



ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

Policy and Procedure

TITLE:	Violence in the Workplace	NUMBER:	AD-OHS-010
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Applies To:	All Staff		

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(Note: All capitalized terms are defined in Appendix A - Definitions)

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PREAMBLE

1. NSHA is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive working environment for Staff, Patients, and visitors. NSHA acknowledges that violence is an occupational health and safety Hazard at the Workplace. Violence can cause physical and emotional harm and have negative effects on the productivity of the organization. The psychological injuries which can result from violence may be immediate or delayed. NSHA views any acts or threats of Violence in the Workplace as unacceptable.
2. For the purposes of this policy, Staff refers to any employee, physician, volunteer, learner or student, board member, contractor, contract worker, franchise employee, Foundation employee, and any other individual performing work activities within NSHA.
3. This Policy is supplemented by the NSHA *Violence in the Workplace Program* which provides details on prevention and steps to manage Violence in the Workplace (see [Figure 1](#)). The *Violence in the Workplace Program* is a component of the NSHA Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Management System and includes a [Workplace Violence Prevention Statement](#) which must be posted.

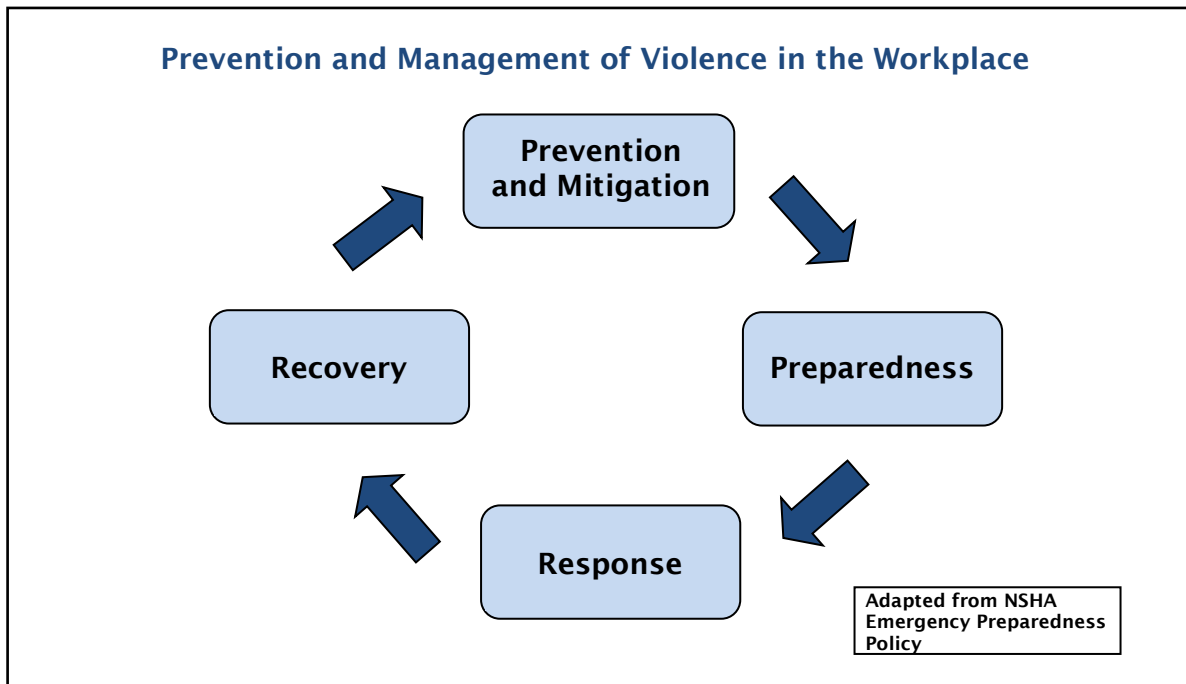


Figure 1

4. This Policy aligns with [NSHA-AD-HR-020 Respectful Workplace](#) to address the full range of Violence, Offensive, and Disrespectful Behaviours directed against Staff (see [Figure 2](#)).

