Date: January 23, 2008

POLICY 70-39

Cancels: Pol/Pro 70-39 dated 1/9/06

Policy Approved By **Date** 1/23/08

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

SEE ALSO; RCW 49.17.060; WAC 296-24; Policy 70-28; Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA).

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

NOTE: The actions of commissioned law enforcement personnel responding to visitor protection and law enforcement issues/incidents are governed by agency law enforcement procedures. If agency law enforcement procedures conflict in any way with this policy, then agency law enforcement procedures will take precedence over this policy when being applied to commissioned law enforcement personnel. The Chief, Visitor Protection and Law Enforcement, oversees agency visitor protection and law enforcement responsibilities/procedures in parks.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines for all employees regarding violence and its impact in the workplace. State Parks is concerned and committed to employee safety and health and will take all reasonable measures to foster a safe working environment for employees and those doing business with the agency. All employees, including managers and supervisors, are responsible for following all applicable laws, directives, policies and procedures, and for maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

2. Definitions

Firearm: A weapon or device from which a projectile or projectiles may be fired by an explosive such as gunpowder.

Workplace Violence:

- Direct or implied verbal threat, direct or implied written threat, threatening behavior, intentional physical assault, or other conduct that arouses fear, hostility, or intimidation; and
- Reasonably causes a person to fear for individual safety or for safety of friends, family, other co-workers, or property; and
- Occurs on agency property, is perpetrated using agency property, or affects the agency's ability to carry out its mission.

Workplace: Any agency owned, leased, or operated facility, vehicle, vessel or property (including parking lots); or any facility or property for which the agency has an operating agreement.

3. **Policy**

A. State Parks will not tolerate violence, intimidating behavior or threats of violence in the workplace. All reported incidents will be taken seriously. Any intimidating or threatening behavior will be presumed to constitute a statement of an employee's intent to do harm, and is a violation of this policy. Violations can also include oral or written comments, jokes, gestures, horseplay, or other acts and communications that suggest or imply that physical or other harm may occur to someone's person or property, or that display hostility toward others.

B. All employees including supervisors and managers are expected to promote a safe working environment. All employees are responsible for immediately reporting threats or assaults through the chain of command to the Human Resources Director or directly to the Human Resources Director if desired.

C. The Human Resources Director or designee has the authority and responsibility for implementing the provisions of the workplace violence prevention program to ensure agency compliance with the requirements of this policy.

D. The Human Resources Director or designee will initiate an investigation as soon as possible after a workplace violence incident is reported to determine if a violation of this policy has occurred and if disciplinary action is warranted. Staff is expected to cooperate with the investigation and failure to do so may result in discipline up to and including dismissal. Retaliation against anyone involved in the process of an investigation is strictly prohibited and may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. The Human Resources Office will maintain confidentiality to the degree appropriate to complete its work. However, investigative reports and all related materials may be subject to public disclosure or be otherwise disclosed according to the law.

E. Any employee who threatens, harasses, or abuses someone at the workplace or away from the workplace during the work time of either person, or using any state resources such as work time, telephones, FAX machines, mail, e-mail or other means may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may also be taken against employees who are arrested, convicted or issued a permanent injunction as a result of violence when such action has a nexus to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

F. Firearms are not allowed in the workplace except as follows:

1. Commissioned personnel may possess and carry Washington State Parks approved law enforcement equipment (when carried and used for the sole purpose of official duties).

2. Assigned staff may handle Washington State Parks approved law enforcement equipment, including agency firearms and ammunition, and agency weapons, while performing official duties (i.e., supply and mail room staff).

3. A firearm that is appropriately secured, inaccessible, and out of sight in the employee's personal vehicle parked on state property will not be considered a violation of this policy.