



UNITED



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE CRISIS PLAN

Staff Assault on a Customer

Abstract

This Document provides reasonable guidelines for responding to an incident of workplace violence in which a customer or member of the public has been assaulted by a staff member.

Signed and Approved by Josh Earnest

Chief Communications Officer of United Airlines

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Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide reasonable guidelines in response to incidents of workplace violence between a staff member and customer which may pose risk of reputational, financial, or other damages to United Airlines.

The goals of this plan are to:

1. Control the flow of information and messaging associated with the incident
2. Minimize the reputational, financial, or other damages which an incident may pose
3. Asses the potential liability of United Airlines and decide on the appropriate response to an incident.

Activation of the Plan

Should an incident occur, an initial assessment should be carried out to determine the severity of the crisis. The following chart demonstrates the action to take should an employee detect a potential incident.

Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
<p>Description: Level 3 incidents of workplace violence pose a low but possible level of risk for United.</p> <p><i>Examples include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Occasional accusations of assault from a staff member mentioned online</i>• <i>Potential coverage by local or small media outlets</i>• <i>Rumours from staff</i>	<p>Description: Level 2 incidents of workplace violence pose a medium and prospective level of risk for United.</p> <p><i>Examples include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>United faces lawsuits from customers accusing of an assault</i>• <i>Some media coverage by mainstream outlets</i>• <i>Series of customer complaints with similar experiences – without evidence of the occurrence</i>	<p>Description: Level 1 incidents of workplace violence pose a high and immediate level of risk for United.</p> <p><i>Examples include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Video, Photo, or Audio evidence of an assault on a customer is in the media or online</i>• <i>Widespread media coverage or headlines</i>• <i>News media are gathered at the location, or contacting United for a response</i>
<p>Action: Report incident to manager, to be investigated by communications committee, if news coverage is made, report to Crisis manager.</p>	<p>Action: Report incident to Crisis manager, crisis manager will contact team, reassess level of threat, and decide if plan should be activated</p>	<p>Action: Report incident to Crisis manager immediately, Crisis manager will contact team and activate plan.</p>

Incident Response Team [IRT]

The purpose of the Incident Response team is to assess, manage and resolve crisis events which may occur because of incidents of workplace violence. In response to incidents, *Kate Gebo* will be the crisis manager [CM] overseeing managing the response. She will contact the following staff who will assist her in managing the response.

- Human Resources and Labor Relations [HRLR] , *Kate Gebo*
- Chief Executive Officer [CEO], *Scott Kirby*
- Chief Communications Officer [CCO], *Josh Earnest*
- Social Media Communications Specialist [SMCS], *Geoffrey Bach*
- The Head Legal Advisor

Wider Team:

Each member of the IRT will have their own team of 2-4 chosen individuals' asides from the spokesperson. The wider team will be made up of various departments and brought in when required to accommodate the needs of the IRT in managing the crisis.

- Executive board and leadership
- Communications and Public relations team
- Legal department
- Marketing
- HR and Staff management
- Social media team and designers
- Security

Responsibilities

The following people or parties are responsible for the following during a crisis response:

Title/Leader of Team	Responsibilities	Person[s]
Crisis Manager [CM]	Crisis Plan and Management, incident investigation	<i>Kate Gebo</i>
Spokesperson	Spokesperson,	<i>Scott Kirby</i>
Communications Team [CT]	Crafting messaging, releasing media releases/statements	<i>Josh Earnest</i>
Social Media Team [SMT]	Social Listening, Public sentiment monitoring	<i>Geoffrey Bach</i>
Legal Team [LT]	Work with incident investigation to determine liability and compensation	Legal Department

Procedures

1. Alert

Staff alert the CM [Crisis manager] of an incident. CM will then notify members of the IRT [Incident Response Team] of the incident and its level and meet immediately.

If the incident is ongoing, and depending on its severity, the CM should contact relevant authorities or staff to stop the incident, unless this puts staff in danger.

2. Assess

The IRT, will contact the offending employee[s], the victim[s], the public, and relevant staff to gather information. The IRT should assess the incident and note down the following:

- What happened
- When and where the incident occurred
- Who and how many were involved in the incident
- How long it took for employees or security/police to respond and stop the incident
- How was the incident discovered

The IRT should also assess any liable factors that the incident may pose to United, please consider the following and hand any notes to the LT:

- Was the offending staff member employed by United, or by a third party not associated with United Airlines?
- Was the incident the result of a personal relationship that the offending staff member had with the victim[s]?
- Was the incident caused by workplace policy, or workplace training [or a lack of]?
- Was the incident found to be unexplained, random, accidental, or untargeted?

