

University of Washington Police Crime Prevention Unit

Workplace Security Plan

This document identifies the necessary components of a workplace security plan to help you create such a plan for your workplace. This plan is in addition to, and separate from, the health and safety plans required by state [WISHA](#) mandates. We recommend that work group members collaborate on the workplace security plan using this document and their knowledge of the specific work environment. A workgroup can be as large as a department or as small as an office. The UW Police Crime Prevention Unit is available to [consult with managers and administrators on the planning process and to review completed plans.](#)

Integrate with other emergency planning

Integrating the workplace security plan with other health and safety or emergency planning documents has substantial advantages. Parts of other plans, such as an emergency evacuation plan, can also be used in planning how to respond to a criminal or violent emergency. Annual training can include information on all plans.

Here are links to other health, safety and emergency planning web pages.

[EH&S Health and Safety plans](#)

[Emergency Evacuation Operations plan](#)

[The Office of Emergency Management](#)

Action items

- Assign an employee or a small group to draft workplace security plan and review/implement it as well as other health and safety and emergency plans.

Identify Security Risks

Identifying security risks helps you prepare in greater detail for problems that are more likely to occur. Some risks are not easily identifiable or quantifiable. For example, university buildings are usually public facilities during business hours, so thieves or other types of criminals may enter as easily on non-criminals.

Another type of risk is more easily identifiable based on the type of business or activity being conducted there. Some diagnostic questions are:

- Does the workgroup have or work with things of value or that others might perceive as having value? If so, persons might be at more risk for theft or a confrontation with a thief.
- Does the workgroup interact with people who may be distressed in some way, may be mentally ill, or who may get bad news from the workgroup, e.g. bad grades, disciplinary actions, collection letters, parking tickets, etc. If so, persons might be more at risk from threats, irrational behavior, or assaults.
- Does the workgroup have employees who normally work in secluded areas or during non-standard business hours? If so, these employees may appear to be more vulnerable or might have more difficulty calling for assistance in an emergency.

Still another type of risk might not normally be present but could arise (and be identified) during exceptional circumstances. Examples of this type are:

- Domestic violence where an abuser could come to the workplace looking for his or her domestic victim but might pose a threat to others as well.
- A disgruntled employee who decides to cause a disturbance, damage property, or pose a threat to co-workers.

After risks have been identified, these Workplace Safety Plan components may be implemented in such a manner as to minimize the risks as much as possible.

Education and training

A well-written plan is of little use if employees are not routinely trained.

Train new employees on the plan

Make training on the emergency plans part of a new employee's orientation.

Review Workplace Security Plan regularly

Since criminal or violent emergencies do not happen often, employees are likely to forget what to do without (at least) annual reinforcement training. Take the opportunity to review other health and safety and emergency plans at the same time you review your workplace security plan.

Supervisors' and Faculty's checklist

If supervisors or faculty are faced with any prohibited behavior as identified by the [UW Policy & Procedure on Violence in the Workplace](#), here are the steps they must take:

See the: [What Faculty & Supervisors Must Do Checklist](#)

WPV Prevention training

UW Police Crime Prevention and UW Human Resources will provide information on UW Policy, early warning signs of potential violence, how to respond in an emergency, and risk abatement plans.

Action items

- Schedule Workplace Violence Prevention training. [Use this form](#) or call UW Police Crime Prevention at 206-543-9338.
- Incorporate security plan training into new employee orientation.
- Schedule annual training on the WPV Safety Plan
- Provide copies of, or the Web link to, the [Supervisors' and Faculty's checklist](#) to supervisors and managers.

Physical Security

Physical Security is the ability to control physical access to the workplace and to specific locations inside the workplace. This includes controlling unauthorized access during non-business hours and denying access to a dangerous person when employees are present.

Exterior Doors

Most exterior doors on buildings at the UW are substantial enough to deny quick entry by force. Most have 'panic bars' or devices that allow a person to exit easily in an emergency. Notify Facilities Services immediately if lock hardware becomes loose or door closing devices or latches aren't working

correctly. Don't allow suspicious persons 'tailgate' you through a locked door.

Windows

Windows should not open far enough for a person to enter or to reach through far enough to reach a latch.

Locks and keys (including key cards)

Locks on UW building are generally of high quality. A key card system is more flexible and more secure because cards can be turned on or off and be programmed for specific areas and times. The major problems with lock/key security are the unaccounted for issuance of keys and unauthorized key copying. The issuance of master keys should be on a strict need-to-have basis and NOT for convenience. The loss or compromise of a master key can be devastating to a department's budget. We recommend that only a very few master keys be issued. A rigorous method of key control is an important part of physical security.

Interior Doors

Interior doors which are solid core are the most secure but often they are designed with clear or frosted glass panels. The most common problems are unlocked office doors or doors left open. When leaving your office always lock the door, even if you will only be gone for a moment. As a refuge from a dangerous person there should be enough 'SAFE' rooms for employees to 'shelter in place' during an emergency.

Areas that have restricted access

Designated areas of the workplace which have restricted access make it easier for employees to identify suspicious persons who should not be there, or for UW Police to take law enforcement action.

