



**INVOLUNTARY EMPLOYMENT  
SEPARATION/TERMINATION  
STRATEGIES V2**



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

V2 document arises out of a blog post that Sean A. Ahrens, CPP, CSC made on the Association of Threat Assessment Professional Forum on February 3, 2021 at 7:32 AM, suggesting a crowdsourcing effort for a "...checklist, which addresses simple, best practices for an involuntary termination/separation." The resulting documentation would not be possible without the help of the following individuals:

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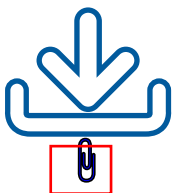
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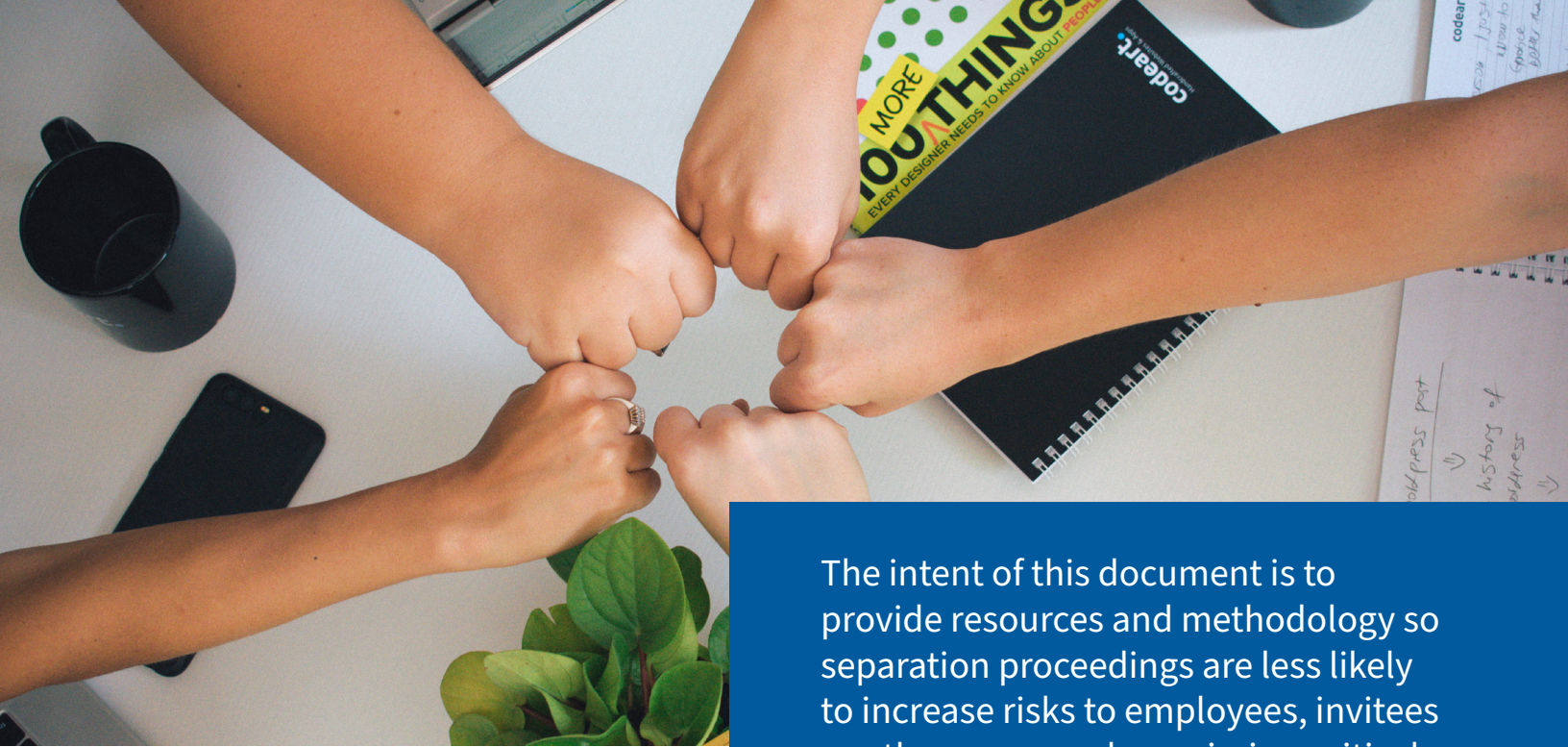
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**Amat Victoria Curam**



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The intent of this document is to provide resources and methodology so separation proceedings are less likely to increase risks to employees, invitees or other personnel, or mission-critical assets in an organization

# Involuntary Employment Separation/Termination Strategies

## INTRODUCTION

The following guidance for Employment Separations is made free for use and combines the thought leadership of multiple people from the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP). The hope of this guidance document is that it is used proactively as a tool for an employer's person-centric separation process to manage and mitigate behavioral risk concerns before, during, and after an involuntary separation/termination of an employee. As such, a link to download this document in Word format is provided for customization to your respective environment.

