

## **Number 17.7 - DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY**

**Effective Date:** May 11, 2012

**Applicable To:** All classified, exempt, appointed, temporary, and contractual employees in the Executive Branch of the State of Vermont

**Issued By:** Department of Human Resources

**Approved By:** Jeb Spaulding, Secretary of Administration

### **PURPOSE & POLICY STATEMENT**

The State of Vermont desires to achieve working environments for its employees that are free of any form of discrimination, intimidation or harassment. Toward that end, the State recognizes the significant and deleterious effects of domestic or sexual violence in its workplaces. The State believes in a workplace environment that supports safe, respectful, equitable relationships, and that challenges any social norm that supports domestic or sexual abuse.

The State will provide employees subject to domestic or sexual violence with an opportunity to simultaneously address their personal needs and work obligations. The State does not discipline or discriminate against employees because they are victims/survivors of domestic or sexual violence. Employees subjected to domestic or sexual violence should work with the State to identify their needs, discuss any need for appropriate leave, or otherwise identify how to best balance their personal circumstances and job duties.

### **GENERAL GUIDANCE**

The State acknowledges that victimization can lead to absences, late arrivals, earlier departures, or decreased productivity. These employment issues may be a result of legal obligations, medical needs, safety planning, and/or trauma. Employees subject to abuse may request consideration for work schedule changes, use of appropriate leave, and/or request a leave of absence to help address related difficulties. The State should continue to work with employees during any and all stages of the abuse and/or recovery process. The State encourages victims/survivors and other affected employees to contact community agencies (listed below) for assistance, resources and referrals. Many provide free services for safety planning, accessing protection orders, counseling, support groups, shelter, advice and legal assistance. The State will attempt to make appropriate information, referrals, and resources available to victims and other employees.

The State encourages all employees to take advantage of available resources. You may contact the listed resources twenty-four hours a day and seven 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, and  
United Way Information and Referral, dial 211.**

You may also contact our Employee Assistance Program (“EAP”), and/or your local human resources administrator. Employee discussions with EAP are confidential, and EAP may be contacted as follows:

**Invest EAP**  
(888) 834-2830 (Toll free line available 24/7), and  
[www.investeap.org](http://www.investeap.org) Password: vteap.

### **Employees who commit or threaten to commit domestic or sexual violence**

State employees must refrain from committing or threatening to commit domestic or sexual violence. The State will take appropriate disciplinary action if an employee commits or threatens to commit domestic or sexual violence consistent with its legal, collective bargaining, and policy obligations. Any employee who commits acts/threats of domestic or sexual violence at the workplace or while using workplace resources, could also 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, telephones, cellular phones, fax machines, computers, e-mail, mail, automobiles, pagers, office supplies, photocopy machines and work time.

If an employee intentionally uses his/her position or workplace resources to enable a perpetrator to harm/contact a victim, both the employee and perpetrator (if an employee) will also 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.

The State strives to provide a safe and secure workplace for all state employees. When staff members are subjected to domestic or sexual violence, there may be times when enhanced security protocols are appropriate. The State of Vermont will evaluate workplace safety options when it learns of domestic and/or sexual violence or threats, and will consider the safety of identified staff and co-workers. Employees should immediately report known safety threats to their supervisors

and/or managers, who should alert the appointing authority and Buildings and General Services (“BGS”) security.

The State recognizes that perpetrators and/or potential perpetrators may also need assistance and resources. The State will provide, when appropriate, referrals to community agencies, our Employee Assistance Program, and/or certified Batterer Intervention and/or Sex Offender Treatment Programs. We encourage all employees to take advantage of these resources. To find a Batterer Intervention Program in your area, call (802) 223-1302, or visit <http://vtnetwork.org>. To find a Sex Offender Treatment Program in your area, call (802) 247-3132 or (503) 643-1023, or visit <http://www.atsa.com/request-referral>.