

Workplace Policy Regarding Domestic and Sexual Violence: Options for Vermont Employers

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Title 12 (chapter 178) of the Vermont statutes provides a mechanism for **victims of stalking and sexual assault to apply for protection orders (also called SSA orders)** when the perpetrator is not a family or household member. The process for obtaining an Order Against Stalking or Sexual Assault is similar to that for obtaining a Relief From Abuse order, except that SSA orders are obtained through the Civil Divis

V. ABBREVIATED DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY

A. Response to Employees who are Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence

Employees at *(Business Name)* should not be disciplined or discriminated against in hiring, firing, staffing, or other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of being a victim of domestic violence.

(Business Name) acknowledges that victimization can lead to absences, late arrival/early departure, or decreased productivity. These employment issues may be a result of legal obligations, medical needs, safety planning and trauma. Reasonable accommodations will be given to the victim before imposing any employee disciplinary action.

(Business Name) encourages victims and other affected employees to contact community agencies (listed below) for resources and referrals. Many provide free services for safety planning, accessing protection orders, counseling, support groups, shelter, advice and legal assistance.

(Business Name) will attempt to make available appropriate information, referrals, and resources to victims and other employees.

(Business Name) will provide support through referrals to community agencies, our *Employee Assistance Program*, and our Security and Human Resources personnel. We encourage all employees to take advantage of these resources. You may contact these resources available twenty-four (24) hours a day and seven (7) days a week:

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, visit <http://www.vtnetwork.org>
Vermont Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-228-7395
Vermont Sexual Violence Hotline at 1-800-489-7273
United Way Information and Referral, dial 211

You may also contact our Employee Assistance Program _____, Security Office: _____, and Human Resources: _____.

B. Response to Employees who Commit Acts or Threats of Domestic or Sexual Violence

Any employee who commits acts/threats of domestic or sexual violence at the workplace or while using workplace resources, will be subject to disciplinary action which may include but is not limited to dismissal. If appropriate, law enforcement will be contacted, which may result in arrest, criminal charges and/or prosecution. Workplace resources include, but are not limited to, phones, fax machines, e-mail, mail, automobiles, pagers, office supplies, photocopy machines and work time.

If an employee intentionally uses their position or workplace resources to enable a perpetrator to harm/contact a victim, both the employee and perpetrator (if an employee) will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include but is not limited to dismissal. If appropriate, law enforcement will be contacted, which may result in arrest, criminal charges, and/or prosecution.

(Business Name) recognizes that perpetrators also need assistance and resources. We will provide, when appropriate, referrals to community agencies, our Employee Assistance Program at _____, certified Batterer Intervention and/or Sex Offender Treatment Programs. We encourage all employees to take advantage of these resources.

VI. COMPREHENSIVE DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY

A. Early Intervention and Prevention Strategies/Response

1. It is the policy of (*Business Name*) to promote the use of early prevention strategies to avoid or minimize the occurrence of domestic or sexual violence and their effects in the workplace. (*Business name*) will provide support and assistance to employees who are victims of domestic or sexual violence.

This support may include: confidential disclosure policy, resource and referral information, additional security at the workplace, work schedule adjustment, phone security measures, workplace relocation or leave necessary to obtain medical, counseling, legal assistance, or court appearances.

Written resource and referral information will be made available in all languages spoken by employees. Other appropriate assistance will be provided based on individual need. In all responses to domestic and sexual violence, (*Business Name*) will respect the autonomy of the adult survivor to direct her or his own life, and their confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

2. (*Business Name*) through its Agencies and Departments will maintain, publish and post in locations of high visibility, such as bulletin boards, break rooms, company phone directories, and/or on line information sources, a list of resources for victims and perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence. (*Business Name*) will also maintain, publish and post any other policies regarding maintaining safety at the workplace.

B. Reporting Procedure

(*Business Name*) employees are responsible for informing the designated manager/supervisor of any threats, which they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received related to domestic or sexual violence.

(*Business Name*) understands the importance of confidentiality related to reports of domestic and sexual violence, and will respect the privacy of the reporting employee. Employees should make reports in ways that maintain safety, respect, and dignity for individuals.
