

POLICY II-145	Respectful Workplaces and the Prevention of Harassment and Violence	DOMAIN People and Teams
SLT Sponsor: Chief Human Resources Officer		Date Approved: January 30, 2024
Policy Lead(s): Corporate Director - Occupational Health, Safety & Wellness, Manager – Safety & Hygiene		Date Effective: January 31, 2024
		Date of Next Review: January 2027

For further information please contact covenantpolicy@covenanthealth.ca

NOTE: The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the definition section

Policy Statement

Covenant Health is committed to providing a psychologically and physically safe, healthy, and inclusive **workplace** which values diversity. This is in alignment with Covenant Health’s People Strategy, the Quality Strategy, Our Commitment to Ethical Integrity, policy III-35 [Just Culture](#), policy III-70 [Disclosure of Wrongdoings and Protection of Persons who Disclose Wrongdoings](#) and Covenant Health Mission and Values.

Covenant Health does not tolerate workplace harassment or violence. These are considered serious matters and shall be addressed in accordance with Covenant Health’s legal obligations under Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation, other applicable legislation, Accreditation Canada standards, applicable collective agreements, the Covenant Health Out of Scope Employees -Terms and Conditions, other terms and conditions of employment, the

Purpose Statement

Covenant Health is committed to eliminating or, if that is not reasonably practicable, controlling the hazard of harassment and violence, regardless of its source. Anyone who enters a Covenant Health workplace is obligated to uphold this policy and work together to prevent workplace harassment or violence.

This Policy, and associated procedures, do not apply to harassment or violence against patients. In these situations, refer to Covenant Health policy III-75 [Abuse of Patients, Residents or Clients](#) and the *Protection for Persons in Care Act* (Alberta).

This Policy is intended to:

- promote a culture of trust, dignity, and respect.
- foster a culture of shared accountability and cooperation in promoting and maintaining a safe, healthy, and respectful workplace.
- empower **workers** to be accountable to keep themselves and each other safe from **harassment** and **violence** in the workplace.
- protect workers from the potential hazards associated with all types of harassment and violence (including **domestic/personal relationship** violence and **sexual harassment** or **sexual violence**) regardless of its source.

- enhance awareness of the rights, responsibilities, and available supports for workers who are at risk of, experience, or otherwise become aware of workplace harassment or violence.
- outline the accountabilities of Covenant Health **managers**/medical leaders and **supervisors** with respect to supporting and maintaining a safe and respectful workplace.

Applicability

This policy applies to incidents of harassment or violence involving Covenant Health staff, members of the medical staff, volunteers, students, and to any other personnel acting on behalf of Covenant Health.

Responsibility

Compliance with this policy and applicable procedure(s) is required by all **Covenant Health workers**, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Covenant Health (including **contracted service providers** as necessary).

Principles

Workplace harassment or violence in any form erodes the mutual trust and confidence that are essential to Covenant Health's mission, vision and values.

Covenant Health

- a) is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and inclusive workplace which values diversity, where all persons are treated with respect and dignity. This is in alignment with Covenant Health's People Strategy, Quality Strategy, Commitment to Ethical Integrity (Code of Conduct), principles of a just culture, and its Mission and Values.
- b) does not tolerate workplace harassment or violence. These are considered serious matters and shall be addressed in accordance with Covenant Health's legal obligations under Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation, other applicable legislation, Accreditation Canada standards, Covenant Health Values, principles of a just culture, applicable collective agreements, the Out of Scope Terms and Conditions of Employment, other terms and conditions of employment, and the Medical Staff Bylaws and Rules Midwifery.
- c) acknowledges that conflict is a normal and expected part of working together, can contribute to disrespectful behaviour in our working relationships, and that disrespectful behaviour can be a precursor to harassment and violence. Therefore, effective conflict management is a key strategy for preventing harassment and violence in the workplace. Actively addressing and managing conflict when it occurs, creates a safe, healthy, and respectful workplace for everyone. Avoiding conflict does not bring resolution and can lead to the recurrence of further conflict with negative impacts to people and the workplace.
- d) recognizes that harassment and violence may be prevented through effective interventions, such as hazard assessment, training, incident responses, root cause

analysis, and corrective action. Where the hazards cannot be eliminated, the controls must be documented on a position based Hazard Assessment.

- e) recognizes that workplaces can be publicly accessed and, therefore, has Emergency Response Codes and Plans in place to keep workers and the public safe (for example, Code White, Code Purple, Code Black, Suspicious Item, and Active Assailant). shall cooperate with investigations conducted by external agencies to the extent required by law.
- f) ensure that contracted service providers are aware of their obligations under this Policy and associated procedures.

Definitions:

Contracted service providers means a third party, including a self-employed person, providing goods and services to Covenant Health in a Covenant Health site or facility.

Covenant Health worker means Covenant Health employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students and volunteers, but excludes contracted service providers and their workers.

Discrimination means any practice, comment or conduct that is known or reasonably ought to be known to be unwelcome, and which is related to any protect ground in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

Disrespectful behaviour means the comments or conduct that is rude, inconsiderate, or insensitive. Disrespectful behaviour includes behaviours that can be addressed and stopped by bringing them to the attention of the other individual. Disrespectful behaviour can also occur between two or more workers with both sides contributing to the discord. It is recognized that if disrespectful behaviour goes unaddressed, it can lead to harassment or violence.

