

Prevention of Occupational Violence and Aggression Protocol

Who	All Southern Health staff.
Expected Outcomes	<p>All employees have a right to work without being subjected to violence and aggression and Southern Health recognises it has a legal responsibility to do all that is practicable to prevent acts of occupational violence and aggression.</p> <p>This protocol is intended to facilitate the management of occupational violence and aggression and to minimise the risk of harm to employees, patients/clients and visitors.</p> <p>In addressing this issue, Southern Health is committed to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Violence and aggression against employees is unacceptable in all Southern Health workplaces and will be proactively addressed.• All employees will receive education and training in the prevention and management of occupational violence and aggression commensurate with their levels of exposure.• A culture of reporting incidents of occupational violence and aggression is encouraged
Purpose	<p>The purpose of this protocol is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate the prevention and handling of incidents involving occupational violence and aggression into Southern Health practices at all levels.• Develop a risk management approach to help prevent occupational violence and aggression and reduce the risk of illness and injury.• Provide ongoing information, training and supervision to employees in dealing with occupational violence and aggression to enable them to work safely and manage incidents when they do occur.• Provide proactive support mechanisms to assist employees who are exposed to occupational violence and aggression incidents.• Develop and implement procedures and guidelines to reduce the incidence and severity of the risks from occupational violence and aggression in consultation with stakeholders, to be reviewed every two years.• Report all incidents and near misses of occupational violence and aggression via <i>RiskMan</i> and thereupon an investigation of the incident/near miss will be undertaken by the area manager or supervisor.• Provide managers with the knowledge and skills to enable them to manage occupational violence and aggression incidents in their area of responsibility.
Definitions	<p>Definition of Occupational Violence and Aggression</p> <p>“Occupational violence and aggression” means any incident where an employee is abused, threatened or physically attacked in circumstances arising out of, or in the course of, their employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘Threat’ means a statement or behaviour by a person that causes another person to believe they are in danger of being physically attacked. A threat may involve an actual or implied threat to safety, health or wellbeing, or

verbal abuse.

- 'Physical attack' means the direct or indirect application of force by a person to the body of, clothing or equipment worn by, another person, where that application creates a risk to health and safety.

Occupational violence can be perpetrated by a co-worker; client, patient or visitor; a person known to the organisation; or a stranger.

This protocol is in line with the Occupational Health and Safety Policy, in which Southern Health commits to fulfilling its responsibilities under the OHS Act 2004 to provide for the health and safety of all employees, patients/clients, contractors and members of the public using Southern Health premises, facilities and equipment.

Responsibilities Managers' and supervisors' responsibilities

Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- providing immediate and ongoing support for employees exposed to occupational violence and aggression, including access to appropriate support services;
- advising employees of the need to promptly report occupational violence and aggression incidents;
- the follow-up, investigation and risk management of all occupational violence and aggression incidents;
- ensuring induction and training of new employees in Southern Health policies and procedures relating to the prevention of violence and aggression.;
- assessing the level of exposure of staff to occupational violence and aggression and referral to appropriate training; and
- enforcing sanctions/consequences where occupational violence and aggression behaviour is experienced.

Employees' responsibilities

All employees are responsible for:

- following safe work practices and complying with health and safety instructions with a view to preventing and/or minimising the risk of occupational violence and aggression;
- attending the appropriate occupational violence and aggression training and education; and
- identifying and reporting all occupational violence and aggression incidents, including near misses, to their manager/supervisor.

Risk Management

The following are the specific requirements pursuant to the risk management approach which should be used to help prevent occupational violence and aggression and reduce the risk of illness and injury. This involves identification, assessment, control and review of hazards related to occupational violence and aggression.

Assessment of Risks

- Identify, assess and control risks related to occupational violence and aggression with specific focus on physical work environment, training and education, work procedures and practice, including communication to employees, patients/clients and visitors regarding expected behaviours.

- Upon admission to a Southern Health service, information will be sought from patients/clients related to their aggression risk factors, and a documented plan of care will subsequently take any such factors into account and reflect actions aimed at minimising the risk of exposure to violence and aggression. Plans of care will be reviewed on a regular basis and following a violent or aggressive incident.

A hierarchy of sanctions and consequences which include warning systems, contracts of acceptable behaviour, etc will be enforced for patients/clients or visitors who are violent or aggressive, or who provoke violent or aggressive behaviour.

Reporting

- All reports of incidents of occupational violence and/or aggression will be investigated and a risk management approach will be used to determine control measures to avoid similar situations arising in the future.

Education and Training

- A staged education and training program will be provided for employees based upon their risk of exposure to violence and aggression.



References & Related forms and/or documents

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)
- Southern Health's Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Southern Health's Occupational Health and Safety Risk Management Protocol
- WorkSafe Guidance Note: Prevention of Bullying and Violence at Work February 2003
- Victorian Taskforce on Violence in Nursing Final Report 2005 http://www.health.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/17674/victaskforcevio.pdf
- DHS Policy Framework and Toolkit : October, 2007 http://www.health.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/101643/nurse_safe_policy-Final.pdf

Southern Health Policy	Human Resources Policy Occupational Health and Safety Policy	ACHS	Corporate
Reviewer	Director, Workforce Health & Safety	Last review date	May, 2008
Authoriser	Occupational Safety, Health & Environment (OSHE) Steering Group	Next review date	May, 2010

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