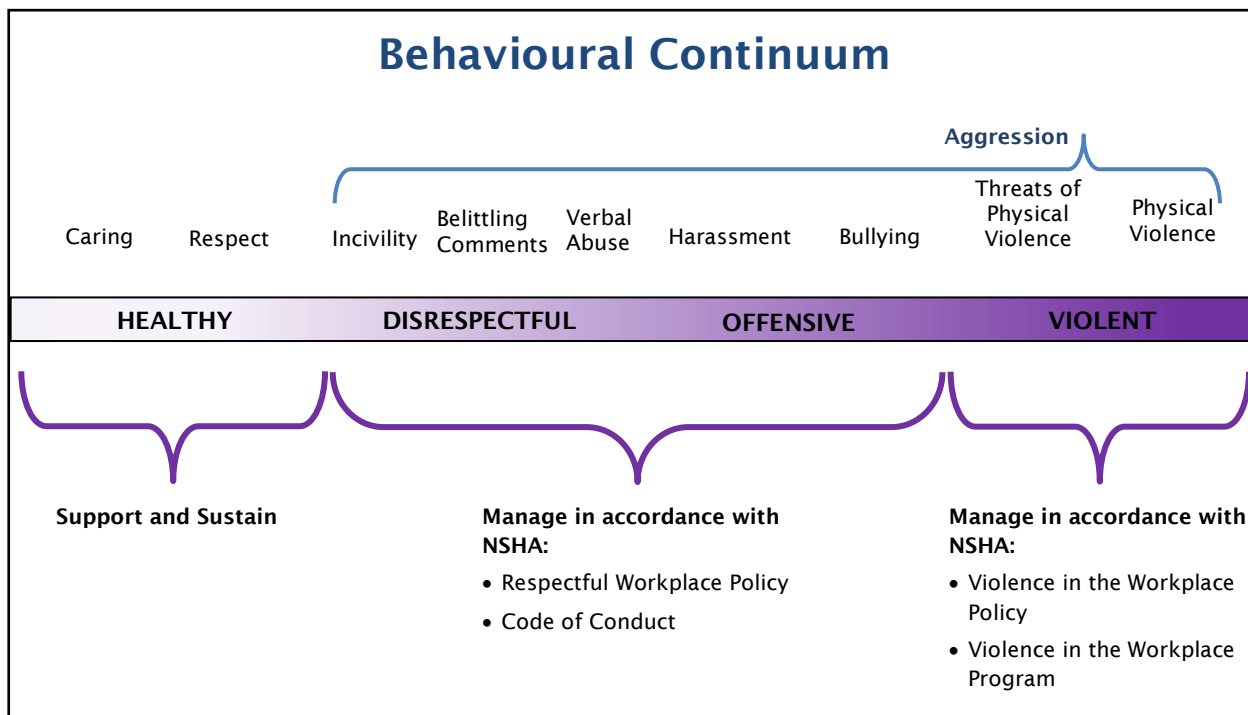


Figure 2

5. Although the majority of Violence experienced in NSHA Workplaces is related to Patient and visitor behaviours, it is recognized that there are four types of Violence in the Workplace:
 - 4.1 Externally-initiated Violence – the aggressor is external to the organization and is often, but not always, associated with criminal activity.
 - 4.2 Patient-related Violence – the aggressor is a Patient, a family member, or an acquaintance.
 - 4.3 Co-worker Violence – the aggressor is another member of NSHA Staff.
 - 4.4 Domestically-initiated Violence – the aggressor has a personal or intimate relationship with the victim.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. NSHA will take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to minimize and – to the extent possible – eliminate the risk of Violence in the Workplace. As required by the Nova Scotia *Violence in the Workplace Regulations*, the NSHA *Violence in the Workplace Program* has been developed to assist management and Staff to ensure a healthy and safe Workplace.
2. NSHA treats any act of Violence within its scope of service as a serious matter and will make every reasonable effort to identify potential sources of Violence to eliminate or minimize the risks. NSHA recognizes the need to balance the safety of Staff, Patients, and visitors with its obligation to provide health care services to those in need.
3. NSHA collaborates with all individuals to create a safe and healthy Workplace.
4. This *Violence in the Workplace Policy* is not intended to discourage or prevent any person from:

