

**ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

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**POLICY**

Ridgewater College will foster an environment where employees, students and visitors are free from threats and acts of violence. This will be accomplished by encouraging mutual respect among all individuals, establishing open and honest communication, inviting all employees to provide input, and enforcing zero tolerance for any type of violent behavior. Please see the Ridgewater College "[Possession or Carry of Firearms Policy](#)" for restrictions regarding possession or carry of firearms applicable to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, in accordance with the Minnesota Citizens' Personal Protection Act of 2003, [Minnesota Statutes Section 624.714](#), and other applicable law.

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*History:*

*03.15.04 Adopted*

*03.13.08 Revised*

*10.24.22 Proposed; Reviewed for Equity Compliance and Moved from Chapter 5 to Chapter 1.*

*09.20.23 Revised*

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**PROCEDURES**

Ridgewater College has adopted a Zero Tolerance for Violence in the Workplace Policy in accordance with Minnesota Statute (MS 1.50) Freedom from Violence Act, which states “The State of Minnesota hereby adopts a policy of zero tolerance of violence. It is stated policy that every person in the state has a right to live free from violence.” Ridgewater College will provide an educational and employment environment that is free from threats or acts of violence, whether perceived or real. Employees, students, and visitors of Ridgewater College will be treated with respect and dignity.

**Definition of Violence:** *“Violence” means the abusive or unjust exercise of power, intimidation, harassment, and/or the threatened or actual use of force which results in or has a high likelihood of causing hurt, fear, injury, suffering or death. Workplace violence generally falls into three categories:*

- 1. A violent act or threat (perceived or real) by a current or former employee, supervisor of manager, or someone who has some involvement with a current or former employee, such as an employee’s spouse, significant other, relative or another person who has a dispute with an employee.*
- 2. A violent act or threat (perceived or real) by a student or a member of the public visiting the college.*
- 3. A violent act by someone totally unrelated to the work environment. The purpose of the visit is to commit a criminal act such as robbery or bombing.*

Ridgewater College will foster an environment where employees, students, and visitors are protected from workplace violence. This will be accomplished by encouraging mutual respect among all individuals, establishing open and honest communication, inviting all employees to provide input, and enforcing zero tolerance for any type of violent behavior. Specifically, Ridgewater College will:

- Provide information and training for employees and information to students that will foster a workplace environment and culture that is safe, respectful, pro-active, and responsive to threat or acts of violence for its customers/students and employees.
- Promptly respond to threats or acts of violence. This response will include timely involvement of law enforcement agencies, when appropriate.
- Take appropriate and assertive disciplinary action against employees and students of Ridgewater College who are involved in the commission of threats or acts of violence. (Disciplinary action includes any measure up to and including discharge from employment or expulsion from enrollment.)
- Support criminal prosecution of those who threaten or commit work-related violence against its employees, students, or visitors. Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 15, 86, this policy does not create any civil liability on the part of the State of Minnesota.
- Enforce the college policy of restricting possession or carry of firearms applicable to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, in accordance with the Minnesota Citizens’ Personal Protection Act of 2003, Minnesota Statutes section 624.714, and other applicable law(s). (See Ridgewater College’s [“Possession or Carry of Firearms Policy.”](#))
- Prohibit the possession or carry of dangerous weapons other than as described above. The category “dangerous weapons” includes, but is not limited to, any weapon that it is illegal to

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possess; loaded or unloaded, assembled or disassembled pellet guns, BB guns, and stun guns; replicate firearms, as defined in [Minnesota Statute 609.713](#); knives and other similar instruments with a blade length of more than three inches, other than those normally present in the workplace for the specific purpose of food preparation and service; any switchblade knife, metal knuckles and similar weapons; bows, cross-bows and arrows; explosives and explosive devices; throwing stars, num-chuks, clubs, saps, and any other object commonly used or intended for use as a weapon.

Ridgewater College is committed to ensuring the workplace provides safety and reasonable protection from workplace violence. The following actions and activities support violence prevention goals and policies:

- Employees are provided information and training that fosters a safe and respectful workplace environment, and an environment that is proactive and able to be responsive to threats (perceived or real) in the workplace.
- Employees are expected to lead by example in promoting positive behavior.
- Supervisors are empowered to take immediate action to resolve or stabilize violent situations in the workplace and to protect people from harm.
- Supervisors will work with Human Resources to ensure appropriate incident response reports are completed immediately when a threat or violent incident occurs.
- The Director of Human Resources will serve as a referral source and will respond as needed to any incident report.
- Standards of conduct are clearly communicated and consistently enforced.
- Discipline for unacceptable behavior will be used fairly, consistently, and appropriately.
- Ridgewater College will not tolerate rude, offensive, insulting, derogatory, hateful, threatening, or violent language or behavior among its employees, students, or visitors. Examples of such language or behavior include, but are not limited to, name calling, obscene language or gestures, intimidation, harassment, stalking, negative racial or sexual comments, etc.
- Employees are encouraged to make use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)—an assessment, short-term counseling, and referral agency. While supervisors, union representatives, or family members may encourage employees to seek help from EAP, the decision to use its services should be a voluntary one; employees may also choose to seek assistance from private health services.

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*History:*

*03.15.04 Adopted*

*03.13.08 Revised*

*07.20.16 Revised*

*10.24.22 Proposed*

*09.20.23 Revised*

*03.11.25 Proposed; 11.10.2025 Revised*