

Number: TBD

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 13, 2000

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

Policy Area: Safety

Issue: Safety Procedures for Conducting Work with Offenders on CSOSA Premises

Action/Guidance: Staff Safety – Office

Context: Community Supervision Officer (CSO) and CSOSA staff safety centers around minimization of risk by controlling the physical setting of the office, establishing procedures for dealing with emergencies or disruptions, and training staff to work with offenders and the public.

Risk cannot be eliminated but it can be minimized. Minimization of risk to all CSO's and CSOSA employees is the goal of the agency's safety policies.

I. Procedure:

A. Office Entry and Exit

1. Before entering the office, workers shall make a visual check of the outside of the building. Ensure that everything appears "normal." Doors providing access to staff work areas should be locked and access controlled. All entry and exit doors should be constructed of solid core materials and should always be locked unless under visual control.
2. All offices shall have a policy for key issue and return. Distribution of keys shall be restricted to need. Additionally, a procedure for handling lost or misplaced keys shall be developed and arrangements for duplication specified.
3. All offices shall have policy and procedures for electronic burglar alarm systems and use.

B. Offenders and Visitors

1. Offenders and visitors shall use one designated entrance and exit. All offenders and visitors without government identification are to pass through metal detectors and/or handheld metal detectors.
2. If possible, waiting areas shall be located away from Community Supervision Assistant (CSA) work areas. Valuables such as purses and money shall not be left in public view and should be under lock and key when feasible.
3. Community Supervision Officers shall escort all offenders and/or visitors to and from the reception area. The offender or visitor shall always precede the CSO and should never be unattended. This procedure is intended to minimize safety risks and to enable CSOSA to meet security requirements necessary for access to the NCIC computer information system, which prohibits unauthorized and unescorted persons from entering space where NCIC access is available.

4. Appropriate lighting shall be used in entrance and waiting areas. The office manager is responsible to ensure that burned out bulbs are replaced within 24 hours.

C. CSOSA Staff

1. CSO's and CSA's shall be trained in crisis intervention to learn techniques for defusing aggressive behavior. These skills may prevent personal victimization and may also reduce the possibility of injury to others.
2. CSO's shall advise CSA's and building security staff of anyone they believe to be a potential problem. In addition, CSO's and CSA's shall be trained to be observant of potentially aggressive behavior or other problems.
3. Abusive or obscene telephone calls received by CSS shall not be tolerated. Staff shall advise the caller that verbal abuse is not acceptable, and, if the verbal abuse does not cease immediately, the phone call will end. Harassment calls received by CSS staff shall be investigated immediately by the Office of Security.
4. CSA's are not be expected to deal with an abusive or unruly offender. CSA's shall be well versed in office emergency procedures and should have access to some type of panic button.
5. The CSA shall be separated from the waiting area. The design of all future office waiting areas is to separate the CSA from the offender waiting area. Offenders shall pass through metal detectors monitored by building security staff to ensure that no weapons are permitted in the building.
6. All CSOSA employees shall store any personal packages, purses, bags, or other belongings in a locked drawer, cabinet, or other secure place.

D. Personal Offices

1. CSOSA employees should be aware of all items in their personal work area. They will be selective in choosing items to keep in the office, particularly those items normally located on a desk. Family photographs should not be displayed for viewing by the offender. Keys, ID/building access cards, portable electronic devices (mobile phones, pagers, etc.) and other personal or agency items shall never be accessible to the offender. Offices, files, desks, and supplies shall be secured when not in use. Staff should never leave an offender in the office alone when agency files are in plain view or are within easy access to the offender.
2. Office doors should be kept open whenever an offender is in the office unless the door or interior office wall contains a window allowing a direct line of sight to the CSO and offender or visitor at anytime. CSO's and other staff with interior windows must not place paper, curtains, or any other material that obstructs the line of sight into and out of the office.

E. Physical Arrangement of Office

1. Furniture shall be arranged to allow access to the door for easy exit if needed. Desks shall be arranged so they are not a barrier to escape in the event of a hostile

situation. Chairs shall be placed so that the officer's chair is the one closest to the door.

2. File cabinets, desks, and chairs shall be placed so as not to impede an escape route from the officer's chair to the door. Some type of obstacle should be situated between the visitor's chair and the door.
3. CSO's should be aware of potential weapons available to offenders and/or visitors in the office. Letter openers, pens, picture frames, and note spindles should be at a distance and inaccessible to offenders and/or visitors while seated.
4. An office plan shall be in place for handling an aggressive or violent client, and all staff should be familiar with it.
5. CSO's and CSA's shall have easy access to an alarm system or "panic button" to summon assistance.
6. All staff shall know emergency code words and procedures.
7. Emergency telephone numbers shall be readily available. Officers should not rely on memory in emergency situations.

F. Working Alone in the Office

1. CSO's should advise building security personnel of their presence on weekends or during extended work hours.
2. CSO's who are going to be working late in the office (or arriving alone on weekends) should move their cars to a parking place nearest the building.
3. When working alone, the officer should inform someone, a supervisor or a spouse, for instance, of his/her location and estimated time of departure. A system of regular telephone checks should be established. No offenders shall be allowed in the building outside regular or specially arranged business hours.
4. Answering devices (voice mail, caller ID) should be used. Workers should accept calls for known numbers only, or call back immediately upon screening messages.
5. The outer or entry door should be opened only to known persons. All entrances and windows should remain locked.

II. Statutory Authority: Section 11233(b)(2)(B) of the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997 ("Revitalization Act"), Pub. Law 105-33, 111 Stat. 712, D.C. Code § 24-1233(b)(2)(B) (1996 Repl., 1999 Supp.) (Director's authority); D.C. Code § 24-103 (1996 Repl.) (Probation's authority).

III. Procedural References/Supercedures:

- **References:**

Federal Judicial Center. (unknown). *Staff Safety: Workbook for Participants*. Washington, DC: Federal Judicial Center.

Maggio, Mark J. (1997). *Applied Officer Safety: In-District Facilitator's Guide for Probation and Pretrial Services*. Washington, DC: Federal Judicial Center.

Kipp, Richard A. (1995). *Safety Awareness Workbook: Anticipating, Identifying, and Resolving the Potential Victimization of Probation and Parole Officers*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.

Thorton, Robert L. and Shireman, John H. (1993). *New Approaches to Staff Safety*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.

Virginia Department of Corrections. Division of Operations. Community Corrections. (1999). *Strategies, Trainine, Equipment, & Policy for Staff Safety*. Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Corrections.

United States District Court. Northern District of Ohio. (unknown). *Safety Policy*.

- **Supercedes:** N/A