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- 5.1. Pursuing a complaint under any applicable legislation (including the *Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act* and *Criminal Code of Canada*);
 - 5.2. Filing a grievance under an applicable collective agreement;
 - 5.3. Pursuing a complaint under the provisions of any governing professional association; or,
 - 5.4. Exercising any other legal rights under any other law.
5. Promoting and supporting a safe and healthy Workplace requires consistent processes and ongoing commitment by all Staff. NSHA provides a Workplace where Staff:
- 6.1. Are aware that Violence in the Workplace is not tolerated;
 - 6.2. Are aware of their legal obligations and responsibilities to prevent and manage Violence in the Workplace;
 - 6.3. Are aware of policies, programs, procedures, and supports available to help prevent and manage Violence in the Workplace ; and
 - 6.4. Work together to create an environment that is healthy and safe and for all.
6. Acts of Violence, Offensive, or Disrespectful Behaviour directed against Staff will be reported by Staff via the Safety Management and Improvement System (SIMS), Safe Line or other reporting system used in the particular NSHA geographic area.
7. Acts of Violence, Offensive or Disrespectful Behaviour directed against Patients and visitors will be reported by Staff and documented and investigated by risk management/Patient safety via the currently approved and effective reporting system for the area. For incidents involving Patient complaints, refer to [NSHA AD-QR-001 Abuse Prevention and Response](#).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

1. NSHA aims to create a positive and healthy organizational culture that enables Staff to support the health and wellness of Nova Scotians. NSHA will foster safety, learning, respect, leadership, accountability, inclusiveness, role optimization, and collaboration among our teams.
2. A high-performing Workplace is developed through enhancement of a positive, healthy, safe, and productive work culture and environment.
3. NSHA is committed to sustaining healthy and safe Workplaces.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All Staff

- 1.1. Actively promote and support a healthy and safe Workplace.
- 1.2. Review, understand, and participate in the effective implementation of the *Violence in the Workplace Program*. This includes:
 - 1.2.1. Participating in the application of the *Workplace Violence Risk Assessment and Prevention Planning Tool*, as requested by the Director/Manager/Delegate;

- 1.2.2. Applying and using the identified controls to prevent and manage Workplace Violence;
- 1.2.3. Participating in education and training, as required;
- 1.2.4. Reporting all concerns, Hazards, Near-Misses, Incidents, and injuries (physical and psychological) involving Workplace Violence to
 - 1.2.4.1. The appropriate manager/delegate and
 - 1.2.4.2. Via the appropriate NSHA zone or area reporting system (Safe Line or SIMS);
- 1.2.5. Co-operating and participating in the investigation of Workplace Violence incidents; and
- 1.2.6. Accessing post-incident counseling services when personal situations indicate the need.

2. Executive and Senior Leadership (CEO, Vice Presidents, and Executive/Senior Directors)

- 2.1. Ensure the health and safety of Staff and others at the Workplace through:
 - 2.1.1. Provision of reasonable resources to ensure health and safety;
 - 2.1.2. Support for the development and effective implementation of an appropriate NSHA Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Management system, including the *Violence in the Workplace Program* and other programs, procedures, and training requirements that are reasonable in the circumstances; and
 - 2.1.3. Review of quarterly reports of incidents of violence in NSHA workplaces and application of this information to enhance safety, reduce incidents of violence in NSHA's Workplaces, and to improve this *Violence in the Workplace Policy* and *The Violence in the Workplace Program*.