Experience has shown that organizations are often unprepared to manage and respond to potential scenarios where employees proposed for

separation may act out. Each situation is unique and should be treated as such. While there is not one prescriptive method to address behavioral risk at employment separation, certain preventative processes can help minimize the potential for harm to self or others. This guide is intended as a starting point to assist employers to proactively address separations. Given the absence of formal research into safe separations, empirical studies are ongoing. Consider this guide a living document which will be reviewed and updated as additional best practices surface.



## DEFINITIONS

Contained within this document are several definitions which may assist individuals and organizations who are developing processes and procedures related to involuntary separation/termination:

**Behavioral Health:** The scientific study of the emotions, behaviors and biology relating to a person's mental wellbeing, their ability to function in everyday life, and their concept of self. "Behavioral Health" is the preferred term to "Mental Health."

Violence in the Federal Workplace, 2019.

<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/isc-violence-federal-workplace-guide>.

**Behavioral Risk:** Any particular behavior or behavior pattern which can strongly yet adversely affect health, safety, or adaptive functioning. Source: [www.psychologydictionary.org](http://www.psychologydictionary.org).

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation's report titled, "[Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks](#)" (2017) is a valuable resource organizations can use to gain a better understanding of behavioral risk assessment and strategies.

**Direct/Veiled Threat:** Direct or implied communication or action that creates a reasonable fear that injury could occur or intentionally create emotional distress to another person. A direct threat is straightforward ("I'm going to kill you") while a veiled threat is implied ("I could make my manager disappear if I wanted to").

**Interview:** A structured or semi-structured conversation with another person to gather information on the behavioral risk picture of a person of concern. The information solicited often centers around the who, what, where, why and how an act or event occurred.

**Interrogation:** An undesirable interview technique, which is not recommended for an individual who may act out. The technique includes a direct interview session where the investigator attempts to use rapport, accusation or deceit towards obtaining an admission regarding their direct involvement in an act or occurrence.

**Leakage:** The communication to a third party of an intent to do harm to a target. Third parties are typically other people, but the means of communication could vary widely, from planned or spontaneous utterances, to letters, diary entries, digital communications (emails, voice mails, blogs, journals, internet postings, tweets, text messages, video postings), and future communication technologies.

**Pretext:** A reason given in justification of a course of action that is not the real reason. For the purposes of this guide, a pretext might include a fabricated scenario to facilitate contact with a person of concern or to elicit information from the person of concern which will aid in the overall threat assessment.

**Separation/termination:** Includes all voluntary and involuntary ways that employers and employees end their employment relationships, which include, but are not limited to: furloughs/suspensions, voluntary and involuntary separation, resignation, layoff, retirement, contract separation, for cause.

**Threat Management Team:** A multi-disciplinary group of individuals from interdependent organizational departments (examples of departments that could be represented on the Team are Human Resources, Legal, Security, and Operations) that assemble to identify, evaluate, and address behavioral risk concerns, which may or may not include direct or implied threats, exhibited on/off company premises. Depending on situation, a threat management team may include ad hoc members who are invited to participate on the team on an as needed basis.

**Threats by Proxy:** A threat directed by an aggressor to a person through a third party (i.e., hiring a programmer to write automatic threatening texts, a sister harasses her brother's ex-wife.)



## DEFINITIONS (CONT.)

**Workplace Violence:** Unwanted, unsolicited behaviors, occurring within company-controlled property or locations associated with the company, that generate a reasonable concern for one's safety, security or mental well-being. The behavior can be progressive, it can be immediate, or it can be accomplished through proxy.

- Examples of behaviors leading to reasonable safety concerns can include but are not limited to acts of physical violence, direct or indirect

threats, verbal, nonverbal, and physical intimidation, implications or suggestions of violence, possession of weapons where prohibited, assault of any form, physical restraint or confinement, dangerous horseplay, loud, disruptive or angry language or behavior atypical of the work environment, commission of violent crime, or any act that a reasonable person would perceive as a threat of violence.

## BACKGROUND

There are four areas of consideration within workplace violence. These include:

1. **Environmental factors** (i.e., in high-crime area, work alone condition, handles cash or valuables, hot or stressful environments, proximity to houses of worship).
2. **Prevention approaches** (i.e., training, policies, procedures target hardening through access control, badging, employee and visitor validation and vetting).
3. **Management approaches** (i.e., threat assessment team, investigations, multidisciplinary threat management).
4. **Response measures** (emergency response plans, training, exercises, coordination with law enforcement, crisis management, communications management).

