Susquehanna Valley Central School District Workplace Violence Prevention Program

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Susquehanna Valley Central School District
Workplace Violence Prevention Program

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Introduction

What is Workplace Violence?
Workplace violence is defined as any physical assault or act of aggressive behavior that occurs where a public employee performs any work-related duty in the course of their employment. This includes but is not limited to:

1) An attempt or threat, whether verbal or physical, to inflict physical injury upon an employee.
2) Any intentional display of force which would give an employee reason to fear or expect bodily harm.
3) Intentional and wrongful physical contact with a person without his or her consent that entails some injury.
4) Stalking an employee to cause fear of harm to the employee's physical safety and health when such stalking has arisen through and in the course of employment.

What is the New York State Workplace Violence Prevention Law and Regulation?
On June 7, 2006, New York State enacted legislation creating a new Section 27-b of State Labor Law that requires every public employer to evaluate the risk of workplace assaults and homicides at its workplace(s) and to develop and implement programs to prevent and minimize the hazard of workplace violence to public employees. In 2009, NYS Department of Labor (DOL) implemented regulations to accompany the Workplace Violence Prevention Law. These regulations are enforced by NYSDOL and can be found[1] at:
https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/03/workplace-violence-prevention-regulations.pdf.
Effective January 4, 2024, all public school districts, New York City public schools, Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) and County Vocational Education & extension Boards are covered by this law.

Purpose of this program
The purpose of this Workplace Violence Prevention Program is to provide information to managers, supervisors, employees, and authorized employee representatives about preventing and responding to incidents of workplace violence or threats of violence in accordance with the Workplace Violence Prevention Law and Regulation.

The goal of this program is to reduce the risk of workplace violence to employees and to ensure that any incident, complaint, or report of violence is taken seriously and dealt with appropriately and as expeditiously as possible. This program outlines the major components of our effort to meet these goals. At the core of this Workplace Violence Prevention Program is the Susquehanna Valley CSD's commitment to work with its employees to maintain a work environment free from violence and other threatening behavior to the greatest degree possible.

[1] Regulations can also be found in Title 12 of the New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations, Section 800.6

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Policy Statement

Susquehanna Valley CSD has developed and implemented a policy statement which describes the goals and objectives of our workplace violence prevention policy, the incident alert and notification policies employees should follow in the event of workplace violence, and describes how employees are able to participate in the implementation of our workplace violence prevention program through an authorized employee representative. The policy statement is posted at www.svsabers.org and in each building's required postings location near employee common areas**.** The policy statement is included in Attachment 1.

Workplace Risk Evaluation

Susquehanna Valley CSD has conducted a workplace risk evaluation consisting of:

A record examination: Susquehanna Valley CSD has examined all records of workplace violence incidents in the past year to identify patterns in the type and cause of incidents; areas of the workplace where incidents occur; incidents that involve specific workplace operations; or incidents which involve specific individuals.

An assessment of administrative risk factors: Susquehanna Valley CSD has assessed all relevant policies, practices, and procedures that may impact the risk of workplace violence.

An evaluation of the physical environment: Susquehanna Valley CSD has evaluated the physical work environment for factors which may place employees at risk of workplace violence with the participation of authorized employee representatives. Although workplace violence can occur in any work setting, some settings or factors may pose a greater degree of risk. Employment situations or factors that may pose a higher risk for Susquehanna Valley CSD employees include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Working late night or early morning hours
- Exchanging money with the public
- Working alone or in small numbers
- Working in a setting with uncontrolled access to the workplace
- Working in a setting where previous security problems have occurred:
- Having a mobile workplace assignment
- Having duties that include the delivery of passengers, goods, or services

Risk factors identified during the examination, assessment and evaluation are listed in Attachment 2, along with the methods and means by which each risk is being addressed by the Susquehanna Valley CSD. As your employer, Susquehanna Valley CSD is responsible for addressing all risk factors that our employees are potentially exposed to.

Any incidents that may occur after the implementation of this program must be carefully documented and analyzed in order to make improvements to this program during the required annual review or as necessary.

