

SOROPTIMIST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKPLACE POLICIES



The Soroptimist International of the Americas headquarters office has implemented the following policies, which serve as a sample that other workplaces can employ.

POLICY STATEMENT

Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc. seeks to provide a work environment free from violence or threats of violence against employees—including domestic violence that may occur on Soroptimist property. Soroptimist is committed to ending violence against women and supporting its victims, including those who might be employees of Soroptimist. Soroptimist will take reasonable steps to maintain the safety of employees who are victims of domestic violence. Assistance to employees will be given when possible and will follow all applicable personnel rules.

Soroptimist recognizes that victims may have performance problems as a result of their situation. Soroptimist will make reasonable efforts to resolve performance problems but employees are still responsible for meeting the standards of their position. No employee will be penalized or disciplined solely for being a victim of domestic violence in the workplace.

In addition, Soroptimist prohibits the use of company property, such as telephones, faxes, e-mails, the mail or any other means to threaten or abuse intimate partners or former intimate partners.

DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is defined as violent behavior committed by one intimate partner against another. The violence can be physical, sexual or psychological with the primary purpose to control, dominate or hurt the partner. This criminal act, which primarily affects women, can happen between husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend or in same sex relationships. This also includes former intimate partners. (More information is available in *Every Home a Safe Home*, which is distributed to new employees.) Soroptimist understands that a woman is never to blame for the abuse and acknowledges the barriers she must overcome to leave a violent relationship.

EDUCATION

Soroptimist will endeavor to provide annual staff education by a domestic violence professional to address current topics such as:

- Definition of domestic violence
- Signs that a co-worker could be a victim
- What to do if it is suspected that a co-worker is being abused
- Resources for employers and victims

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Although the Soroptimist staff will be provided with training on how to identify and handle situations where they suspect a co-worker is a victim of domestic violence, nothing can happen until the employee has identified herself as a victim to her supervisor. In order to access the possible workplace services available, the employee has an obligation to:

- Alert both the supervisor and the executive director of the abuse.
- Provide Soroptimist with copies of any protection orders.
- Provide Soroptimist with a current emergency contact.
- If necessary, provide Soroptimist with a photograph of the abuser.
- Work with the supervisor and a domestic violence professional to develop a workplace safety plan.

- Save threatening e-mails or voice mails.
- Designate a signal or code word for co-workers to alert them that you are in trouble and they should call the police.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Once an employee has been identified as a victim, Soroptimist will endeavor to:

- Keep the domestic violence confidential, except where necessary to protect the safety of the victim and other employees. Information about the employee and the situation will be given to others on a need-to-know basis.
- Provide the employee with contacts for domestic violence resources.
- Make reasonable efforts to maintain a secure office environment.
- Be respectful of the employee's personal choices and privacy.
- Provide orientation to new employees about domestic violence.
- Limit the information about employees given to the general public including home contact information, cell phone numbers, work hours or lunch breaks.

In addition, the employee and supervisor, in consultation with the executive director, can discuss the feasibility and necessity of the following options:

- Screening the employee's e-mails or telephone calls by a different employee
- Providing an escort to and from transportation
- Flexible use of available leave time for doctors, lawyers or court appointments
- Possibility of leave without pay if there is no accrued time available
- Changing work hours or alternating work hours
- Changing workspace to a more secure area
- Removing name from website or telephone directory
- Changing payroll addresses, direct deposit information or beneficiaries

PERPETRATORS

Any Soroptimist employee who threatens, harasses or abuses an intimate partner or former intimate partner at or from the workplace will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. This includes employees who use workplace resources such as phones, fax machines, e-mail, mail or other means to threaten, harass or abuse an intimate partner or former intimate partner. Soroptimist encourages abusers to seek help.

The Following Organizations work with men who are violent:

- Menergy: 215-242-2235
- SAFE: 610-970-6590
- Men's Resource Center: 610-971-9310

National Domestic Violence Resources

- National Domestic Violence Hotline Number: 800-799-SAFE

Pennsylvania

- PA State Domestic Violence Coalition: 800-932-4632
- Women in Transition, Philadelphia, PA: 215-751-1111

- Lutheran Settlement House, Philadelphia, PA: 215-739-9999 (English), 215-235-9992 (Spanish)
- Women’s Center of Montgomery County, PA: 800-773-2424
- Laurel House, Norristown, PA: 800-642-2424
- Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County, PA: 610-565-4590
- Bucks County, PA Domestic Violence Agency: 800-220-8816
- Chester County, PA Domestic Violence Agency: 888-711-6270

New Jersey

- New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women: 800-224-0211, 609-584-8107
- Burlington County: 609-871-7551
- Camden County: 856-227-1234
- Gloucester County: 856-881-3355
- Mercer County: 609-394-9000

Legal Help Lines

- Women Against Abuse Legal Center: 215-686-7082
- Women’s Law Project: 215-928-9801

Provided Compliments of:

