



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Environmental Health & Safety

Guidelines for Handling a Potentially Violent Confrontation

Become familiar with the following guidelines so that you will be able to remember them while under the stress of a threatening situation.

- Stay calm. Raising your own voice may increase the anxiety of a potentially violent person.
- Avoid challenging body language such as placing your hands on your hips, moving towards the person, or staring directly at them. Remain seated and do not turn your back on the individual.
- Move away from any objects, such as scissors, that may be employed as a weapon.
- Position yourself, if possible, so that an exit route is readily accessible.
- Remain helpful while you summon your supervisor for assistance. Sometimes, the opportunity to talk to a manager or supervisor will help satisfy an irritated client.
- Ask uninvolved parties to leave the area if this can be done safely. Use the prearranged code word to alert your supervisor/coworkers to call University Police.
- Speak slowly, softly, and clearly to reduce the momentum of the situation.
- Listen empathetically by paying attention to what the person is saying. Let the person know that you will help them within your ability to do so.
- Ask questions to help regain control of the conversation and to understand the situation.
- Neither agree with distorted statements nor attempt to argue –REMAIN CALM. Avoid defensive statements. This is not the time to place blame back on the enraged person.
- Ask the aggressive person to leave and come back at a time when they feel calmer.
- Do not physically touch an outraged person or try to force them to leave.
- Never challenge, try to bargain, or make promises that you cannot keep.

- Calmly ask the person to place any weapons in a neutral location while calmly talking to them.
- Describe the consequences of any violent behavior.
- Never attempt to disarm or accept a weapon from the person in question. Weapon retrieval is only done by a police officer.