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Workplace Violence Control Measures and Prevention

Hierarchy of Controls

A hierarchy of controls is a safety professional term referring to a ranking of the safeguards that an employer can use to protect employees from harm in order of preference and effectiveness. There are three main types of safeguards, or control measures, that an employer can implement to protect employees from recognized workplace violence risk factors. Engineering controls are considered the most effective, followed by work practice controls, and then personal protective equipment.

Engineering controls eliminate or reduce the risk of workplace violence through physical changes to the workplace.

Examples of engineering controls include:

- Increasing lighting in remote areas
- Designing secure building access
- Installing security hardware
- Eliminating isolated work areas
- Installing drop safes

Work practice controls eliminate or reduce the risk of workplace violence through changes to organizational policies, procedures, and work practices.

Examples of work practice controls include:

- Increased staffing
- Employment of security personnel
- Implementing building access control procedures, for example, requiring badges to enter
- Instituting communication procedures across shifts or classes to share information regarding agitated clients or students
- Providing information to employees on the criminal history or violence of clients, inmates, or customers
- Reducing customer wait times
- Providing employees with personal alarms
- Providing cell phones to employees in the field
- Training employees on de-escalation and how to recognize precursors to violence

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is generally considered the least effective control measure but may be needed to enhance other control measures or minimize potential injury severity when other control measures fail.

Examples of personal protective equipment include:

- Ballistic or stab resistant body armor
- Riot gear including protective helmets and shields
- Eye and face protection

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Workplace Violence Prevention Implementation

Prevention of violence in the workplace is the responsibility of the Susquehanna Valley CSD and everyone has a role to play in keeping the workplace safe from violence. The following section focuses on early warning signs of violent behavior and workplace issues that have the potential to trigger violent behavior. Management, employees, and authorized representatives should be familiar with the signs and issues described below to intervene early and reduce the likelihood of workplace violence.

Early warning signs of potential violence

There is no single "profile" that can identify a potentially dangerous individual. It is important to be careful when drawing assumptions about a person's potential for violence based on any specific behavior or action. However, certain patterns of behavior and events frequently precede episodes of violence.

Behavior or situations that may indicate an increased risk of violence include, but are not limited to the following:

- Direct or veiled threats of harm
- Intimidation, belligerence, bullying or other inappropriate behavior directed at others
- Numerous conflicts with supervisors and employees and/or verbal comments expressing hostility directed at coworkers, supervisors, or others
- Bringing an unauthorized weapon to work, brandishing a weapon in the workplace, making inappropriate reference to guns or expressing fascination with weapons
- Fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements in person or online indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides
- Statements in person or online indicating an increased tone of desperation, feeling that normal interventions to solve a problem will not work, feeling hopeless about a situation at work, with family, with finances, and other personal problems
- Signs of abuse of drugs or alcohol on or off the job
- Extreme or uncharacteristic changes in behavior or displays of emotion
- Employees with ongoing domestic difficulties
- Employees with a temporary order of protection against someone

These behaviors or situations should be reported to an employee's supervisor and/or the administrator of the workplace violence prevention program. Some behaviors may require immediate law enforcement intervention where others may require disciplinary action.

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Workplace issues that may trigger violence

Common situations that may trigger workplace violence can be categorized under employee issues or workplace issues.

Employee issues include:

- A negative performance review
- An unwelcome change in role due to performance or reorganization in the workplace
- An unwelcome change is work schedule
- Criticism of an employee's performance
- A conflict with coworker or supervisor
- Personal stress outside the workplace
- Increased workload or pressure

Workplace issues include:

- No clearly defined rules of conduct
- A lack of employee training
- Inadequate hiring practices or screening of potential employees
- Insufficient supervision of employees
- A lack of discipline or inconsistent discipline in the workplace
- A lack of employee support systems or support systems that are inadequate
- Employer failure to address incidents as they occur
- An overly authoritarian management style in the workplace

Note, a workplace issue that only an employee perceives can still be a trigger for workplace violence.

