



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

1. Purpose

West Ascension Parish Hospital is committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and respectful environment for employees, patients, visitors, medical staff, vendors, contractors, students, and volunteers. The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations, prevention strategies, reporting requirements, response procedures, and post-incident follow-up related to workplace violence.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all workforce members and all individuals present on hospital property or while engaged in hospital business, including off-site activities, home visits, outreach events, and hospital-sponsored programs as applicable.

3. Policy Statement

West Ascension Parish Hospital has zero tolerance for workplace violence, threats, intimidation, harassment, or other disruptive behavior that creates a risk to the health or safety of any person. Acts or threats of violence will be addressed promptly and may result in removal from the premises, disciplinary action up to and including termination, notification to law enforcement, and any other action permitted by law or hospital policy.

4. Definitions

Workplace violence includes violent acts, threats of violence, intimidation, harassment, physical assault, verbal abuse that escalates to a safety risk, stalking, brandishing of weapons, destruction of property, or any behavior that places another person in reasonable fear of harm while on duty, on hospital property, or engaged in hospital business.

Types of workplace violence may include, but are not limited to, violence by patients, family members, visitors, intruders, coworkers, supervisors, vendors, contractors, or any other individual interacting with the hospital.

5. Examples of Prohibited Conduct

- Physical assault, attempted assault, or unwanted physical contact.
- Threats, intimidation, coercion, menacing gestures, or aggressive behavior.
- Verbal abuse, shouting, or language that reasonably causes fear of imminent harm.
- Stalking, harassment, or repeated unwanted conduct that creates a safety concern.
- Possession, brandishing, or use of a firearm, knife, or other dangerous weapon except as authorized by law and hospital policy.
- Intentional damage to hospital property, personal property, or equipment in a threatening context.
- Any retaliatory action against an individual who reports a workplace violence concern in good faith.

6. Responsibilities

Leadership: Leaders are responsible for promoting a culture of safety, enforcing this policy, ensuring staff awareness, supporting prompt reporting, coordinating corrective action, and participating in workplace violence risk assessments and response efforts.

Human Resources / Safety / Security: Human Resources, Safety, Security, and other designated departments are responsible for supporting training, maintaining reporting processes, investigating incidents as appropriate, coordinating response measures, and monitoring trends for prevention and improvement.

Employees and Other Workforce Members: All workforce members are responsible for treating others with respect, remaining alert to warning signs, following de-escalation and emergency procedures, reporting incidents immediately, and cooperating in reviews or investigations.

7. Prevention and Preparedness

The hospital will maintain and implement a workplace violence prevention plan and related safety and security procedures designed to prevent, respond to, report, and mitigate workplace violence risks.

- Ongoing education and training on recognizing, preventing, reporting, and responding to workplace violence.
- Orientation to the workplace violence prevention plan for permanent and temporary employees.
- Annual education and training for healthcare workers who provide direct patient care, including interactive opportunities for questions and answers.
- Regular assessment of workplace risk factors, including staffing patterns, uncontrolled access points, late-night or early-morning shifts, parking areas, behavioral health risks, and high-risk clinical situations.
- Review of alarms, panic buttons, emergency communication systems, camera coverage, controlled access measures, and security staffing as applicable.
- Post-incident debriefing, support resources, and opportunities for process improvement following events or near misses.

8. Reporting Requirements

All incidents, threats, attempted acts, actual acts of violence, or behaviors that raise a reasonable concern for safety must be reported immediately to the supervisor, Security, Administration, Human Resources, or other designated hospital leadership. When there is an immediate threat, staff should call 911 and/or Security without delay.

The hospital will document reported incidents and respond in accordance with the workplace violence prevention plan, emergency procedures, and applicable law. Incidents involving injury, a firearm or other dangerous weapon, or an urgent or emergent threat to personnel shall be escalated and reported in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

9. Response Procedures

- Take immediate action to protect life and safety.
- Contact 911 and/or Security immediately when there is an active or imminent threat.
- Remove staff, patients, and visitors from danger when safe to do so.
- Use de-escalation techniques when appropriate and safe.
- Notify hospital leadership and follow incident command or emergency response procedures as appropriate.
- Preserve evidence and document the event as soon as practical after the situation is controlled.
- Arrange medical care, emotional support, and debriefing for affected individuals as appropriate.

10. Non-Retaliation

West Ascension Parish Hospital prohibits retaliation against any person who, in good faith, reports workplace violence, requests assistance, contacts emergency services or law enforcement during a violent incident, participates in an investigation, or otherwise raises a safety concern under this policy.

11. Corrective Action

Violations of this policy by employees or other workforce members may result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, contract termination, removal from assignment, loss of privileges, or other appropriate action. Patients, visitors, vendors, or other non-employees who engage in prohibited conduct may be removed from the premises, restricted from access, reported to law enforcement, or subject to other action consistent with patient care obligations and applicable law.

12. Patient Care Considerations

When workplace violence involves a patient or patient representative, the hospital will balance safety interventions with the patient's clinical condition, rights, and care needs. Leaders and clinical staff should assess contributing factors such as medical condition, cognitive status, intoxication, behavioral health needs, pain, fear, or communication barriers, and implement appropriate interventions while maintaining safety.

13. Signage and Public Notice

The hospital may post signage at entrances and other appropriate locations stating that abuse, threats, or assault of healthcare staff will not be tolerated and may result in removal, criminal prosecution, or other action as appropriate.

14. Documentation, Review, and Improvement

The hospital will maintain records related to workplace violence reports, investigations, follow-up actions, education, and prevention efforts as required by law and hospital practice. Trends and contributing factors will be reviewed at least annually to improve prevention strategies, staffing considerations, security measures, job design, and environmental controls.

15. Related Policies and References

- Emergency Management / Incident Response
- Security Management
- Employee Conduct / Code of Conduct
- Patient Rights and Responsibilities
- Behavioral Health / De-escalation Procedures
- Human Resources Corrective Action Policies

16. Approval

This policy shall remain in effect at all times and will be reviewed periodically and revised as needed to remain consistent with hospital operations, patient safety needs, and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.