This document is focused on preparedness but is intended to support any organization, regardless of whether they have an existing formal workplace violence program in place. It also is intended as an informational resource for those who are concerned about an upcoming separation. It's a resource for those who have a concern about how an employee will respond to negative information and unfavorable developments. Note: Effective workplace violence prevention should not solely rely on "feelings" about how an employee will respond to negative information and unfavorable developments. Instead, "gut feeling should be supported by the use of consistent and defensible processes and procedures to identify, assess and mitigate potential threats."



## DISCLAIMER/NOTICE

The intent of this document is to support Human Resources or other corporate administrative functions such as Behavioral Risk Management/Threat Management Team, and should not be considered inclusive. When in doubt, or if a threat is imminent, seek outside help from law enforcement and other external partners immediately.

## STAFF CONTACT WITH EMPLOYEE

The decision to terminate/separate may arise out of habitual process, which is typically marked by a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or progressive discipline process. It may manifest from one or more policy violations. Regardless of motivating factor(s), there should be contact with the individual slated for separation prior to the separation in order to address and document the investigative or procedural process and gather critical information about the employee and their likely response to the separation. Information gathered through deliberate contact will help inform the threat assessment and develop effective threat management strategies. This is an excellent opportunity to evaluate the employee's disposition.

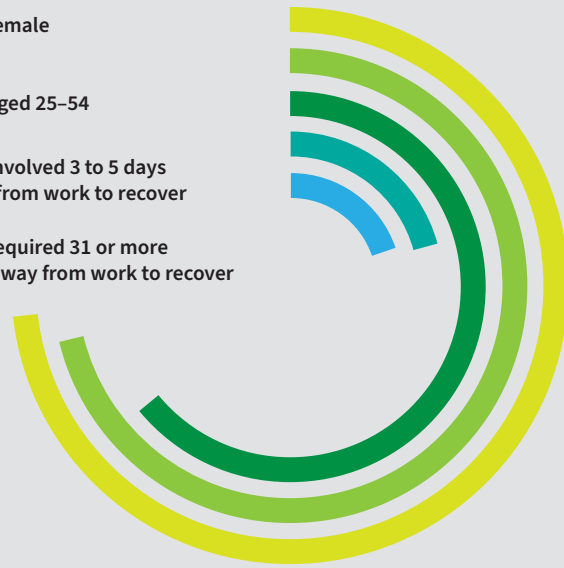
## PRE-INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1. Separation will require investigation or a performance improvement process. It's possible that corporate policy requires suspension/administrative leave during the investigation.
  - It is important to consider how the employee will respond to an interview and the potential for the future investigation, suspension, and separation. Are there other stressors (e.g., financial, family, health, etc.) which may influence the employee's response to an interview or his/her behaviors at the conclusion of the interview? To the extent possible, the interview should be conducted in a manner that conveys empathy and attempts to ease potential threat escalation. The interview should be conducted by someone with de-escalation training and the ability to remain calm in the face of potential emotional outburst. Potential questions and concerns of the employee should be anticipated so answers and direction can be provided by the interviewer in a direct, clear and concise manner.
2. Gathering the employee's statement will be required. Before the employee interview, consider whether suspension of that employee might occur at the conclusion of the meeting depending on the outcome of the investigation. Topics to consider:
  - Will the suspension be with or without pay? Whenever possible, suspension with administrative pay is advisable.
  - Plan to coordinate with Labor Relations, Human Resources, Corporate Security, and Legal because even a suspension with pay may trigger the person to act out.
  - The interview should be discreet and confidential, and ideally conducted away from fellow employees. (i.e., manufacturing floor, break area/cafeteria).
  - Interview the employee about their involvement in the concerning situation. Treat the employee with dignity and respect, and avoid an interrogative atmosphere.
  - Seek facts. Do not render opinions. Fully document the who, what, where, when, why, and how questions of the interview.
  - Identify other witnesses that can corroborate or refute the original complaint or policy violation.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) estimates more than 2 million individuals are affected by workplace violence every year.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) 20,790 workers in private industry experienced trauma from nonfatal workplace violence in 2018. These incidents required days away from work. Of those victims who experienced trauma from workplace violence:

- 73% worked in the healthcare and social assistance industry
- 71% female
- 64% aged 25–54
- 23% involved 3 to 5 days away from work to recover
- 20% required 31 or more days away from work to recover



## PREPARING FOR AN INVOLUNTARY SEPARATION

When working with someone who has the potential to act out, the core goal in the process should be to do so deliberately, which ensures a safe workplace, protects other employees, and mitigates longer term threats. One important way to pursue the overall aim is to treat an employee who will be or is being separated with dignity and respect. As a rule of thumb, consider the situation from your own perspective. For instance, meeting with a staff member in front of their peers and calling them back to your office, may not be the best approach. In short, treat people in the same manner as you want to be treated.

