



## DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 20, 2020

**Rescission(s):** None

**Reference No.:** 2020.08

**To:** All DUA UIOnline users  
**From:** Katie Dishnica, Chief of Staff  
**Subject:** Suicide or Self-Harm threat guidelines

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**Purpose:**

To provide practical guidance on responding to claimants or employers threatening suicide or self-harm.

**Background:**

You may on occasion be confronted by a distressed claimant or employer threatening suicide or self-harm on the telephone or in writing. Such situations can be difficult to handle, especially when the majority of employees are not trained or qualified to assist the individual with such related issues.

There are numerous factors which may have influenced or led a claimant or employer to the point of making such a threat. **You must take the threat seriously.**

This document provides basic guidance on the procedures to be followed to ensure the individual making the threat is addressed appropriately and the employee gets the assistance they need following the incident.

**Responding to a Claimant or Employer Threatening Suicide or Self Harm:**

- If you are unsure of what the claimant or employer stated, attempt to clarify exactly what was stated and try to obtain as many details as possible regarding the individual making the threat, (i.e. name, address, telephone number and current location of the claimant or employer)
- Do not attempt to counsel the claimant or employer, or make judgement about whether you think the claimant or employer will carry out the threat of suicide or self-harm.

- Advise the claimant or employer that based on the statements made you will need to contact the local Police Department to check on their well-being and that threats of suicide are taken seriously.
- Contact the Police Department, advise them of the situation and be prepared to provide them with the claimant or employers name, address, telephone number, date of birth, location if known and the specific language used to make the threat.

**Note:** Utilize the Massachusetts Police Department Phone Directory to locate the city or town where the individual is currently located if known, if not, then utilize the current address on file (**see attachment #1**).

- Notify your Supervisor or Manager as soon as the situation allows and outline the course of action you have taken by completing the Police Contact Worksheet (**see attachment #2**)
- The Police Contact Worksheet should be completed and submitted to the Office of Internal Control and Security as soon as the situation allows by emailing [ICID@detma.org](mailto:ICID@detma.org)

### **Support for the Employee Who Received the Threat:**

Should support be needed for the person who was the recipient of the threat, the employee should be encouraged to utilise free confidential support and counselling through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Mass4You. The EAP is a service that provides employees with confidential and professional counselling and related services to assist them in resolving issues that may be work related or of a personal nature.

Employees are encouraged to access the EAP service as early as possible should they need additional support, 1-844-263-1982 (available 24/7)