3. Plan

If the incident is public or circulating in media, release the provided media holding statement. SMT will then begin social listening to determine the public sentiment towards the incident.

Use the “*Workplace Violence Incident Framework – Staff assault on member of the public*” in the **appendices** to assess appropriate actions to be taken.

The default action is to apologise, if SMT finds public sentiment to be negative, and potential liable factors are present, do not plan for any other course of action.

4. Act

The SMT should halt and scheduled posting or advertising to social media, as well as ensure social media logins are protected.

The SMT and CT will work in conjunction to publish an internal notice to staff of the situation, advising them not to talk to media as this is an ongoing issue, and that the company cares about staff safety.

SMT and CT will determine messaging and an apology statement that align with public sentiment. Ensure the statement is in plain language, and addresses key stakeholders, notably the victim[s], and

affected customers or public. The SMT and CT should also consider commitments and planned actions to provide with the apology. See “*Key Messaging*” on **page 5** for relevant information.

Any media releases or statements will be signed off by all members of the IRT, and each sub team’s members, before being released to relevant communication channels.

If the incident requires a formal apology, it will be made in the form of a press conference. The messaging information will be handed from the CT to the spokesperson to study, and the CT will contact relevant media and organise the press conference in front of United Airlines Headquarters. If the incident is ongoing, questions should be kept to a minimum and focus on the immediate situation. If the incident is recent or retrospective, ensure focus is on amending the incident and that it will be resolved.

5. Monitor

Monitor the response to released messages. The SMT should determine the receptiveness of the statement[s] given by the media release or spokesperson through social listening on relevant social media and news reporting.

If social media channels are being flooded with negative comments on United Airlines pages, the SMT should avoid deleting these comments unless they are promoting misinformation or untrue information about the nature of the incident or United Airlines.

Key Messages and Supporting Information

Framing of Messages

1. Shows customers that United is making a change as an expression of apology
2. That we are looking to the future and allowing the incident to be a steppingstone in developing a better consumer experience.

Internal

“We take incidents of violence in the workplace, and the safety of our employees and customers seriously, no matter the severity”

Primary Message: United Airlines cares about its employees and customers, we want to ensure a safe work environment for all.

Secondary Message: As an employee of United Airlines, you represent the company, so these types of incidents will not be tolerated as they reflect on us.

External

“We want to ensure that an unprecedented event like this never happen again on a United Airlines Flight/Property/etc”

Primary Message: We are doing our best to make sure it does not happen again.

Secondary Message: This type of event is unprecedented and very unlikely to occur in general or in the future.

“We are reviewing and amending United’s policy and training procedures, to ensure staff are equipped with the correct tools to deal with these types of incidents correctly.”

Primary Message: United Airlines is doing its part to ensure the safety of its customers and/or the public, and we have made changes so this will not happen.

Secondary Message: We care about our customers and staff’s primary concern is the safety of customers.

Internal Communication Procedures

Relevant staff should be notified of the incident prior to the initial media release. While the incident is investigated, only relevant details should be given to staff. A secondary release to staff should be made at the same time as the public media release is made.

Ensure that all communications made internally are consistent with external messaging. Do not publish contrasting information.

Avoid discussing liable factors in internal communications, and do not publish these in external communication.

Avoid naming the offender, victim, or employee involved in the incident to avoid media leaks.

Communication Channels

This list provides relevant information for what channels should be used to communicate what information.