1. The first question is why is this person's employment ending?
  - Is the termination performance-related? If so, were they on a Performance Improvement Plan?
  - Is the termination because of a Reduction In Force (RIF) or workforce downsizing?
  - Has a separation event or policy infraction occurred previously with this individual?
  - Does the employee possess unique knowledge/information which would allow the employee to access to the location, information, or processes which could be used by the employee to retaliate against the company after the separation or termination or prepare for such action before separation or termination is finalized?
  - How close is the employee to retirement and how will the separation impact the employee and his/her family financially?



2. Has a proper, neutral investigation been conducted? The following questions should be addressed by management at least one week prior to the initial interview or investigation. “Yes” answers could indicate greater concern and the need for additional planning or support, such as engagement with a Threat Management Team.
  - Has the employee reacted to disciplinary information negatively in the past?
    - Has the employee previously made threats to bosses, peers, or subordinates?
    - Has the employee shown a propensity to blame others for his/her actions?
    - Has the employee indicated they are being victimized by their bosses or the company?
    - Does the employee feel they have multiple injustices or unfair action against them?
    - In what ways did the employee negatively react and to what degree? Have they yelled? Were they visually holding back their outburst? Did you observe somatic signs such as clenched teeth, balled up fists, flushed face, or intense staring?
  - Has the employee ever presented behavioral risk concerns?
  - Has the employee shown other concerning behavioral changes?
  - Do you know if the employee has any recent or current personal stressors that are adding to the disciplinary process?
    - How will the disciplinary process and potential separation impact existing personal stressors?
  - Is the employee without personal support (family/friends)?
  - To your knowledge, are there concerns about the employee regarding theft or incidents of sabotage via their access to sensitive or potentially dangerous organizational materials?
  - Do you know if the person has access to weapons? Does their employment require the use of weapons, tools or implements (i.e., armed security/law enforcement personnel, custodian, food preparation)?
  - What is the employee’s financial situation? Are there existing financial stressors? How will the potential separation process impact those stressors?





## IMMEDIATE POLICY VIOLATIONS

If an obvious policy violation has occurred, which is directly witnessed or corroborated quickly through an investigation, consider immediate suspension with administrative pay.

- Is it possible to take an approach of progressive discipline?
- If suspension is possible, prepare a packet of information outlining the process, steps, timeline, and pre-defined touch points when the employee will be contacted to update them on their employment status.
- Consider offering or requiring Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) and/or evaluation for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or Short Term Disability (STD) if behavioral health appears to be a concern.
- Suspensions should not be a personal decision, but reflected in policy. The investigator is only following corporate policy rather than appearing biased. Ensure you have a policy that addresses this.
- Provide a single, clearly defined point of contact for the employee to contact to address outstanding items, questions and concerns following separation.



## INVOLUNTARY SEPARATION CHECKLIST

It is critical to ask introspective or direct questions about the person whose employment is ending. “Yes” answers may indicate a greater concern and the need for additional planning or support, such as engagement with a Threat Management Team.

- Is the employee still in the workplace?
- Have they been sent home without pay?
- Is the person aware separation may be imminent? Have they been part of a Performance Improvement Process?
- Have coworkers expressed concerns about how the person may react if/when job separation occurs?
- Do employees/colleagues describe the employee as combative, hot-headed, fragile, or toxic?
- Does the person have a support group? Partner or significant other? Family? Are these individuals local?
- Does the employee have a supportive family life?
- Has the employee worked with the employer for a significant amount of time?
- Does the person have close friends at work? Supportive coworkers?
- Is the employee local to the facility? Do they reside nearby?
- Does the individual dislike the person conducting the separation?



- Is the person who complained scheduled to take part in the meeting? [The complainant should not participate in the separation meeting.]
- Does the employee have a violent criminal history? Has a verified/accurate criminal history been obtained for the individual?
- Does the employee have a history of using violence to resolve conflict?
- Are there “soft landing” options available? (For example: vested benefits, severance pay, effective date for coverage or leave options, employment outplacement, employment assistance, or benefit extensions including access to EAP services and health insurance.)
- What is the person posting publicly on social media? Are they venting and displaying anger toward the organization or employees, or posting online veiled or direct threats (“leakage”)?



## SEPARATION PLANNING & MEETING

“Amat Victoria Curam” (Victory Loves Preparation) emphasizes the primary focus which is to plan, plan again, and continue to plan when dealing with an employee exhibiting behaviors of concern.

