

Human Resources Policy Bulletin

Lancaster County

Number: 2023-4

Date: September, 2023

Reference:	Title:
	<u>Workplace Weapons Policy</u>

I. OVERVIEW

This policy establishes guidelines and restrictions regarding weapons in the workplace. Lancaster County ("County") recognizes the importance of maintaining a safe and secure work environment for all employees and County volunteers. Possession of weapons is strictly prohibited within County property, County vehicles and other County worksite locations unless authorized by this policy.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. "County property" is defined as any premises under the care and control of the County to include, but is not limited to, owned or leased property or property contracted to be managed by the County, and common areas including, but not limited to public sidewalks, approach sidewalks, steps, verandas, parking lots, vestibules, interior hallways and atriums under the County's ownership or control.
- B. "County vehicle" is defined as county owned, leased or personal vehicles utilized in the performance of the employee's work responsibilities.
- C. "County volunteers" are uncompensated persons who perform services directly related to the business of the County for their benefit, to support the humanitarian, charitable, or public service activities of the County, or to gain experience in specific endeavors.
- D. "County worksite" is any location to which a County employee has been dispatched or posted to perform their responsibilities. This location shall be considered a premises under the care and control of the County.
- E. "Possession" is defined as a person knowing of an item's presence and having physical control of it or knows of an item's presence and has the power and intention to control it. A person is deemed to be in possession of a weapon in a vehicle when the person is inside or in control of the vehicle and shall be treated under this policy as if the weapon were being carried on their person.
- F. "Weapon" is defined as any firearm, stun gun, taser, knife with a blade length longer than 3.5 inches, any device which releases any propelled object by spring mechanism, compressed air, or compressed gas, explosive, or any other instrument the use of which is intended or likely to cause death or serious bodily injury, or immobilize another person.

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III. POLICY

No County employee or County volunteer shall possess or cause to be present a weapon in or on County property, County worksite, or County vehicle while carrying out their job or volunteer responsibilities or when present at their workplace or worksite even during nonwork hours. This policy applies regardless of whether a person possesses a valid concealed carry permit or license issued by any jurisdiction.

IV. EXPECTATIONS

- A. A County employee or County volunteer is responsible for making sure that any item in their possession is not prohibited by this policy. Whether or not a weapon is concealed does not matter for the purposes of this policy.
- B. If a weapon is present in the workplace, the County employee or County volunteer who notices the weapon is expected to contact their supervisor or Human Resources. Under no circumstances should any County employee take any unnecessary risk or compromise their safety.
- C. If a County employee or County volunteer is unsure whether an item is covered by this policy, they should contact Human Resources.

V. EXCEPTIONS

- A. Law Enforcement Personnel: An officer, agent, law enforcement trainee, or County employee who is authorized by law to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of law. This person must be carrying proof of employment while possessing a weapon on County property.
- B. Detention Personnel: Employees at a County detention facility who are authorized to utilize a taser, stun gun or other approved device per department policy.
- C. Security Personnel: Employees serving in a security position are authorized to utilize a taser, stun gun or other approved device per department policy.
- D. Other Personnel: Employees of the Court, County Attorney's office, Public Defender's office and Records and Information Management performing their official job responsibilities are authorized to be in possession of evidence, which may include weapons.

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- E. Practice Facilities: A County employee or County volunteer may possess a weapon in or on a shooting range or archery range operated, supervised, or maintained by the County or the State of Nebraska or any other political subdivision in compliance within the applicable practice facility rules.
- F. Personal Vehicles: A County employee or County volunteer may secure their weapon in their personal vehicle on County property or County worksite. The vehicle must be locked, and the weapon shall not be visible from outside the vehicle. This exclusion does not override any Department policy which prohibits such activity.
- G. Department Kitchen or Break Room: A County employee or County volunteer may utilize knives during the preparation of food on County Property.
- H. Special Circumstances: In exceptional circumstances, where there is a legitimate business need to possess a weapon in or on County property or a County worksite, a person may request permission from the Human Resources Director. After consulting with the Lancaster County Sheriff, and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, the Human Resources Director will issue a written decision. In locations managed by the Public Building Commission or another entity, additional authorization may be needed.
- I. These exceptions do not authorize any person to possess a weapon on County property for personal protection.

VI. REPORTING

Any County employee who believes that an unauthorized person is in possession of a weapon on the County property or County worksite must report this immediately to their supervisor or Human Resources, who will contact local law enforcement if necessary. If immediate threat exists, a County employee shall call 911.

VII. RIGHT TO SEARCH

The County reserves the right at any time and at its discretion to search all County property and County worksites when there is a reasonable belief that there is a violation of this policy. Where security reasons justify, County property or County worksites may require a thorough search of the County employee. For example, security may require the County employee and County employee's personal items be searched while in or on County property or County worksite. County employees who fail or

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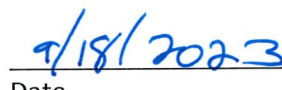
refuse to promptly permit a search under this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

VIII. ACCOUNTABILITY

Violations of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.



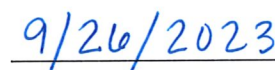
Barb McIntyre
Human Resources Director



Date



Christa Yoakum, Chair
Board of County Commissioners



Date