Domestic/personal relationship violence means threatened, attempted, or actual conduct that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and is used to frighten, control, intimidate or humiliate a worker, by a person who is, was or wishes to be in a personal, intimate, or domestic relationship with a worker. This can range from subtle, coercive forms to violent acts that result in physical harm or death. Examples of behaviour may include but are not limited to physical violence, sexual abuse, financial control, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, and using electronic devices to harass and control. Some examples include, but are not limited to, inappropriate phone calls, e-mails, social media posts, or visits to the worksite.

Harassment means any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying, or action by a person that the person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affects the worker's health and safety and includes **discrimination** and sexual solicitations or advances. Other examples include, but are not limited to: conduct, comment, bullying or action because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical stature, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

Workplace harassment can include incidents that occur outside of the workplace or working hours, but are related to the workplace (some examples include, but are not limited to, inappropriate phone calls, e-mails, social media posts, visits to a worker's home and incidents at luncheons or after work socials) or harassment from clients and service recipients.

Harassment excludes any reasonable conduct of a manager/medical leader or supervisor in respect of the management of workers or a workplace. Performance management is an allowable action by the Employer and is to be conducted by the employer in a fair, timely and respectful manner.

Just culture means an environment where everyone feels safe, encouraged, and enabled to discuss quality and safety concerns.

Manager means an individual(s) who has the delegated human resources authority for directly planning, monitoring, and supervising direct reports. This may be a worker's immediate supervisor, manager, director, executive director or designate. Where the manager is the **respondent** in an allegation of **disrespectful behaviour**, harassment or violence 'manager' shall mean the next higher position in the respective department.

Respondent means the individual against whom an allegation has been made.

Sexual harassment means any unwelcome conduct or comment of a sexual nature that ought reasonably to be known or expected to cause offence or humiliation to a person, detrimentally affects the work environment, or leads to adverse job-related consequences for the recipient of the harassment. Such conduct or comment includes, but is not limited to:

- conduct or comment that is related to gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation; or
- a sexual solicitation or advance including but not limited to where the person making the solicitation or advance is, or is perceived to be, in a position to confer, grant, or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker.

Sexual violence means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a sexual nature by a person, whether at the workplace or work-related, that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, including but not limited to:

- unwanted sexual contact;
- stalking; or
- a pattern of on-going sexual harassment leading to psychological harm.

Supervisor means a person, whether unionized or non-unionized, who has charge of a workplace or authority over a Covenant Health worker. This includes Charge Nurses.

Violence means the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence. It is acknowledged that harassment may become violence.

Worker means Covenant Health employees, members of the medical staff and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and any other person(s) acting on behalf of Covenant Health.

Workplace means a location where a worker is, or is likely to be, while engaged in their work or work-related activities. The workplace includes all locations where business or social activities organized by Covenant Health are conducted, including but not limited to work in the community and locations of work-related social events. Workplace includes any vehicle or mobile equipment used by the Covenant Health worker as part of their job.

Relevant Policy and Policy Support Documents:

A. Policies:

- II-135 [Reporting of Work-related Incidents, Injuries and Illnesses](#);
- II-130 [Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness](#)
- III-35 [Just Culture](#)
- III-55 [Records Management](#)
- III-70 [Disclosure of Wrongdoings and Protection of Persons who Disclose Wrongdoings](#)

B. Procedures:

- II-145.PROC.1 [Type I External Party Procedures](#)
- II-145.PROC.2 [Type II Patient-to-Worker Procedures](#)
- II-145.PROC.3 [Type III Worker-to-Worker Procedures](#)
- II-145.PROC.4 [Type IV Domestic-Personal Relationship Procedures](#)

C. Guidelines:

- [Covenant Health’s Commitment to Ethical Integrity](#)

D. Job aids:

- Emergency Response Codes and Plans
- Employee Family Assistance Program – [Homewood Health](#) on CompassionNet
- [Respectful Workplaces and the Prevention of Harassment and Violence](#) on CompassionNet

E. Standards:

- II-145.STND.1 [Support Respectful Workplaces and the Prevention of Harassment and Violence Standards](#)
- Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Legislation

Keywords:

Human Resources, Workplace Abuse, Harassment, Violence, Disrespectful, Behaviour, OHS, OHS&W

References:

Covenant Health Resources:

- Covenant Health Values
- Collective Agreements
- Diversity and Inclusion Workplan
- Hazard Assessment Process
- Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Program
- Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Reporting and Information Line
- Mission and Culture Survey
- People Strategy
- Quality Strategy
- Respectful Workplaces CompassionNet Page

Non-Covenant Health Documents:

- Accreditation Canada Standards
- Medical Staff Bylaws and Rules
- Midwifery Staff Bylaws and Rules

Alberta Health Services

- Policy III5 – Respectful Workplaces and the Prevention of Harassment and Violence

Past Revisions:

March 8, 2019 (previous name – Workplace Abuse and Harassment)

September 15, 2017

February 5, 2016

February 11, 2013