



## TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

### Operating Policy and Procedure

#### **OP 76.10: Violence and Workplace Threats**

**DATE:** May 5, 2016

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy and 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.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed in April of even-numbered years by the director of Human Resources in conjunction with the chief of Texas Tech Police with substantive revisions forwarded to assistant vice president for human resources, the chief of staff and associate vice president and the university counsel.

#### **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 fax, or by e-mail), 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, personnel management, 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 managing director of 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, reprimands, 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 personnel 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 managing director of Human Resources or designee, the director of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or designee, the managing director of Equal Employment Opportunity or designee, the associate director of Communications and Marketing 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 managing director of 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 managing director of Human Resources or designee, the director of Employee Assistance Program or designee, the associate director of Communications and Marketing or designee, the managing director of Equal Employment 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.