Recognizing the signs and intervening early

To help prevent a violent situation from occurring management, employees, and authorized representatives should be trained to recognize the early warning signs (such as a change in a person's behavior before an episode of violence) and the issues or events that may trigger violence. With this knowledge an employer can intervene early to prevent a violent incident from occurring.

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Reporting an Incident

At the core of this Workplace Violence Prevention Program is Susquehanna Valley CSD's commitment to work with its employees to maintain a work environment free from violence and violent behavior to the greatest degree possible.

Any Susquehanna Valley CSD employee who becomes aware of a physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse at the workplace must immediately report the facts and circumstances of the violent incident to their supervisor and/or the contact person identified in the Policy Statement (Attachment 1). In the event that an employee witnesses or is involved in an incident of violence in which there is an immediate threat to the employee's safety or the safety of others or where a serious injury has occurred, the employee will immediately call 911 to obtain law enforcement and/or medical assistance and notify their immediate supervisor. The supervisor will immediately conduct a preliminary inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the incident and make a prompt report to the Director of Facilities using the Incident Report in Attachment 4.

If a pattern of workplace violence incidents develops that involve criminal conduct or serious injury, Susquehanna Valley CSD will attempt to develop a protocol with the District Attorney or Police to ensure that violent crimes committed against employees in the workplace are promptly investigated and appropriately prosecuted.

Retaliation against an employee who makes a report of violence or other violent behavior is strictly prohibited and shall be subject to appropriate corrective or disciplinary measures.

Post-Incident Response

Management has developed procedures to respond to incidents of workplace violence. These include the following as appropriate:

- Assure that injured employees receive prompt and appropriate medical care. (This includes, but is not limited to, providing transportation of any injured persons to medical care).
- Report the incident to the appropriate authorities as required by applicable laws and regulations.
- Secure the premises to safeguard evidence and reduce distractions during the post incident response process.
- Assure that an incident report is completed immediately after an incident occurs, noting details that might be forgotten over time. Attachment 4 contains a sample incident report form.
- Address the need for appropriate treatment for employees who were victims of workplace violence. In addition to physical injuries, victims and witnesses may suffer psychological trauma, fear of returning to work, feelings of incompetence, guilt, powerlessness, and fear of criticism by supervisors or managers.
- Management will investigate any reported workplace violence incident thoroughly.

All employees should be trained to inform management about any incidents that occur and how to prepare an incident report.

Employee Information and Training

Training of every employee will be performed upon initial assignment and annually thereafter. Retraining is required any time there is a significant change to Susquehanna Valley CSD's workplace violence prevention program, a newly identified risk factor, or a control measure addition. Required training topics are listed in the Training Outline in Attachment 4.

Recordkeeping Requirements

All workplace violence incidents and threats will be documented in a workplace violence incident report. Workplace violence incidents that cause a work-related death or an injury that-meets the recording criteria of the Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau (PESH) log of injuries and illnesses should be recorded on both the PESH log and the workplace violence incidents report. For more on the PESH log of injuries and illness, the PESH website linked here: https://dol.ny.gov/public-employee-safety-health

Workplace violence incident reports will provide a written description when an incident occurs so that management can evaluate why the incident occurred and implement an appropriate safeguard or control measure to reduce the risk of such incidents from happening again. The Workplace Violence Incidents Report also creates a historical record. The Workplace Violence Incident Report(s) will be reviewed at least once a year to determine if and how the workplace violence prevention program should be updated. (A sample incident reporting form is attached as Attachment 4 of this document.)

Program Review

The Director of Facilities with the Authorized Employee Representatives, will evaluate the effectiveness of this Workplace Violence Prevention Program, at least annually or after any serious workplace violence incident. The review will focus on: determining trends in workplace violence incidents; addressing the root cause of incidents; evaluating the effectiveness of the control measures in place; and determining if any changes need to be made to control measures. The review will also assess whether the reporting and record keeping systems have been effective in collecting all relevant information. The cover sheet of this program will be updated with the names and titles of those who perform the review and the date of completion.