Architectural features to separate the public from service providers

Such features can help define restricted access areas but can also serve as protective barriers to protect employees from dangerous persons.

Safe Rooms

Safe rooms are used when employees make the decision to protect themselves from danger by 'sheltering in place' rather than evacuating. Safe Rooms should be:

- Located inside a work area

- Accessible from all parts of the work area
- Have a solid core door, or a door with small glass panels, a way to restrict vision from the outside, and a lock and telephone. Some modifications may be necessary to transform existing rooms into Safe Rooms. All modifications must conform to Fire Codes and other health and safety regulations. ([EH&S](#) can be contacted for information regarding health and safety regulations.)

Alarms

Some workplaces will need alarms.

- Intrusion Alarms detect unauthorized entry during non-business hours. The alarm is usually monitored by a commercial alarm company.
- Duress alarms enable employees to call for help without being obvious to the person causing the problem. The alarm is usually monitored by a commercial alarm company. There may be some delay while the company notifies the local law enforcement agency. Dialing 911 from an office phone and setting down the handset or hanging up after connecting may result in a faster police response.

It is necessary to test alarms periodically.

- Notify the local law enforcement agency (usually UW Police) about the test. Ask to be notified when the alarm company calls the local law enforcement agency to report the alarm.
- Activate the alarm
- Receive information from the police about when the alarm company called. Determine the elapsed time.
- Follow up with the alarm company

Securing a Building (Lockdown)

The ability to communicate lockdown instructions across the University is a daunting task. The ability to totally secure a single building, work area or a safe room within a building involves the ability to communicate information, which will be addressed in the next section, and a process for locking down/securing an area.

- Selected employees should be (voluntarily) assigned the primary and backup responsibility to lock certain doors or areas in the event of an emergency during which it is advisable to ‘shelter in place’.

- Assigned employees must have the ability to lock the specified doors. This may be done with keys, via the CAAMS system or other card access systems, or by manipulating the door locking mechanism.
- Prepare Signs for posting at exterior doors that are locked to tell persons what to do. Example – The building (area) is locked until further notice due to an emergency situation. Please go to a safe place and try to acquire information from official sources.
- Your department can request a physical security survey of your office space by using this [form](#) or by contacting the Crime Prevention office at 206-543-9338. A crime prevention officer will survey your whole office space, (e.g., doors, windows, locks) and your department will receive a letter of recommendations from the UW Police Department.

Action Items

- Identify a key control coordinator – usually the building manager or a department equivalent.
- Implement a key control system
 - Identify a contact person to receive reports of door, lock, or key problems.
 - Request a security survey from UW Police
 - Identify potential safe rooms
 - Request or implement physical modifications
 - Solid core doors
 - Window blinds or coverings
 - Communications availability
 - Ability to lock certain doors. All locks must conform to Fire Code and other safety regulations.
- Design and implement lockdown plan
 - Acquire ability to lock the building, work area, and office doors.
 - Assign responsibility to specific employees (primary and secondary)
 - Design internal emergency communication plan (see next section)
- Review any need for alarms
 - If there are alarms, implement a testing schedule

Emergency Communications

911

- Anyone who perceives threats of danger to persons or property, or to report suspicious persons or activity, should call 911 for police assistance.
- 911 calls go to the University Police if the call is made from a (wire connected) telephone on UW property.
- Pressing 911 and the previous number 9-911 will both work from UW telephones.
- Cell phone users at the Seattle Campus calling 911 will connect with either the Seattle Police or Washington State Patrol. Callers should ask to be connected to the UW Police.

When calling 911 it is important to tell the call taker....

- What is happening. This helps police assign the correct priority.
- Where the danger is. This may not be same place as from where you're calling.
- Who is causing the danger (includes a description). Police will be looking for the dangerous person while arriving at a confused situation.

Within work unit

The ability to communicate emergency information in a single building or work area within a building is crucial. Having one communication method is not enough. Using multiple methods increases the chances of getting the message to a larger number of employees. The messages distributed should be clear and concise. Sample messages for Evacuation and Shelter in Place can be written in advance

- Implement a local 'phone tree'. Designate primary and secondary staff members as points of contact to initiate emergency communications. The employee who knows about the danger should notify the primary contact person AFTER calling 911. That contact person can call a prearranged list of persons who would each call a short list of different persons who would each call a short list of different persons until all employees have been notified.
- Designate primary and secondary staff members in discrete work areas to notify each employee in person.

- Where danger is imminent, yell for help or to alert co-workers to Evacuate or Shelter in Place.
- Use a 'Code Word' or phrase to alert a co-worker to call police when you don't want the suspect or dangerous person to know. The code word or phrase should sound innocuous enough so the person causing the problem doesn't understand, but be uncommon enough so it won't be used accidentally in the course of normal business.
- Other methods for emergency communications within the department:
 - Email lists
 - Text messaging
 - Intercom or paging systems
 - Faxes

Action Items

- Decide which communication methods to use
- Identify Code word or phrase
- Design Phone 'tree' or In-Person notification plan
- Identify primary and secondary points of contact for distributing emergency information
- Write clear and concise sample messages for the points of contact to use and include in your safety plan.
- Practice emergency communications

Identify and Report Concerns

'Identifying and Reporting Concerns' are the key topics addressed in the Workplace Violence Prevention training presented by Human Resources and the UW Police. The key to violence prevention is early identification of concerns and reporting those concerns.