3. Directors/Managers/Delegates

- 3.1. In collaboration with department, unit, and program Staff, ensure that the *Violence in the Workplace Program* is available, understood, and effectively implemented. This includes:
 - 3.1.1. Ensuring that Staff are provided access to – and training on – the *Violence in the Workplace Program* and the [NSHA Workplace Violence Prevention Statement](#);
 - 3.1.2. Posting the [Workplace Violence Prevention Statement](#) in each department or unit, in at least one area that is frequented by Staff;
 - 3.1.3. Applying the preventive and protective measures described in the *Violence in the Workplace Program*, including completion of the *Workplace Violence Risk Assessment and Prevention Planning Tool* and application of the identified controls;

- 3.1.4. Ensuring that Staff are educated and trained, as detailed in the *Violence in the Workplace Program*, on:
 - 3.1.4.1. Their rights and responsibilities under the *NS Occupational Health and Safety Act*;
 - 3.1.4.2. The Hazards of Workplace Violence specific to their work environment;
 - 3.1.4.3. How to recognize a situation in which there is a potential for Workplace Violence, and how to respond appropriately;
 - 3.1.4.4. How to respond to an incident of Workplace Violence, including how to obtain assistance;
 - 3.1.4.5. How to report and document incidents of Workplace Violence.
- 3.1.5. Ensuring that a communications plan is in place for their department, unit, and/or program, so that Staff are fully aware of Violence Hazards, risks, controls, and their responsibilities;
- 3.1.6. Investigating Incidents of Workplace Violence to determine their causes and the actions needed to prevent recurrence, and reporting that information using the approved NSHA zone or area method;
- 3.1.7. Providing appropriate supports, including debriefs, as described in the *Violence in the Workplace Program*, for Staff who are exposed to or affected by Workplace Violence;
- 3.1.8. Following up to ensure that Violence risks are eliminated or adequately controlled; and
- 3.1.9. Supporting and holding Staff accountable for their responsibilities as described below.

4. People Services

- 4.1. Ensure that the *Violence in the Workplace Program* is reviewed periodically and maintained current.
- 4.2. Organize and support the availability of required education and training for the prevention and management of Workplace Violence.
- 4.3. Maintain and make available relevant education/training records.
- 4.4. Provide guidance and assistance to Directors/Managers/Delegates, as required, in their application of the *Workplace Violence Risk Assessment and Prevention Planning Tool* and their investigation of Incidents.
- 4.5. Identify potential psychosocial supports.
- 4.6. Support and monitor the processing of Workers' Compensation reports for physical and psychological injuries, in accordance with the [Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia Policy Manual](#).
- 4.7. Analyze Workplace Violence trends identified through observations and Incident reporting systems and initiate proactive measures.

- 4.8. Provide quarterly reports of Workplace Violence to Executive and Senior Leadership for review, in accordance with Accreditation Canada expectations.

5. **Building Infrastructure and Asset Management (BIAM)**

- 5.1. Ensure that security assessments occur at all NSHA sites and are kept current in accordance with the *Violence in the Workplace Program*.
- 5.2. Provide and maintain facilities that are effective for the prevention and management of Violence in the Workplace.

6. **Emergency Preparedness**

- 6.1. Actively promote Emergency Preparedness to ensure an effective response to acts of Workplace Violence.
- 6.2. Work in collaboration with others to ensure Code White response is tested as part of an exercise, a real event or for training purposes, or as significant changes occur.
- 6.3. Work in collaboration with others to ensure the Lessons Learned Process (an aspect of the *Violence in the Workplace Program*) has been used to validate or revise the Code White response as part of an exercise, a real event or for training purposes, or as significant changes occur in the organization.
- 6.4. In consultation with OHS&W, ensure Staff identified as internal responders have received the proper education and/or training on their role(s) as outlined in the Code White response, including their specific responsibilities, authorities, and limitations.
- 6.5. Provide ongoing consultation regarding industry standards and best practice as it relates to emergency management.
- 6.6. Work in collaboration with others to provide response plans that engage responders to ensure acts of Violence are managed quickly to minimize harm.
- 6.7. Participate in Incident reviews, debriefs, and other forums to ensure continuous improvement.
- 6.8. Establish and maintain a system-wide process to ensure appropriate and timely notification of others regarding emergency situations throughout NSHA (e.g. utilizing the Management on call process).

