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Office of the Commissioner

Procedures for dealing with threats directed towards Department of Health and Human Services staff or buildings

Policy # DHHS-14-05

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I. SUBJECT

Procedures for dealing with threats directed toward Department of Health and Human Services staff or buildings.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

There shall be a set of procedures to deal with threats against Department of Health and Human Services employees and buildings.

III. RATIONALE

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services considers threats directed against its employees as serious offenses subject to prosecution to the fullest extent of the law. In keeping with this philosophy, Department of Health and Human Services pledges to protect Departmental employees and cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in assisting in the apprehension and prosecution of any person who threatens an employee or building.

IV. PROCEDURE STATEMENT

A. Threats Directed Toward Employees

1. **Threats of physical harm directed toward employee(s)** that include an immediate specific threatening action (e.g., "right now I'm going to come to your office and hurt worker X") shall require that supervisors immediately notify the nearest law enforcement agency without delay. Nothing in this procedure shall prevent the employee from reporting the threat in the event a threat is not reported by a supervisor/management.
2. **All Other Threatening Comments** (e.g., "if I don't get my check something very bad is going to happen...") shall be immediately reported to the employee's supervisor who will notify the District Operations Business Manager and Office Director. The Departmental threat form will be filled out by the employee directly involved. If law enforcement is not involved, an explanation identifying the actions taken will be documented on the form.

3. **Supervisor/Manager Response** whenever a supervisor is informed of a specific, direct threat of physical harm he/she shall immediately take steps to:
 - i. Ensure that the nearest law enforcement agency has been notified of said threat and inform them of the name and address of person(s) who allegedly made the threat. In addition to notifying law enforcement, supervisors and managers are authorized to take immediate and appropriate measures to protect the safety of employees, clients and the public at DHHS locations. This includes, but is not limited to, securing the building, relocating employees to secure areas, or evacuating the building following consultation with law enforcement.
 - ii. Immediately notify:
 - a) In District Offices: the District Operations Business Manager or Office Manager will take the lead for building security measures.
 - b) In Augusta Central Offices: the Office/Division Director or other top supervisor immediately available in the building at that time, will take the lead for building security, in consultation with a Deputy Commissioner.
 - iii. For Augusta Central Offices, a Deputy Commissioner will notify the Commissioner.
 - iv. Develop a safety plan with the threatened employee(s) as appropriate. A guide for assisting in the development of safety plans is attached to this policy.
 - v. The Department of Health and Human Services threat information form shall be filled out by the employee directly involved, checked for completeness by the supervisor/manager and forwarded to a Deputy Commissioner or designee.
4. **Employees shall cooperate fully with the investigating law enforcement agency**, including submission of detailed written reports and attendance at any interviews or hearings requested.

B. Bomb threats

Specific Instructions: The staff person receiving a threat should attempt to ascertain as much information as possible by using the bomb threat information sheet. When released from the call, immediately notify the Supervisor, District Operations Business Manager, and Office Director, who shall determine if evacuation and contact to law enforcement is necessary. Bomb threats may require immediate evacuation of the affected facility.

V. THREAT REPORTS

Once the Deputy Commissioner or designee receives the threat report forms, they will be compiled, analyzed and distributed as deemed appropriate by DHHS Executive Management.

VI. DEFINITIONS

Threat: For the purpose of this policy statement, the term “threat” is defined to be any oral or written communication or gesture directed to or against any Department of Health and Human Services employee which articulates/conveys an intention to inflict physical, emotional, or financial harm or damage to property of or to the individual against whom the threat is directed. A threat may originate from any person, to include, but not limited to: clients, contractors, and other employees. A threat directed at an employee that is reasonably related to an employee’s job, is considered a threat, regardless of whether the employee is in the workplace or off duty when the threat occurs

Bomb threat: A threat that must mention a bomb or other term for an explosive device.