1. Prepare a script, consider what-if scenarios, and how you would react to various situations. Recognize and involve others (legal, labor, union representatives, security) in all aspects of the separation process. Where applicable, consider involvement by law enforcement as outside support. The script should be brief, but maintain the respect and dignity of the person. Organization representatives should not be baited into an argument, and the focus is being direct, firm, and supportive.

Where possible and safe, structure the separation conversations in two parts: In the first part of the conversation, give the person 3–4 key pieces of information (your employment is ending now, your pay will continue until (insert date), we won’t contest unemployment, confirm contact information and set a meeting for next day, review key points for second conversation). For the second part of the conversation:

- Ask if the employee has questions.
  - Answer any open questions from the first meeting with the employee.
  - Describe the timeline to the employee (last paycheck, insurance end date and EAP end date).
  - Provide additional details that weren’t covered in first meeting (whether a reference will be provided, arrangements for any personal effects).
2. Given the organizational delegations/assignments and dynamics, consider the best person from the organization to deliver the separation notice.
    - Will the separation be done by an individual (i.e., manager, human resources staff) who is properly trained in the separation of a person who may act out?
    - Identify participants. As few as possible, but not less than two individuals.





- Considerations should be given to how the subject employee will respond to the participants and number of participants. Other participants can include:
    - Union steward.
    - Only those with a need to know should be aware of the separation meeting.
  - Undesirable participants
    - No students/interns or junior staff members.
    - No staff/employees involved in complaint that led to a separation decision.
3. Thoughtfully consider the location.
- Off-site, on-site or remote (phone, virtual meeting)
    - Consider off-site.
    - The method of conducting the separation meeting should be carefully considered. Remote separations are discouraged, but there may be instances where they are required (COVID-19, distance from the employee's residence to workplace, etc.).
    - On-site physical locations where separation shall occur should have multiple exits.
      - Near an exterior wall that is near an exit.
      - Arrange seating so that the delivering employer should be accessible to the door and not boxed in by the separated employee whose employment is concluding.
      - Choose a room where doors swing outward from the room.
      - Consider the employee's parking and building access when selecting a location.
    - Have an area outside the room where the employee can securely leave personal belongings such as coats, lunch containers, backpacks, gym bags, etc. Do not let the employee bring any of these items into the room with them. Take off jackets/sweatshirts, etc., if appropriate.
    - Away from employee congregation, gathering spots, or administration areas.
    - Away from peer group – maintain dignity and coordinate a discreet means of exit.
    - Contact security/law enforcement to be present, and have additional staff to monitor area.



- Thoughtfully consider day and time, if possible
  - The designated day for separation is based on work schedule/hours. While most agree separation on a Friday is not ideal, there may be extenuating circumstances, or the employee may work on schedule that is outside of a normal work week. The intent is to give the opportunity for the staff member to contact co-workers or other staff members, to ask questions which will assist with the trauma of the separation and avoid a time where the employee “broods” over the event without opportunity to vent. The best separation date will be driven by work days and times, and should not be considered absolute for all workspaces/departments and staff. Environmental factors such as social distancing and COVID-19 may also play a role in scheduling.
- Personal belongings
  - Prepare a plan for personal belongings.
    - Will the separated employee be allowed to gather his/her personal belongings? If not, who will gather them? Is there a day/time for gathering belongings that help protect the separated employee’s dignity?
      - Employees should only be allowed into the building after hours, in a supervised capacity.
      - Two staff members should escort employee. Do not allow employee to pick up at the facility unattended; do not let employees go to other locations than their work space.
  - Thoughtfully consider how to retrieve organization-owned items (i.e., ID card, access cards, computer, phone, equipment, etc.) before last payment or compensation.
    - Do not make the employee return to provide work equipment. Arrange for courier service to obtain all work equipment not on their possession at the separation meeting.
  - Have options for retrieving personal belongings.
    - Compensation for items.
    - Packing/shipping for items.



- If an employee has belongings at the facility in a locker or office, then request permission to access items. As allowed by policy, cut locks. If there is damage to personal property, provide restitution for any damage to exceed expected value.
- Segregate organizationally owned items from personal belongings.
- Inventory and professionally pack items for return to employee.
- Have two managers involved in documenting, inventorying, and photographing all employee belongings, packing everything and signing inventory sheets.
- Arrange for secure delivery (i.e., FedEx, courier, etc.) to employee's residence. Notify the employee when it will be delivered and require signature. Confirm and memorialize the tracking receipt.

