



County Manager Business Process

Rules of Conduct for Neighborhood/Group Meetings

1. Purpose

This process outline has been developed to assist Neighborhood Association (NA) leaders with meeting protocol. NAs are not county organizations and are not administered by county staff; however, county staff are in attendance to facilitate and present information. Meetings must meet certain standards to be in alignment with county policies. This document includes excerpts from the County's Risk Management policies to clarify the expectations of order and safety for attendees and county staff at NA meetings and gatherings.

2. General Meeting Rules

- Public Meetings
 - Neighborhood Association (NA) meetings shall be open to the public as defined in RCW Chapter 42.30.030 and RCW 42.30.110.
 - Meetings shall have an agenda outline that includes, at a minimum:
 - A. Welcome,
 - B. Announcements,
 - C. Reports/Presentations, and
 - D. Adjournment.
 - Meetings may include presentations from county staff or other community organizations of interest to their residents. These can be noted as formally or informally by the neighborhood association volunteer leadership as is agreed upon by the membership.
 - As a best practice, NA meetings should have brief notes as a record of discussion, especially if an election or vote on action is taken at the meeting. These notes are the responsibility and records of the Neighborhood Association board and records of the NA meetings are not kept at the county.
 - The Neighborhood Program Coordinator (NPC), (or a representative of the neighborhood association if the NPC is not in attendance), will take down any questions that arise for the county and the NPC will follow up to get answers from the appropriate county staff members and report back to the NA at their next meeting.

3. Respect and Decorum

- It is the duty of all attendees to preserve order and decorum. Attendees shall neither, by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings of the association's agenda, rally discord among attendees, or disrupt or disparage any member while speaking. All persons present at the meeting have an obligation to obey the legitimate directives of the presiding chair/president of the association.
- County staff members that are asked to attend and present information on county programs and projects are expected to be treated with courtesy. The NA Board and association members are reminded that staff are the subject matter experts, but they do not make the decisions on policy and their role is to present information, take notes and return comments and concerns to department heads and elected officials.
- Clark County has a ZERO TOLERANCE workplace violence policy and will not tolerate any form of workplace violence. This includes but may not be limited to:

- A. Violence by Strangers – Involves verbal threats, threatening behavior or physical assaults by a person who has no legitimate business relationship to the workplace.
- B. Violence by Customers or Clients – Involves verbal threats, threatening behavior or physical assaults by any person who either receives services from or is under the custodial supervision of the affected workplace or the victim.¹
- County Employees are required to attend Workplace Violence Prevention training on an annual basis and are responsible to report known or suspected incidents of workplace violence and communicate recommendations to improve security and safety within County facilities and buildings. Employees, volunteers and tenants are encouraged to report behavior that they reasonably believe poses a potential for workplace violence.

Workplace Violence Incidents should be classified into four (4) areas for reporting purposes. If it appears a criminal violation has occurred, the incident will be referred to the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction.²

Incident	Definition	Report
Minor Dispute	Minor employee/client disputes that show no potential for hostile behavior (i.e. disgruntled citizen, no threats)	Not Required
Threats	Any dispute that creates a safety concern shall be reported. (i.e. verbal or physical threats of immediate or future harm, stalking, etc.)	-911 -Workplace Violence Report
Actual Violent/Physical Altercation	All violent threats, acts of physical altercations must be reports (assault battery, etc.)	-911 -Workplace Violence Report
Criminal Activity/Terrorist Threat	Criminal acts (i.e. bomb threat, suspicious package, etc.)	-911 -Workplace Violence Report

4. Violations: Residents/Members:

- Any person making disruptive, disparaging or impertinent remarks or unreasonably disturbing the business of the assembly, either while addressing the association board or attending the meetings, may be asked to leave the meeting by the NA Board.
- If staff is being targeted and the behavior is not stopped by the board, the staff members are directed as per county policy to leave the meeting.
“Should field staff sense any potential for physical force, assault, or threat, they shall immediately leave the site and report to their supervisor.”³

5. Complaint(s):

- **Received from Residents/Members:** If concerns are raised by residents regarding a hostile environment that becomes unsuitable for open participation at neighborhood association meetings, those complaints will be received by the NPC who will notify the County Manager. These complaints will be investigated by the County Manager’s office or their designee. The association’s Board will be contacted, and further action may be taken; up to and including possible disassociation of the NA from the Neighborhood Outreach Program.
- **Received from County Staff:** If concerns are raised by staff regarding a hostile and unwelcoming environment at neighborhood association meetings, those complaints will be reported to their managers and handled through General Reporting Responsibilities outlined on page 7 and 8 of Clark County’s Occupational Health and Safety Workplace Violence Prevention Program.

¹ Page 4 of Clark County Occupational Health & Safety, Workplace Violence Prevention Program

² Page 9 of Clark County Occupational Health & Safety, Workplace Violence Prevention Program

³ Page 12, Item G under Remote Work Locations, Clark County Occupational Health & Safety, Workplace Violence Prevention Program.

County employees are expected to follow Standards of Conduct Policy and Regulation; i.e., employees representing Clark County are expected to perform duties in a way that promotes and sustains a collaborative, professional and respectful work environment, and maintain acceptable standards of professionalism while representing the county. Employees are also expected to follow standards of conduct outlined in Human Resources Policy Manual, Policy 13.0 Employment Standards. These standards include adherence to ethical conduct and requirements that political activity is not permitted on County time (and therefore not permitted at neighborhood association meetings).¹

6. Follow-up:

- **Location Issue:** These reports will be reviewed and investigated by the Risk Management Office. If a location is deemed to be unsafe for county staff, the location will no longer be supported as a meeting place for neighborhood associations. Some of these conditions would be inadequate or nonexistent lighting in parking area, too remote of location, insufficient fire exits from meeting space, etc.
- **Association Issue:** If the association is found to foster a hostile or unsafe environment for county staff, the association’s Board will be contacted, and further action may be taken; up to and including possible disassociation of the NA from the Neighborhood Outreach Program.
 - **First Warning:** Will be sent in writing or via email by the NPC after consultation with the County Manager’s office, and the NA Board will be reminded that it is their responsibility to maintain a safe meeting environment.

“When a work assignment is necessary with a known hostile client/individual in the field, the employee and supervisor shall consult to discuss the safest means to complete the task. Requesting a “civil stand-by” from the local law enforcement agency may be warranted. Under no circumstances should a County employee contact a known hostile person alone.”²

Exception: If there has been an outright threat or bullying situation to staff, there will be a first and final notice. The association will be disassociated until an agreed-upon resolution has been determined. New Board members may need to come forward to work with the NPC on steps to have the NA recognized by the county again.
 - **Second Warning:** If there is a second concern brought forward, the NA will be disassociated with a formal notice from the NPC, after consultation with the County Manager’s office. The NA’s Board is responsible to ensure that decorum and order are enforced at their meetings so that residents and county staff do not feel bullied or threatened. New Board members may need to come forward to work with the NPC on steps to have the NA recognized by the county again.

Emotions can run high in meetings when residents are unhappy with policies or projects. The above warnings apply when individuals or groups are allowed to become disorderly and threatening towards staff. NA meetings are a place for residents to share concerns with staff and discuss potential solutions. Demonstrations, signage, and shouting make people feel unsafe and hinder effective collaboration and problem solving. Neighborhood Association officers should do their best to facilitate a peaceful assembly.

Although this is the NAs meeting, if they have invited staff to be present, their meeting is classified as a remote workplace. Human Resources and Occupational Health and Safety Division manuals require that the workplace is free of harassment and bullying and this includes interactions with county residents.

Clark County is committed to a work environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment for its employees, the public it serves and those with whom the County conducts business.

Date Initiated:	03/11/2022/07/05/2022	Marilee McCall, Neighborhood Program Coordinator
Date Reviewed:	03/17/2022/07/05/2022	Lindsey Hueer, Sr. Policy Analyst
Date Reviewed:	03/28/2022/07/06/2022	Amanda Migchelbrink, Clark County Prosecutor’s Office, Civil Division
Date Approved:	07/11/2022	Kathleen Otto, County Manager

¹ Pages 129-152 of Clark County Human Resources Policy Manual, Policy 13.0, Employment Standards

² Page 12, “Remote Work Locations” Item H, Clark County Occupational Health & Safety, Workplace Violence Prevention Program.