Supervisors must notify head of unit

[What Supervisors Must Do - Checklist](#)

Action Items

- Schedule WPV Prevention training for employees by using this [form](#) or calling UW Police Crime Prevention at 206-543-9338.

Individual employees' responsibilities

The primary responsibility for the safety of employees is with each individual employee. The University can help with plans, technology, and training but each employee has to contribute.

Report concerns to supervisors

The identification and reporting of early warning signs and appropriate intervention is critical to preventing violence

Recognize and report suspicious persons / events

While violence doesn't happen very often, other types of crime, such as theft, happen much more often. A safety plan that includes training on reporting suspicious persons or events will help exercise the safety plan and prevent some property crime.

Maintain personal safety

In an emergency, employees should keep themselves safe so they can report the emergency and alert other employees.

Maintain workplace physical security

Each employee should assume responsibility for reporting malfunctions in door locks or equipment, for making sure locked doors close behind them, and for not letting unknown persons 'tailgate' behind them when entering a secure area.

Action items

- Include a section on individual responsibilities in the safety plan

Identify and discuss common scenarios

Each workplace will have slightly different concerns. Employees in some workplaces have extensive contact with the general public; others have none. Some have a lot of interaction with students; others have less. Some workgroups have a large number of employees working in different locations; others have a relatively small group of colleagues.

Known types of problems

Have discussions with employees about known or typical types of problems and decide on guidelines to handle them.

Suspicious persons

A suspicious person is one that is inappropriately present in an area, such as a private office or nonpublic area, or is exhibiting some unusual or strange behavior. Employees should call 911. Examples are: a person found inside a private office who claims to be looking for the restroom; a person who is seen going from car to car in a parking lot, looking inside the vehicles.

- Employees DO NOT have to see and recognize a crime before they can call the police. Call the police and let them determine what is going on. Employees will not get in trouble for reporting something that turns out to be legal behavior.
- Most thieves who are caught near the time of the crime have been reported by aware employees who thought the suspects were suspicious. Usually the actual crime had not been observed.

Action items

- Identify and discuss common scenarios including reporting suspicious persons. Decide on guidelines to handle them.

Court Orders for Victim Protection

Employees are instructed to notify the University

The UW Workplace Violence Policy instructs employees to notify the UW, including their supervisors, if they have obtained an [Order for Victim Protection](#)

Confidentiality

Reassure the employee that their situation will remain as confidential as possible, consistent with the University's responsibility to maintain a safe workplace.

After disclosure, an assessment may be requested

Call [685-SAFE](#) to discuss the necessity of a risk assessment. If there is an assessment, an abatement plan will be constructed in consultation with the affected department.

Implement risk abatement plan

The affected department has the responsibility to implement the abatement plan. The risk abatement plan may contain elements which may be constrained by available resources. For example, the physical security of a workplace may be enhanced by changing locks or installing additional lighting. There may not be resources available to accomplish all recommendations.

Action items

- Ask employees to privately report the existence of Order for Protection to their supervisor or other department administrator.

Response to Violence

Most of the Workplace Safety Plan is devoted to identifying and addressing Early Warning Signs to prevent violence, and to putting the physical and training resources in place in order to react more effectively if violence occurs. This part of the Safety Plan addresses the immediate actions which are necessary to take when violence is happening right now. This subject is also covered by the Workplace Violence Prevention training provided by the UW Police and UW Human Resources (See the Education and Training section – above)

Evacuate or Shelter-in-place?

There are two primary choices of action to take when confronted by violence.

If it is dangerous to stay in an area/room/building, evacuate (Run Away). This is when the source of the danger is close to you but does not control escape routes.

- Violence nearby but it is possible to leave
- Get to a safe location
- Call for help - 911

If it is dangerous to leave the area/room/building, Shelter in Place (Securely Hide). This is when the source of the danger controls or blocks access to escape OR you don't know the location of the source.

“Securely Hide” means...

- Locked or barricaded room with limited visibility from outside and with telephone.
- Get down on the floor and out of the line-of-fire
- Call for help – 911
- Wait for official notice that the danger is over

Action items

- Schedule Workplace Violence Prevention training from UW Police Crime Prevention and UW Human Resources by using this [form](#) or calling UW Police Crime Prevention at 206-543-9338
- Incorporate the concepts of Evacuate or Shelter-In-Place into employee training
- Identify Safe Rooms to shelter-in-place. Practice moving to safe Rooms.
- Practice evacuating the building.

For additional information, please contact the

UW Police Crime Prevention Unit

206-543-9338

Uwpolice@u.washington.edu

<http://www.washington.edu/admin/police/prevention/>