VII. DISTRIBUTION

All employees via e-mail and posting on the DHHS Intranet.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

Threat Information Form
Bomb Threat Information Sheet
Safety Plan Guidance

December 20, 2011

Revised Date



Mary C. Mayhew
Commissioner



Threat Information Form
(threats to DHHS employees, buildings including bomb threats)

Date and time of threat: _____

Person making threat:		Person being threatened:	
Address:		Title:	
Date of Birth:		Phone number:	
Phone number:			
Person receiving threat:			
Title:			
Phone number:			
DHHS Office and location:			
DHHS Program:			
Other, specify:			

Type of threat: Written By Phone In person Other, specify: _____

Threat Details: Threat against worker Threat against worker's family Against Building

Verbal (Written or Oral)

- To destroy property:
- Used obscenities/name calling:
- Threatened to get/use weapon:
- Voice tone:
- Language/exact words:
- Other Notes:

Non-Verbal (behavioral, physical):

- Gestures:
- Physical contact:
- Pacing:
- Showed/threatened with weapon:

Threat Information Form
(threats to DHHS employees, buildings including bomb threats)

Non-Verbal (behavioral, physical) - continued

- Used weapon:
- Property damage (specify):
- Other Notes:

Incident description: (please print or type)

Building Security Measures Taken: None Building evacuated Other, specify

Action Taken:

Person(s) Notified (List all individuals who were notified of the event):

PERSON/S NOTIFIED	NAME	DATE	AGENCY	ACTION TO BE TAKEN (DISPOSITION UNKNOWN)
Direct Supervisor				
District Operations Business Manager				
Office Director				
Law Enforcement				
Other				
ALL THREAT REPORTS MUST BE IMMEDIATELY SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE (Fax #: 287-3005)				

Staff Member Submitting Report: (PRINT) _____ **Telephone:** _____

Agency Name and Unit: _____

Signature of Person Completing Report: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____

BOMB THREAT CARD
PLACE THIS CARD UNDER YOUR TELEPHONE

Date: _____

Check Caller I.D. #: _____

Questions to ask:

1. When is bomb going to explode? _____
2. Where is it right now? _____
3. What does it look like? _____
4. What kind of bomb is it? _____
5. What will cause it to explode? _____
6. Did you place the bomb? _____
7. Why? _____
8. What is your address? _____
9. What is your name? _____

Exact Wording of the Threat:

Type text here:

Sex of Caller: Male Female

Age: _____

Length of Call: _____

Number at which call is received _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Caller's Voice:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calm | <input type="checkbox"/> Crying | <input type="checkbox"/> Ragged |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angry | <input type="checkbox"/> Normal | <input type="checkbox"/> Accent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excited | <input type="checkbox"/> Distinct | <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slow | <input type="checkbox"/> Slurred | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid | <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal | <input type="checkbox"/> Raspy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soft | <input type="checkbox"/> Stutter | <input type="checkbox"/> Lisp |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loud | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Disguised |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clearing
Throat | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep
Breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Cracking
Voice |

If voice is familiar, who did it sound like?

Background Sounds:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voices | <input type="checkbox"/> PA System | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motor | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear | <input type="checkbox"/> Static |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Booth | <input type="checkbox"/> Long Distance | <input type="checkbox"/> Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crockery | <input type="checkbox"/> Factory Machinery | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Noises |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Street Noises | <input type="checkbox"/> House Noises | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe): _____ | | |

Threat Language:

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foul | <input type="checkbox"/> Irrational | <input type="checkbox"/> Incoherent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taped | <input type="checkbox"/> Well Spoken (educated) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Message read by threat maker | | |

Remarks:

Type text here.

WORKPLACE SAFETY PLAN GUIDANCE

Supervisors/managers shall work with threatened employees to develop a safety plan.

Considerations in Developing Safety Plans

Note: Any or all of the following may be implemented, as necessary and as practicable:

- The employee possibly obtaining a protection order from the district court;
- Temporary relocation of the employee's work site;
- Offer a parking spot close to the building;
- Escort the employee to and from their vehicle;
- Employee commuting to work with others;
- Change of employee's phone number and e-mail address;
- Remove voice mail from the employee's phone and have the employee's calls screened;
- Change of employee's work assignment, as possible, and/or work schedule;
- Providing a picture of the perpetrator (if available) to reception areas, police, security, etc.;
- Employee providing information of an emergency contact person should the employer be unable to contact the employee; and
- Other considerations the employee or supervisor/manager may suggest.