If an employee or authorized representative submits a written notice of concern regarding a violation of the employer's workplace violence prevention program or imminent danger in the workplace, the employer must be afforded a reasonable opportunity to address the reported issue. If the employee or authorized employee representative believes that the reported concern has not been resolved and a serious violation of the Susquehanna Valley CSD workplace violence prevention program still exists, the employee or authorized employee representative may request an inspection by filing a complaint with the Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) bureau at the Department of Labor's Division of Safety and Health using the complaint form linked here: https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/09/pesh7.pdf or by calling 1-844-SAFE-NYS. The

completed and signed complaint form can be emailed to ask.shnypesh@labor.ny.gov, or faxed or mailed to the nearest Division of Safety and Health (DOSH) District Office listed in the complaint form.

Employees can also contact the PESH bureau to ask questions about health and safety standards by calling: 1-844-SAFE-NYS or emailing ask.shnypeshlabor.ny.gov. An employee is NOT required to provide written notice to an employer if the employee believes themselves, another employee, or patient is in imminent danger of workplace violence and reasonably believes, in good faith, that reporting to a supervisor would not result in corrective action. In such an instance, an employee can reach out directly to PESH.

For additional information on recordkeeping or workplace violence prevention, or to request free and confidential consultation assistance, please use the contact information on the PESH Consultation Fact Sheet available here: https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/11/p206_12-10-20.pdf

Once a year Susquehanna Valley CSD, with the participation of authorized employee representatives, will review the workplace violence prevention program. The sign off sheet below indicates who conducted the review and the date it occurred.

Name and Title of Management and authorized employee representative	Date Reviewed
Ralph Schuldt, Director of Facilities, DWRU President	**March 3, 2025**
Natalie Brubaker, Superintendent of Schools	
John Palmer, SVESSA President, Bus Driver	
Stephen Potter, SVTA President, Teacher Brookside Elementary	
Jill Rich, CNCT President, Principal Donnelly Elementary	
Vanessa Moschak, Director of Special Services	
Ed Swartwout, Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics/Middle School Assistant Principal	
Jon Atkinson, School Resource Officer	

To obtain a copy of this plan please contact:
Name: Ralph Schuldt
Title: Director of Facilities
Email: rschuldt@svsabers.org
Phone: 607-775-9156
Location: 1040 Conklin Rd. Conklin, NY 13748

Susquehanna Valley Central School District
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ATTACHMENT 1
Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Statement

The Susquehanna Valley CSD is committed to the safety and security of our employees. Workplace violence presents a serious threat to the safety of our students, staff, families and our greater community.

Workplace Violence is defined as any physical assault or act of aggressive behavior occurring where a public employee performs any work-related duty in the course of their employment. Workplace violence includes but is not limited to:

- Any verbal or physical attempt or threat to inflict physical injury upon an employee.
- Any intentional display of force which gives an employee reason to fear or expect bodily harm.
- Any intentional, wrongful and non consensual physical contact with a person that causes injury.
- Stalking an employee to cause fear of harm to an employee's physical safety and health.

Acts of violence against Susquehanna Valley CSD employees where any work-related duty is performed will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action will be taken. All employees are responsible: for creating an environment of mutual respect for each other as well as clients; following all workplace policies, procedures and practices; and for assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

Our workplace violence prevention policy is designed to meet the requirements of NYS Labor Law 27b and highlights some of the elements that are found within our Workplace Violence Prevention Program. The workplace violence prevention law and regulation specify that employers must provide for employee participation in the workplace violence prevention program through an authorized employee representative. Authorized Employee Representative(s) have a right to, at minimum, be involved in:

- evaluating the physical workplace environment to determine workplace violence risk factors;
- developing the Workplace Violence Prevention Program and;
- reviewing workplace violence incident reports at least once a year to identify trends in the types of incidents reported, if any, and evaluate the effectiveness of safeguards and actions taken to reduce the risk of workplace violence.

All employees will participate in the Workplace Violence Prevention Training Program when they are first assigned to our workplace and once a year after that.