Internal Mailing Lists

- Alerting staff to incident
- Changes or reviews of policy/training

External Mailing Lists

- Statement of apology

News Media

- Copies of media releases
- Invitation to Press Conferences

Website

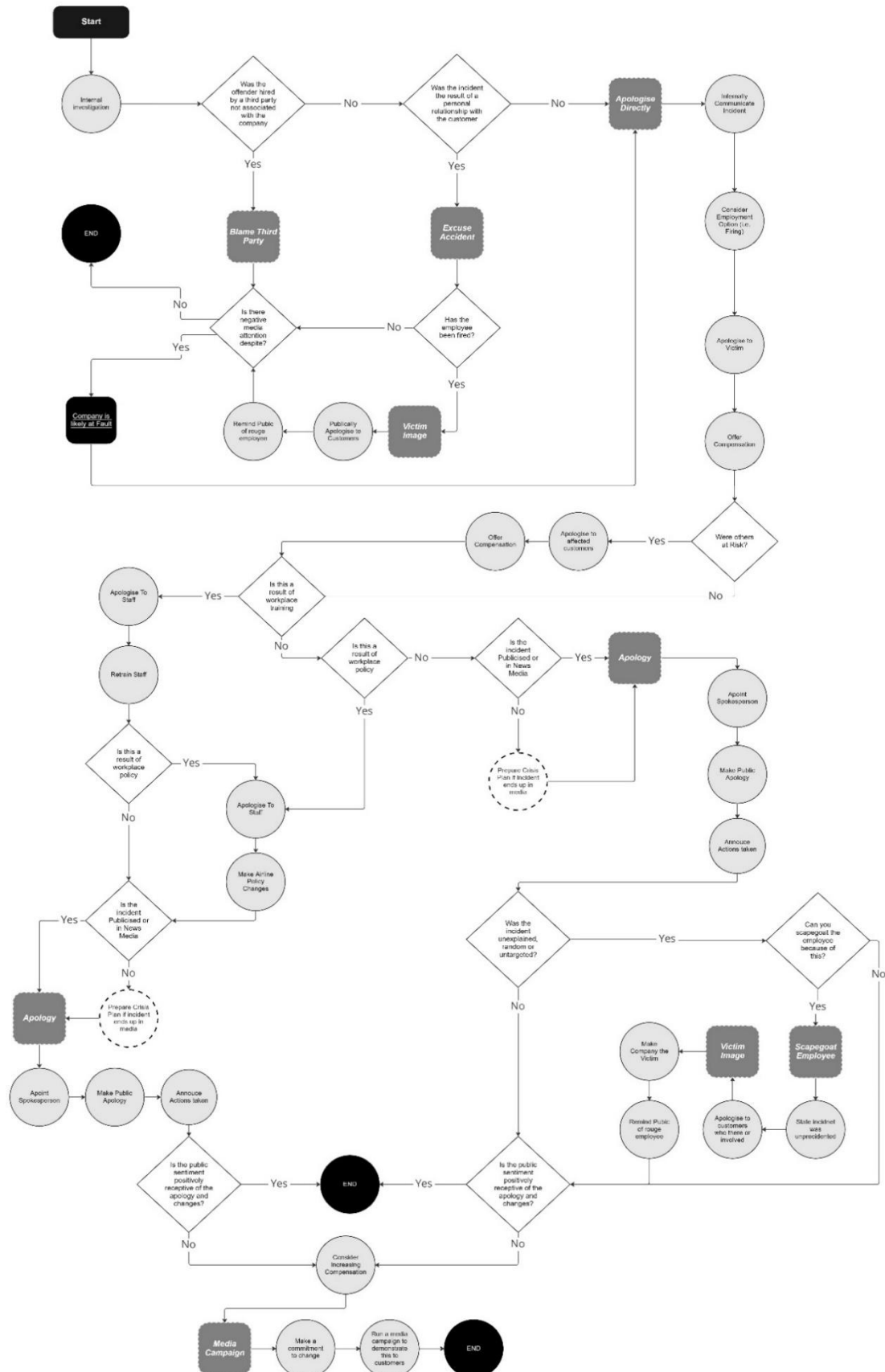
- Media releases
- Statements

Social Media

- Initial media release
- Statement of apology

Appendices

Workplace Violence Incident Framework (Staff assault on member of the public)



Messaging and Media Release Approval Form

Messaging Approval Form



Today's Date: ____/____/____

Attach this document to the intended release for filing

Headline: _____ **Release #:** _____

Date of Release: ____/____/____ **Time of Release:** ____: ____ PM / AM (Circle one)

Channels to be released to:

Channel		Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal Mailing List	
<input type="checkbox"/>	External Mailing List	
<input type="checkbox"/>	News Media / Press	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Website	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Write in Notes)	

Attached Media		Supplied by:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Images	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diagrams/Technical	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Graphs, Data	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media Post	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (attached)	

Signed By:

Crisis Manager: _____

Spokesperson: _____

Communications Team Leader: _____

Social Media Team Leader: _____

Legal Team Head: _____

Approved for Release? (Circle one)

YES / NO

UNITED



NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

(DATE AND TIME)

Urgent Notice from Incident Response Team

To all employees of United Airlines,

Recently we received word of an incident which occurred on (**BOARD ONE OF OUR AIRCRAFT/OUR PROPERTY**) involving a staff member and a member of the public. We take incidents of violence in the workplace, as well as the safety of our employees and customers very seriously, regardless of the severity.

Currently, we are investigating the incident and assessing the situation. We will release a public statement in the coming hours. As an employee, you are a representative of United, and we wish you not to discuss these matters with news media or other organisations until the internal investigation has been completed. Doing so may be a breach of contract by disclosing internal information.

