**SAFE PLACES WA**

Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is the Safe Place Program?**

A: The Safe Place Program is a partnership between local law enforcement and community businesses and agencies, born out of a need to address low reporting of anti-LGBTQ crimes and expanded to support anyone who is a victim of a bias crime. Building occupants and local law enforcement officers partner to assist victims of hate or bias crimes and encourage people to report these crimes. Responding officers receive extensive training around hate and bias crimes so victims are treated with the respect they deserve during responses.

**Q: Why is the State participating in the program?**

A: In 2016, the State launched our [LGBTQ inclusion and Safe Places initiative](http://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/directive/dir_16-11_0.pdf). As public servants, it’s part of our mission to help all people in Washington feel safe, welcome, and valued. The Safe Places Program demonstrates that commitment with both words and action.

**Q: What does the logo sticker mean?**

**A:** The logo is the symbol of an active “Safe Place” police program in your city. The logo is meant to convey inclusion and intersectionality with any and all individuals, regardless of their race, political beliefs, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation and/or identification.

**Q: What’s expected of me when my workplace is a participant?**

**A**: As state employees, the expectation that we create a welcoming environment and treat all people with dignity and respect hasn’t changed. As a program participant, the expectation is that if you greet someone entering the premises who signifies they are a crime victim, you:

* Call 911 on the victim’s behalf.
* Allow the victim to remain on your premise until police arrive.

**Q: How often does this program get used?**

**A**: Each program keeps their own data on program usage, which you can view at the following websites. However, past data indicates that the program has been used infrequently.

* + Seattle Safe Place - <https://www.seattle.gov/spd-safe-place>
  + Safe Olympia – <http://www.olympiawa.gov/safeolympia>
  + Tumwater Safe – <http://www.tumwatersafe.com>
  + Capitol Campus - <http://www.wsp.wa.gov/safe-place>
  + City of Centralia - <http://www.cityofcentralia.com/Page.asp?NavID=920>
  + City of Bremerton - <https://www.bremertonwa.gov/1118/BPD-Safe-Place>

**Q: How does my worksite participate if it’s not located in one of the participating cities above?**

**A:** Buildings may only participate in locations where there is an active law enforcement program. Local law enforcement agencies must want to join the program and provide training to their officers to enhance their outreach and improve relationships with the LGBTQ+ community. Law enforcement agencies may contact the [Seattle Police Department](https://www.seattle.gov/spd-safe-place) to obtain training and join the program. State employees should not contact the Seattle Police Department on behalf of their law enforcement program to initiate participation.

**Q: Does participation in this program put state employees in danger?**

**A:** Although each active police program tracks their own data, the most recent analysis indicates that there is not an increased risk for employees. For one state building participating in the program since 2014, it has been used two times and has not resulted in any violence.

**Q: Is this program available to others outside of the LGBTQ+ community?**

**A:** The short answer is YES! As public servants, the expectation is that we would create a safe and welcoming place for all people, and provide the safe harbor services listed above for any person who is feeling unsafe and seeking police support. Although the program was “born out of a need to address low reporting of anti-LGBTQ crimes” all participating police programs and buildings “encourage any victim of a hate crime, not just those related to the LGBTQ community to seek help with Safe Place” ([www.seattle.gov/spd-safe-place/history-and-mission](http://www.seattle.gov/spd-safe-place/history-and-mission))

**Q: Where can I find more information about the LGBTQ+ community?**

**A:** The Safe Place WA website has a [list of informational resources](https://des.wa.gov/node/35862) for people who are interested in learning more about the LGBTQ+ community and how to be an ally.

**Q: Is the Safe Place Program active if our building goes into lockdown?**

**A:** No, if your building goes into lockdown due to an active threat, your lockdown procedures would override the safe place program and information would be shared to inform people not to attempt to enter the building until it is in normal business operations.

**Q: What happens if a person enters our building to report harassment or assualt that occurred in the past?**

A: You would follow similar but slightly adjusted procedures since there is no immediate threat to the person. To help this person:

1. Call your local law enforcement non-emergency number and let them know someone entered your building as a designated “safe place” to report a crime that happened in the past.

2) Allow that person to remain on your premises until a law enforcement officer arrives.

**Q: What happens if I don’t feel comfortable participating in this program?**

**A:** Talk with your supervisor and/or an HR representative about what your concerns may be and for clarification about how to best move forward.