The goal of this policy is to promote the safety and well-being of all people in our workplace. All incidents of violence or threatening behavior will be responded to immediately upon notification. All personnel are responsible for notifying the contact person designated below of any violent incidents or threatening behavior, including threats they have witnessed, received, or have been told about by another person.

Designated Contact Person:
Name: Ralph Schuldt
Title: Director of Facilities
Email: rschuldt@svsabers.org

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ATTACHMENT 2
Risk Factors and Control Measures

Risks identified in our workplace risk evaluation, and corresponding control methods to reduce those risks, are shown in the tables below for each of our facilities:

Brookside Elementary School - Identified Risk	**Selected Control(s)**	**Comments**
Unlocked exterior doors	SROs check doors on a regular basis; second shift custodians secure doors before leaving	All exterior doors should be locked at all times
Entrance into secure vestibules by more than one person (piggybacking)	Use of second set of vestibule doors prevents immediate access to buildings; all visitors required to have license scanned and badge created	All vestibules have two sets of locked doors prior to main building access
Arrival and dismissal times - large numbers of students enter and leave at once	Controlled number of entrances and exits; multiple staff members stationed at each entrance; cameras are positioned to monitor all entry doors	Multiple staff equipped with radios to monitor arrival and dismissal
Large scale events with visitors to buildings	Access limited to specific areas of the building; SROs present when requested; installation of cameras in large group areas	All gymnasiums, cafeterias and lobby areas are equipped with cameras

Brookside Elementary Bus Garage - Identified Risk	**Selected Control(s)**	**Comments**
Unlocked exterior doors; open overhead doors	Keep doors closed and locked as often as possible	

Donnelly Elementary School - Identified Risk	**Selected Control(s)**	**Comments**
Unlocked exterior doors	SROs check doors on a regular basis; second shift custodians secure doors before leaving	All exterior doors should be locked at all times
Entrance into secure vestibules by more than one person (piggybacking)	Use of second set of vestibule doors prevents immediate access to buildings; all visitors required to have license scanned and badge created	All vestibules have two sets of locked doors prior to main building access

Donnelly Elementary School - Identified Risk	Selected Control(s)	Comments
Arrival and dismissal times - large numbers of students enter and leave at once	Controlled number of entrances and exits; multiple staff members stationed at each entrance; cameras are positioned to monitor all entry doors	Multiple staff equipped with radios to monitor arrival and dismissal
Large scale events with visitors to buildings	Access limited to specific areas of the building; SROs present when requested; installation of cameras in large group areas	All gymnasiums, cafeterias and lobby areas are equipped with cameras

Richard T. Stank Middle School - Identified Risk	Selected Control(s)	Comments
Unlocked exterior doors	SROs check doors on a regular basis; second shift custodians secure doors before leaving	All exterior doors should be locked at all times
Entrance into secure vestibules by more than one person (piggybacking)	Use of second set of vestibule doors prevents immediate access to buildings; all visitors required to have license scanned and badge created	All vestibules have two sets of locked doors prior to main building access
Arrival and dismissal times - large numbers of students enter and leave at once	Controlled number of entrances and exits; multiple staff members stationed at each entrance; cameras are positioned to monitor all entry doors and use of Swipe System to gain access to building	Multiple staff equipped with radios to monitor arrival and dismissal
Large scale events with visitors to buildings	Access limited to specific areas of the building; SROs present when requested; installation of cameras in large group areas	All gymnasiums, cafeterias and lobby areas are equipped with cameras

Susquehanna Valley High School - Identified Risk	Selected Control(s)	Comments
Unlocked exterior doors	SROs check doors on a regular basis; second shift custodians secure doors before leaving	All exterior doors should be locked at all times
Entrance into secure vestibules by more than one person (piggybacking)	Use of second set of vestibule doors prevents immediate access to buildings; all visitors required to have license scanned and badge created	All vestibules have two sets of locked doors prior to main building access