We want to ensure a safe work environment, however sometimes things go wrong. We are deeply hurt by what may have occurred and we are working our fastest to remedy the situation. If you have any information, were a witness to the incident, or involved in any way, please email our incident response team at: incidnetresponse@united.internal.com

Josh Earnest

Chief Communication Officer- United Airlines

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Earnest".

Media Holding Statement

UNITED



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(DATE AND TIME)

Regarding (**INCIDENT**) on (**DATE**)

United Airlines and its staff are all are saddened by the report of (**INCIDENT**) toward a member[s] of the public. We take these matters very seriously and are currently working with relevant authorities to conduct and internal investigation and understand what occurred. We will comment on this matter in the coming hours. As of right now, we want to offer our sincerest apologies to (**AFFECTED PERSONS/VICTIMS**) and anyone else affected by this incident.

Scott Kirby

Chief Executive Officer at United Airlines

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Kirby'.

UNITED



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(DATE AND TIME)

Statement regarding **(INCIDENT)** on **(DATE)**

On **(DAY)** the **(DATE)** at **(TIME)**, United Airlines was notified of an incident where a staff member **(NATURE OF INCIDENT)**. This occurred at **(LOCATION)** at **(TIME OF INCIDENT)** on **(DATE OF INCIDENT)**.

At United we are shocked by the nature of this event, and that it could ever occur at the hands of one of our staff. The staff member in question is currently being investigated, and we are reviewing their relevant training and employment. The actions of the staff member have caused extreme pain to us here at United, and do not reflect the companies' values of customer safety and wellbeing.

Insert any other important information to be released

We are currently getting in contact with **(VICTIM[S])** and anyone affected by the incident. We empathise with those who were hurt by this employee and are attempting to reach out to anyone hurt by this situation, we are determined to make this situation right, and extend our sincerest apologies to **(VICTIM[S])**.

We are also reviewing our policy and training procedures, to ensure that all staff are equipped with the correct tools to deal with these types of incidents correctly. We want to ensure that an unprecedented event like this never happen again on a United Airlines **(FLIGHT/PROPERTY/ETC)**.

Again, we extend our deepest apologies to those who were hurt by the actions of this employee.

Scott Kirby

Chief Executive Officer at United Airlines



Media Policy

When communicating with media ensure you:

- Stick to facts, do not provide speculation about the incident
- Do not make labialise statements towards any party
- Do not give personal details of the victim[s] or employee including
 - Personally, identifying information,
 - i.e., Names, Age, Gender, etc
 - Contact information
 - Phone numbers, address, email, etc
 - Medical information
 - Height, weight, information on injuries, etc

In some cases, if media has already reported on certain aspects like the individual's job [not job title], then it may be okay to mention this information – however first check with LT if this is okay to release.

- Do not mention any specific details, numbers, or financial information about compensation
- Do not mention sensitive topics (i.e., sex, politics, religion)

For Written content:

- Any communication is checked for spelling errors, grammar, and clear wording
- Ensure any written content is checked off by members of the Incident Response Team
- If a question or request is asked that you do not know the details of, pass it on to someone who does to complete. If no one knows, say that we are still investigating the issue

For Verbal content:

- Tone is clear and authoritative, but not intimidating
- Ensure you are extensively briefed about the situation if giving any verbal statement
- If a question or request is asked that you do not know the details of, say that we are still investigating or cannot release these details.
- If a question or request is asked and you have forgotten the details, but it has been stated before, check the details.
 - Do not deflect or renounce the statement as already answered or that we do not know the answer.

Social Media Policy

If there is publicity surrounding the incident, there will likely be social media activity occurring the incident, please ensure the following:

During the Crisis:

- Scheduled posting to social media is paused,
- Scheduled digital advertising campaigns are paused,
- Social media logins are protected,
- Social media logins are only given to those who require it for the period of the crisis.
- Do not reply to direct messages to the account[s]

Once a first response has been planned:

- Broadcast the initial media release or statement message on social media,
- If the employee has been fired, ensure this is mentioned in any initial release on social media - **do not** give details of the employee beyond what is already known,
- Do not reply to comments,
- Continue social listening, document what the public is saying about United and the public sentiment

Following the release of a main media release of apology:

- Announce any commitments made. Broadcast if training or policy will be reviewed or changed.
- Announce progress or milestones derived from the incident such as reaching compensation with the victim[s], or changes to training or policy have been made.
- Ensure that these milestones are announced no less than 2 days after them taking place.