vice presidents, and the Provost and Senior Vice President.

4. Right to Change Policy

Texas Tech reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind this policy, in whole or in part, at any time without the consent of employees. In the event of a contradiction between the terms of this policy and any statement made by a Texas Tech agent or employee, the terms of this policy shall prevail in all cases.