#### 4. Additional controls

- Evaluate controls to be used. These include, but are not limited to:
  - Introduce EAP and provide direct contact information to assigned case manager.
  - Job/hire employment services.
  - References. What will organization say if contacted by potential future employers? [Be clear to avoid future confusion or anger.]
  - Extension of health insurance.
  - Pay
    - Paid leave?
    - Pay extension?
    - Stipends/scheduled payments?
    - Severance packages?
    - As allowable, donation of company equipment? (i.e., let them keep their phone/computer, etc. after wiping)
  - For high-risk separations, do not contest unemployment claims. To do so may further antagonize the individual against the organization and its leaders or employees. Highlight to employee all that the company is doing to help the employee on the way out and to enable the employee to transition to or return to future success.

- Prepare a communication packet containing information and resource phone numbers. Ideally, have a last check at the meeting. If this is not possible, identify when they will receive their check, and make sure it arrives. Consider courier, or overnight guaranteed service if not by direct deposit.
- Further considerations
  - Is a restraining/protective order needed? This should be done in consultation with a behavioral/mental health professional, corporate security, and a threat management team.
  - Conveying trespassing/visitor policies. This requires these policies are in place and communicated to employees.
  - Ask for security or law enforcement presence, special patrols after employee departure, or ask police if they can stage a police vehicle at employee entrance. Position police vehicles for optimum visibility.
  - After separation and while preserving the dignity of the separated employee, notify all appropriate security personnel, including contract personnel to Be-On-the-Lookout (BOLO) for the employee attempting to gain access.
    - Provide clear guidance on what response procedures are desired for anyone encountering employee post separation (e.g., contact site manager, call 911, do not approach).
  - A person's separation should not be disclosed; however, an organization can be reminded about personal safety and building access procedures.
  - Place a photo into the separation file and ensure that it is communicated into a security pass-down book.
  - Meet with Corporate Security to discuss target hardening concepts and to develop a collaborative security plan.
- Victims
  - Determine whether targeted victim employees and coworkers feel safe and consider enhanced facility security such as:
    - Additional security staffing
    - Relocation
    - Assigned parking space close to building entrance and within high visibility
    - Rental car
  - Home security
  - Vehicle security
  - On-line anonymizing services
- Additional thoughts



- How will you share information about the employee’s separation with coworkers? (Established talking points.) Ensure information shared is truthful, comfortable for the provider to share, respectful of the separating employee, and maintain the dignity of all involved.
  - Ask the employee how their separation should be communicated to other staff. As allowable, communicate these messages to staff. Ask if they would like to have a personal message emailed on their behalf to staff.
  - Do not refute an employee’s perspective on how the separation occurred with other employees. If questioned by other employees, why the separation occurred, simply respond “I don’t know, I wasn’t involved” or “the person resigned” are appropriate answers. Avoid creating conflict with the employee and his former coworkers.
- As appropriate, provide employee photograph and vehicle information (if known) to law enforcement/security personnel with a “do not permit re-entry warning” to be maintained at security/reception areas.

## SEPARATION DAY

The key to involuntary separation is rooted in respect, and the willingness to support the employee and maintain the employee’s dignity with the opportunity for an honorable exit.



1. Separation day
  - Scan employee’s social media posts to ascertain if “leakage” is present.
    - If so, postpone separation meeting, continue to pay and seek outside help.
  - Pre-screen designated meeting area and review seating, look for and remove any potential improvised weapons.
  - Confirm attendance by meeting participants, police, security, etc. Separation should be conducted with a minimum participation of two designated individuals.



## 2. Meeting

- Ideally brief, scripted according to employee's specific circumstance and personality, and rehearsed for familiarity with statements to be conveyed.
- The separation meeting should be brief, ideally no longer than 15 minutes. Tissue, food (candy bars), and water should be on-hand for somatic responses.
- Have all separation documents prepared prior to the actual separation process.
- Acknowledge that documents may be overwhelming and difficult to process in these circumstances. Offer a resource to answer questions and set follow-up conversation to review documents, especially paperwork related to insurance and unemployment.
- Refer to the reason for the separation, do not engage in attempts to make conditions personal.
- During separation
  - Revoke/suspend/sever computer and access control privileges.
  - Evaluate other systems that may be at risk and take appropriate measures actions to protect those assets.
- Threats during meeting: Reassess for potential need for restraining or protective order.
  - If an employee makes threats during the meeting, safely and quickly conclude the meeting and send the employee home.
    - Verify they depart the premises. Is a security escort needed?
    - If appropriate, request security or law enforcement presence after employee departure. An additional consideration to be discussed and considered in consultation with corporate security and a threat management team is the use of a marked police or security unit at highly visible locations such as the employee entrance or parking lot. Sometimes this can be productive and warranted, and in other instances it may be counterproductive.

