



# Workplace Aggression and Violence Policy

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of the *Workplace Aggression and Violence Policy* is to outline the minimum requirements and responsibilities of WA health system entities in providing a safe workplace where staff members are not subjected to aggression and violence. The WA health system is committed to the safety, health and wellbeing of all Staff members in accordance with the requirements of the [Work Health and Safety Act 2020](#) and the [Work Health and Safety \(General\) Regulations 2022](#).

For the purpose of this Policy, workplace aggression and violence is considered to be any incident where a Staff Member is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances arising out of, or in the course of, their employment. Examples include, but are not limited to verbal, physical or psychological abuse, threats, spitting, biting or throwing objects.

Workplace aggression and violence may constitute a breach of Commissioner's Instruction No. 7 – Code of Ethics, the WA health system Code of Conduct and other relevant legislation.

This Policy is a mandatory requirement for Health Service Providers under the *Work Health and Safety Policy Framework* pursuant to section 26(2)(c) of the *Health Services Act 2016*.

This Policy is a mandatory requirement for the Department of Health pursuant to section 29 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

## 2. Applicability

This Policy is applicable to the WA health system.

The requirements contained within this Policy are applicable to the services purchased from contracted health entities where it is explicitly stated in the contract between the contracted health entity and the State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider. The State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider contract manager is responsible for ensuring that any obligation to comply with this Policy by the contracted health entity is accurately reflected in the relevant contract and managed accordingly.

## 3. Policy Requirements

WA health system entities have a duty to minimise the risk of violence to all Staff Members; so far as is reasonably practicable.

Each WA health system entity is required to:

- develop policies and procedures to prevent and manage aggressive and violent behaviours in the workplace, relative to the risk profile
- provide and promote a safe work environment where Staff members are not exposed to hazards and can work without risk of injury or harm to themselves and other Staff members
- identify, assess, and control environmental risks in each workplace to reduce the potential for harm to Staff Members
- implement a risk management approach in the management of workplace aggression and violence
- promote a no tolerance approach to any form of aggression or violence, including verbal abuse against Staff Members
- have site-specific policies, procedures, and systems in place for reporting, investigating and reviewing incidents of workplace violence and aggression
- provide training programmes specific to the needs of the Staff Member group, relative to the degree of risk faced within their working environment
- support Staff members to actively report all incidents and hazards related to aggression and violence, including to WA Police Force.

#### **4. Compliance Monitoring**

All WA health system entities are responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy.

The System Manager, through the Strategy and Governance Division, may carry out compliance audits to ascertain the level of compliance with this Policy. Updates may be provided to Chief Executives of Health Service Providers, the Director General of the Department of Health and other relevant persons regarding the findings of compliance monitoring activities.

#### **5. Related Documents**

The following documents are mandatory pursuant to this Policy:

- N/A

#### **6. Supporting Information**

The following information is not mandatory but informs and/or supports the implementation of the Policy:

- [Code of Practice: Violence, aggression and bullying at work 2022, Department of Commerce](#)
- [AS/NZS 4801:2001 Occupational health and safety management systems](#)
- [The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition](#)

## 7. Definitions

The following definition(s) are relevant to this Policy.

Term	Definition
Incident	Is any unplanned event resulting in, or having a potential for injury, ill health damage or other loss.
Staff Member	As stated in the Health Services Act 2016, a Staff member of a health service provider, means – (a) An employee in the Health Service Provider; (b) A person engaged under a contract for services by the Health Service Provider.
WA health system	The WA health system is comprised of: (i) the Department; (ii) Health Service Providers (North Metropolitan Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Service, Child and Adolescent Health Service, WA Country Health Service, East Metropolitan Health Service, PathWest Laboratory Medicine WA, Quadriplegic Centre and Health Support Services); and contracted health entities, to the extent they provide health services to the State.
Workplace aggression and violence	Workplace aggression and violence is considered to be any incident where a Staff Member is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances arising out of, or in the course of, their employment.

## 8. Policy contact

Enquiries relating to this Policy may be directed to:

Title: Executive Director, Governance and System Support

Directorate: Governance and System Support

Email: [EmploymentPolicyFramework@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:EmploymentPolicyFramework@health.wa.gov.au)

## 9. Document control

Version	Published date	Effective from	Review date	Amendment(s)
MP 0159/21	10 May 2021	10 May 2021	May 2024	Original version
MP 0159/21 v.1.0	23 August 2022	10 May 2021	May 2024	Amendments as below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated the Purpose section to include the current <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i> and the Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022.</li> <li>Updated the Policy Contact section from Executive Director, Governance and System Support to Director, Workforce and Employment Unit.</li> </ul>				
MP 0159/21 v.1.1	6 September 2023	6 September 2023	May 2024	Amendment as below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory policy transferred from the Employment Policy Framework to the new Work Health and Safety Policy Framework.</li> </ul>				

## 10. Approval

<b>Approval by</b>	Nicole O'Keefe, Assistant Director General, Strategy and Governance Division, Department of Health
<b>Approval date</b>	10 May 2021

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