7. **Zone Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Councils**

- 7.1. Provide ongoing consultation and advice on the content and application of this *Violence in the Workplace Policy* and the *Violence in the Workplace Program*.
- 7.2. Assist NSHA with cooperative monitoring of the overall effectiveness of Workplace Violence prevention and management activities at the zone level.
- 7.3. Coordinate recommendations, within each zone, to improve safety, including the prevention and management of Violence in the Workplace.

8. **Site Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSCs) and Health and Safety Representatives**

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- 8.1. In accordance with the [Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and the duties of JOHSCs and Health and Safety Representatives described in the *NSHA Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Management System*:
 - 8.1.1. Actively promote and support a healthy and safe non-violent Workplace.
 - 8.1.2. Review and advise on completed NSHA Workplace Violence Risk Assessments and Prevention Plans.
 - 8.1.3. Post the [NSHA Workplace Violence Prevention Statement](#) on all site safety boards.
 - 8.1.4. Review and/or assist in the investigation of Workplace Violence incidents.
 - 8.1.5. Assist NSHA with cooperative monitoring of the effectiveness of Workplace Violence prevention and management activities at the site level.
 - 8.1.6. Make recommendations to improve site safety, including the prevention and management of Workplace Violence.

PROCEDURE

Each member of Staff at all levels is expected to understand and apply the procedures and other information contained in the *Violence in the Workplace Program*.

REFERENCES

Legislative Acts/References

- Province of Nova Scotia. (2013). Human Rights Act (c. 214 of the Revised Statutes, 1989). Retrieved from <http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/human%20rights.pdf>
- Canadian Department of Justice. (2017). Criminal Code of Canada. Retrieved from <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/C-46.pdf>
- Province of Nova Scotia. (2017). *Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations* (c. 7 of the Acts of 1996). Retrieved from <http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/occupational%20health%20and%20safety.pdf>
- Province of Nova Scotia. (2009). Violence in the Workplace Regulations (S. 82 of the OHS Act). Retrieved from <https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/ohsviolence.htm>
- Province of Nova Scotia. (2016). Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (c. 5 of the Acts of 1993). Retrieved from <http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/freedom%20of%20information%20and%20protection%20of%20privacy.pdf>
- Province of Nova Scotia. (2013). Workers' Compensation Act (c. 10 of the Acts of 1994-95). Retrieved from <http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/workers%27%20compensation.pdf>

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Worker's Compensation Board of Nova Scotia. (2014). Policy Manual. Retrieved from <http://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/Policy/Policy-Manual.aspx>

Policies

NSHA Least Restraint (Pending)

[NSHA AD-EP-010 Emergency Preparedness](#)

[NSHA AD-HR-020 Respectful Workplace](#)

[NSHA-AD-OHS-001 Occupational Health and Safety Rights and Accountabilities](#)

[NSHA AD-QR-001 Abuse Prevention and Response.](#)

Other

[NSHA Code of Conduct](#)

[NSHA Workplace Violence Prevention Statement](#)

Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness. (2017). Improving workplace safety in Nova Scotia's community emergency departments. Retrieved from

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/publications/Community-ED-safety-protocols-report.pdf>

Forms

Brochures

Appendices

[Appendix A - Definitions](#)

[Replacing the Following District Health Authority Policies/Version History](#)

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Appendix A – Definitions

Code White	An emergency response code used in healthcare facilities within Nova Scotia Health Authority. It is a term used to describe an emergency situation in which a person is behaving in a potentially violent manner towards themselves or others, and indicates a potential for escalation or is escalating beyond the abilities of the staff present, to control the situation.
Code White Team Response	A trained, planned team response to a disturbance that is a behavioral emergency involving a person in a health care setting.
Disrespectful Behaviour	<p>Behaviour toward others that is undesirable, inappropriate, offensive, unsuitable or improper which leads to an uncomfortable, hostile and/or intimidating work environment and which is not based on one or more of the protected grounds under the <i>Nova Scotia Human Rights Act</i>. The behaviour may be written, verbal or electronic. It can also be described as the assertion of power through aggression. Disrespectful behaviour that is repeated with intent to embarrass or humiliate may be considered Bullying or Harassment.</p> <p>Disrespectful behavior is not addressed in the <i>Violence in the Workplace Policy</i>. Refer to the <i>Respectful Workplace Policy</i>.</p>
Hazard	A condition or practice with a potential for injury to people, equipment, materials, property, or the environment.
Health and Safety Representative	<p>A legislated, site-based representative selected from among the employees at the workplace who are not connected with the management of the workplace, and who functions in accordance with the NS Occupational Health and Safety Act.</p> <p>At NSHA workplaces with 5-19 employees, at least one health and safety representative must be selected.</p> <p>See <i>NSHA Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Management System</i> for details.</p>
Incident	An unplanned and unwanted event that causes physical and/or psychological injury to a person, damage to property or the environment, or has a high risk of doing so.
Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC)	<p>A legislated, site-based committee of management and non-management NSHA Employees which is composed and functions in accordance with the NS Occupational Health and Safety Act.</p> <p>At NSHA workplaces with 20 or more employees, a JOHSC must be functional.</p>