## 3. Somatic/verbal language.

- Maintain engaged eye contact, but avoid staring.
- Avoid unnecessary movement, be conscious of facial expressions, or laughter, smirks, grinding teeth, flushed face, clenched hands or similar. If observed, note these non-verbal cues, ask if they are okay and whether they would like to continue.



- Monitor for somatic responses by the employee: clenched teeth, balled up fists, flushed face, intense staring. If observed, communicate that you have recognized these behaviors and ask if they are okay. Offer food, water, tissues, etc.
4. Conclude separation meeting, deliver separation paperwork, and separation packet.
    - Collect parking pass, keys, tools, materials, computers, access control cards. If applicable, return to HR.
      - Identify consequences for unreturned items (i.e., laptops, phones, etc.).
    - Have EAP information available to discuss with, and offer to, employee.
      - If possible, extend EAP benefits beyond the separation date.
      - Mention EAP program features (financial or legal counseling, EAP services available to family members).
    - Schedule time to recover personal items.
    - Determine who will escort the employee and if security or law enforcement are required. Have two staff members escort the employee out of the facility discretely to their car or arranged transportation.
    - Immediately communicate to security, managers, and staff the outcome of the proceedings. To the extent possible, the separation should be characterized as a “parting of ways,” along with wishing the person success.



## POST SEPARATION MONITORING

One underutilized tactic in a separation process is post-separation monitoring. Human Resources personnel can use follow-up communication and ongoing support to gauge the demeanor of the separated employee. Monitoring can involve managers, corporate security, human resources, or even former peers. The intent is to find out if there are any vocal or somatic cues which may suggest animosity towards the employer or its employees. The following is suggested as a monitoring approach:

1. Where possible, inventory and monitor social media, and maintain search alerts for the employee and the company over a determined course of time.
2. Consider identifying someone who can serve as a third-party intermediary or “pulse checker” for the separated employee after the separation meeting concludes. Is there someone with whom the employee is close to who can informally help monitor the employee’s reaction to separation for the escalation of new threats?
3. Continue monitoring relevant social media profiles to gauge coping and presence of “leakage” direct or veiled threats or videos.
  - 1 day follow-up by HR.
    - Unemployment, dates of final pay, vacation payout, health insurance benefits and options, other personal items, and questions the person may have.
    - If in-person, propose meeting in a public place (coffee shop, for example) of the person’s choice near their residence.
    - Document call and demeanor.

- 1 week follow-up by former peers.
  - As allowable, find out any concerns from coworkers or persons who are close to the individual.
  - Document peer responses and their observations.
- 4 weeks follow-up by Human Resources (verify final pay, upcoming end to insurance or other benefits, or other dates related to employment).
  - Offer additional controls.
    - Ask how they're doing.
    - Offer additional job placement support.
    - Document call and demeanor.
- 4 weeks and beyond.
  - Touch base with peers and see if they have spoken to the employee. Ask how the previously separated person is doing. Have they gotten a new job? Document file with findings.
  - Continue to periodically monitor public social networking profiles.
- For significant concerns, a Private Investigator could monitor/surveil the individual over a period of time to ascertain planning, reconnaissance that may be occurring.
  - Consult the Corporate Security legal department prior to hiring.
  - Obtain investigation briefs from the investigator.



## CLOSING CONSIDERATIONS

Controls identified are often supported by policies and procedures. Ideally, the following policies, charters and, where applicable, procedures should be prior to an involuntary separation process. These include:

- Creation of a Workplace Violence Prevention program team with leadership support and commitment.
- Establishment of preventative strategies.
  - Develop a Threat Assessment Team and processes for exercising that team.
  - Create assessment tools to evaluate and assess the probability that a person may act out.
  - Scope to include all persons and all locations where business will occur, and any threats by proxy.
  - Work with corporate security, legal and threat management team to assess the ability to secure psychological support for certain situations.

## POLICY AND EMPLOYEE MANUAL AND OTHER IDEAS

- Workplace Violence Policy, and as applicable, to include organizational action and consequences for unacceptable behavior from employees.
- Threat Management Team creation, implementation, and development
  - Exercise team/table top exercises/ongoing trainings
- Weapons policy
- Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention Program
  - Exercise team in mock involuntary separation processes
- Denial of access and/or Trespassing policy
- Requirements for protective order/restraining order communication
- Be-On-the-Lookout (BOLO) notification process
- Emergency contacts
  - Legal
  - Corporate Security
  - Insurance and benefit contacts
  - EAP intake contacts
  - Crisis Management Team
    - Other counseling
    - Behavioral psychologist
- Create and leverage system for reporting of concerning behavior and suspicious activity to identify and assess potential threats.
- Train employees on how to recognize and report concerning behavior and suspicious activity.
- Train manager how to assess and triage report on concerning behavior and suspicious activity.
- Maximize cross departmental collaboration and coordination on assessment and management of concerning behavior and suspicious activity.