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Susquehanna Valley High School - Identified Risk	Selected Control(s)	Comments
Arrival and dismissal times - large numbers of students enter and leave at once	Controlled number of entrances and exits; multiple staff members stationed at each entrance; cameras are positioned to monitor all entry doors and use of Swipe System to gain access to building	Multiple staff equipped with radios to monitor arrival and dismissal
Large scale events with visitors to buildings	Access limited to specific areas of the building; SROs present when requested; installation of cameras in large group areas	All gymnasiums, cafeterias and lobby areas are equipped with cameras

Industrial Arts Building - Identified Risk	Selected Control(s)	Comments
Unlocked exterior doors	SROs check doors on a regular basis; second shift custodians secure doors before leaving	

SVCSD Bus Garage - Identified Risk	Selected Control(s)	Comments
Unlocked exterior doors; open overhead doors	Keep doors closed and locked as often as possible	

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ATTACHMENT 3
Sample Workplace Violence Prevention Training Outline

Information and training for all employees:

I. Overview of Requirements of the Workplace Violence Regulations

A. **Develop a written policy statement.** Employers must develop a written policy statement describing the goals and objectives of their workplace violence prevention program and the notification policies employees should follow in the event of a workplace violence incident. The policy statement should describe how employees can participate in the workplace violence program through an authorized employee representative. The policy statement must be posted where notices to employees are normally posted.

B. **Conduct a risk evaluation**. Employers must evaluate their workplace to determine what factors exist that might place employees at risk of occupational assaults or homicides. The risk evaluation includes an examination of any records of workplace violence incidents over the previous year; an assessment of any relevant policies, work practices, and work procedures that may impact the risk of workplace violence; and an evaluation of the physical workplace environment.

C. **Develop a workplace violence prevention program.** Employers must develop and implement a workplace violence prevention program, with input from employees through an authorized employee representative. The program must include: the risk factors identified through the risk evaluation; how the identified risks will be addressed; the methods that will be used to try to prevent workplace violence incidents; a system to report and record any workplace violence incidents that may occur; a written outline or lesson plan for employee trainings on workplace violence risk; and a plan to review and update the program at least once a year.

D. **Provide training and information for employees**. Employers must provide each employee with information and training on the risks of workplace violence in their workplace(s) at least once a year and any time significant changes are made to the workplace violence prevention program.

II. Risk factors that were identified in the risk evaluation and implemented control measures

A. The risk factors identified during the risk evaluation included, unlocked exterior doors, the process of "piggybacking" that allows more than one person to enter the vestibule at a time, the times of day in which students both arrive and depart in large numbers, and the instances of events in which large numbers of public are in buildings.

B. Employees can take the following measures to protect themselves from identified risks such as:

i. Alerting the School Resource Officer, Building Principal, or Director of Facilities when discovering an unlocked door, and speaking up when they notice anyone in the building who is not a student or does not have proper identification

ii. Ensuring that doors are closed and locked behind them when they enter or exit the building; asking anyone with proper identification to report to the main office of the building

iii. Issuing an alert via Navigate 360 if they are aware of an unauthorized person

gaining access to a building
iv. Use of security alarms and other devices
v. Following all protocols as provided in the District and Building Safety Plans
vi. Completing the Workplace Violence Incident Report immediately after experiencing an instance of workplace violence

III. The Workplace Violence Prevention Program can be obtained in the main office of each building

IV. Privacy Concerns

A. Information otherwise kept confidential for security reasons does not have to be disclosed to all employees. Examples of confidential information include but are not limited to information that would interfere with law enforcement investigations or judicial proceedings, would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial, would identify a confidential source or disclose confidential information relating to a criminal investigation, would reveal criminal investigative techniques or procedures except routine techniques and procedures, or would endanger the life or safety of any person.

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ATTACHMENT 4

Workplace Violence Incident Report

Attach additional sheets if necessary

**Employees who are victims of workplace violence can independently and voluntarily request that their name not be entered on the report.*

Date of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Time of incident:	**AM/PM**
Description of incident (include events that led up to incident, and how the incident ended):	
Names of involved employees*:	
Names of witnesses:	
Nature and extent of injuries resulting from incident:	
Name and contact information of person completing report:	
Date report filed:	

For internal use only:

Received by:	Date:
Reviewed by:	Date: