CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE SAFETY TIPS

NEW OFFICE CHECKLIST

OFFICE SPACE

- [ ] Secure entry/exit for employees that is separate from the entrance for constituents

- [ ] Secure workspace for staff separate from public section for constituents

- [ ] Space allows for a swift exit in case of emergencies (preferably multiple options)

- [ ] Alarms, panic buttons, and safety equipment (fire extinguishers, escape hoods) are tested and working

- [ ] Visually open meeting spaces

- [ ] Restricted access to items that could be weaponized (e.g. fire extinguishers, heavy staplers, etc)

- [ ] Good lighting throughout — in public and non-public spaces

OFFICE PRACTICES

- [ ] Establish a safety committee with representatives from each operational 'team' in DC & district (e.g. caseworkers, legislative staff, administrative staff, communications staff, leadership, interns)

- [ ] All staff have access to safety procedures in writing (including public postings where appropriate)

- [ ] Staff have a schedule for regular onboarding and refresher trainings, including for interns

- [ ] Office has policies in place to support staff after an incident of violence

Remember:

Serving the public is an honor. Most constituent interactions do not present any risk of danger.

You have a right to work in a safe environment.

Workplace violence impacts every economic, social, gender, and racial group.

To ensure safety, practice safety assessments and risk reduction in your day to day work.

HAVE PLANS IN PLACE FOR:

- Fire
- Flood/tornado (where relevant)
- Active shooter
- Hazardous mail

Handling potentially unsafe constituent interactions

- Threat via phone or voicemail
- Inappropriate comments or harassment by constituents (in person, via email or over the phone)
- Constituents threatening self-harm (in person or by phone)

Panic button/silent alarm/audible alarm for active threats

Internal 'silent alarm' code phrases to alert other staff of a potential threat

Cybersecurity threats

- Doxxing
- Phishing
- Ransom attempt

Alerting law enforcement to constituents who may be engaging in criminal activities

- Hoax threats
- Attempting to bribe/exert improper pressure

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CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE SAFETY TIPS

PUBLIC SAFETY DECLARATION
DISPLAY PROMINENTLY IN ALL OFFICES

This office is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all constituents and staff.

Safety is the freedom from physical, verbal, and psychological violence or threats of violence

✓ Behavior contributing to an unsafe environment will not be tolerated.
✓ Violence or the threat of violence will be reported to law enforcement.
✓ To discuss a safety concern with a member of staff, please [call, email…]

OFFSITE EVENT SAFETY CHECKLIST

✓ Congressional phone is charged

✓ Two people in the office (supervisor and peer, safety coordinator, public post on Slack) know destination, method of travel, itinerary, and contact information

✓ If relevant, risk assessment for site visit is completed and shared with supervisor

✓ If relevant, local police/Capitol Police have been alerted to any potential threat

✓ Employee leaving the office knows to check-in with both safety buddies at regular intervals; safety buddies know to check in if they haven't received word at those intervals (e.g. check in at arrival, check in at mid-point of event, check-in at departure)

POST-INCIDENT REPORT OUTLINE

GATHER INFORMATION IN A STANDARD FORMAT WHILE RECOLLECTION IS FRESH

▸ Type of incident (e.g. verbal abuse, threat, intimidation, attempted/actual assault, property damage, stalking)

▸ Severity of incident, including physical health, mental health, financial impact

▸ People involved (including witnesses)

▸ Gaps or weaknesses in protocol or policies that enabled the incident

▸ Needs identified for risk reduction and safety promotion (both personnel training and safety measures)

NEW EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST

COMMUNICATIONS

☐ Congressional phone is activated and working

☐ New employee is signed up for US Capitol Police alerts

☐ The new employee has contact information for everyone in the office and vice-versa

CYBERSECURITY

☐ Employee has completed cybersecurity training

☐ No personal information is avaialble online

OFFICE SAFETY PROCEDURES

New employee trained in:

☐ Escape plans, alarms

☐ Tactics for dealing with difficult constituents and how to conduct a post-incident AAR

RESOURCES

New employee is aware of:

☐ Resources available for handling difficult constituents, work stress, post-trauma recovery

☐ Congressional agencies to support staff (including OWCR, OSHA, EAP) and their roles in ensuring a workplace free of safety hazards, discrimination, labor violations

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