See *NSHA Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Management System* for details.

Near Miss An incident that had the potential for injury or damage, but where no injury or damage occurred.

Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Management System (OHSWMS) Provides the methods by which NSHA will comply with legislative requirements and provides the detailed responsibilities and accountabilities of all workplace parties. The OHSWMS also provides the methods for identification of and control of hazards, and corresponding safety programs which meet or exceed legislated requirements.

See *NSHA Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Management System* for details.

Offensive Behaviour Means Harassment, Sexual Harassment, or Discrimination. Offensive Behaviour is not addressed in the *Violence in the Workplace Policy*. Refer to the *Respectful Workplace Policy*.

Staff Any employee, physician, volunteer, learner or student, board member, contractor, contract worker, franchise employee, Foundation employee, and any other individual performing work activities within NSHA.

Violence:

1. Threats, including a threatening statement or threatening behaviour, that give Staff reasonable cause to believe that they – or someone else – are at risk of physical injury and/or
2. Conduct or attempted conduct of a person that endangers the physical health or physical safety of Staff.

This definition has been adapted from the *Violence in the Workplace Regulations*, pursuant to the Nova Scotia [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#).

Violence includes, but is not limited to:

Threats

- Threats of physical harm delivered in person, through phone calls, or in writing via letters or electronically (including social media);
- Intimidating or frightening gestures, such as shaking fists at another person, pounding a desk or counter, punching a wall, or screaming;
- Threatening to throw or strike objects;
- Stalking.

Physical Violence

- Kicking, hitting, biting, grabbing, pinching, scratching, spitting, etc.;
- Injuring a person by using an object such as a chair, cane, or a weapon such as a knife, gun, sharp or blunt instrument.
- Whether they are intentional or not, if these threatening or physically violent behaviours are encountered by staff in the performance of their work, they are considered Workplace Violence.

Workplace: Any place where Staff is or is likely to be engaged in any occupation and includes, but is not limited to: NSHA facilities, including all leased properties, patients' residences, community meeting places, any vehicle used or likely to be used by staff in an occupation, washrooms, cafeterias, business travel, conferences, work related social functions, locker rooms, phone calls, faxes, email, and any location, event, or activity.

Zone Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Council A committee which is based at each of the four NSHA management zones, and involves the Co-chairs of each site JOHSC and others within that management zone in collaborative activities to improve health and safety at NSHA Workplaces.

District Health Authority Policies Being Replaced

[AVDHA 140.093 Workplace Violence Prevention](#)

[CBDHA HR-30-100 Workplace Violence Policy](#)

[CDHA 15-096 Violent Behaviour Against Staff by Patients, Visitors, or Staff Members](#)

[CEHHA 109-007 Workplace Violence](#)

[CHA 109-007 Workplace Violence Policy](#)

[GASHA 3-210 Workplace Violence](#)

[PCHA 11-w-13 Workplace Violence](#)

[SSDHA AD 110-333 Workplace Violence Prevention](#)

[SWDHA 1306.0 Workplace Violence Prevention](#)

Version History

Major Revisions (e.g. Standard 4 year review)	Minor Revisions (e.g. spelling correction, wording changes, etc.)
New 2017-09-18	