# APPENDIX

## INVOLUNTARY SEPARATION CHECKLIST

Screening Questions (Who/What/When/Why)	Notes
Employee position	
Department	
Manager	
Duration of employment	
Reason for separation	
Was a criminal background check completed at time of hire?	If any felonies reported, describe:
Timeline for separation	
Is employee still on campus or on administrative leave?	If on administrative leave, with or without pay?
Is the case being investigated by Employee Relations, HR, Title 9?	Has the employee been interviewed? If HR is investigating, who is the investigator?
Is the employee aware of separation?	If yes, possible, or imminent?
Does the employee show animosity or hostility toward anyone involved with the investigation or the separation meeting?	Do any of these people need to be present during the separation meeting?
Does the employee have any support?	Spouse, family, therapist? Are they local?
Any known behavioral health concerns or stressors and/or substance abuse?	
Any known history of workplace violence?	
<b>ADDITIONAL PERTINENT INFORMATION:</b>	

This checklist should be completed as far in advance of a pending separation as possible.

**SECTION 1:** Complete the following safety questions for all separations. If you get a ‘YES’ response for 2 or more, contact human resources (HR), management or threat assessment team.

Screening Questions (Who/What/When/Why)	Notes
Employee position	
Department	
Manager	
Duration of employment	
Reason for separation	
Was a criminal background check completed at time of hire?	If any felonies reported, describe:
Timeline for separation	
Is employee still on campus or on administrative leave?	If on administrative leave, with or without pay?
Is the case being investigated by Employee Relations, HR, Title 9?	Has the employee been interviewed? If HR is investigating, who is the investigator?
Is the employee aware of separation?	If yes, possible, or imminent?
Does the employee show animosity or hostility toward anyone involved with the investigation or the separation meeting?	Do any of these people need to be present during the separation meeting?
Does the employee have any support?	Spouse, family, therapist? Are they local?
Any known behavioral health concerns or stressors and/or substance abuse?	
Any known history of workplace violence?	
<b>ADDITIONAL PERTINENT INFORMATION:</b>	

**SECTION 2:** HR completes the following safety questions for all separations. If you get a ‘YES’ response for 2 or more, contact the threat assessor or corporate security management.

Safety Questions	Notes
Has the employee reacted violently to coaching from manager and/or HR?	
To your knowledge, are there concerns about the employee regarding potential of sabotage or theft, or access to sensitive or potentially dangerous materials?	
Has the employee shown behavioral changes or conditions that may be of concern?	
Is the person under stress related to this action (medical, family, divorce, etc.)?	
Have there been warning signs, which would cause a negative reaction (fascination with weapons, leakage, suicidal/homicidal ideation, or news related events)?	
Are you aware of coworkers of the employee expressing concerns about how the person may react to negative circumstances?	
Does the person have access to weapons? Has the person expressed a desire to obtain weapons?	

**SECTION 3:** Conduct Pre-Separation Meeting with Team. Review facts of the case, including corrective action processes and employee responses.

Plan the Separation Meeting	Notes
Employee Schedule	
Date and Time of Meeting (Ideally not on a Friday)	
Location (Remotely if possible)	
Other factors that could affect or elevate the risk of separation on that day.	
Separation meeting attendees (Who will represent the organization)?	
Do we need a PD or security standby?	
Personal belongings: Who's going to box up? How will they be delivered? Consult with legal before boxing up someone's personal belongings.	
Who and when will you collect company-issued equipment?	
Who will attend the meeting?	
Notify organization access controls and/or any other applicable offices/departments/banks/etc. to remove access.	
Discuss safety plan for team conducting the separation meeting.	
Prepare the separation package (next steps info; benefits, final paycheck, Job Service, EAP, etc.)/severance package.	
HR will notify manager.	
HR will notify union.	
Who will notify employee (Manager, Union, Other)?	

**SECTION 4:**

<b>Separation Meeting</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Policy infraction and/or read separation letter.	
Deliver separation paperwork and separation packet.	
Communicate trespass notice if applicable.	
Collect keys, tools, materials, computers, access control cards (if applicable, return to HR).	
If necessary, have law enforcement present while the individual recovers personal items OR consult with legal to pack personal belongings and ship them.	
Escort employee out of the facility.	
Communicate to security and management staff; how will you share information about the employee's separation with coworkers?	
Have you sought legal input?	

**SECTION 5:** Monitor for any concerns that arise: unwanted phone calls, appearances, emails, etc. involving anyone related to the workplace. Monitor for threats of lawsuits and social media leakage. Report to Safety Team if any of the previous items are brought to your attention.





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