**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is:

* To communicate the institutional commitment to a “zero tolerance” for violence on campus.
* To state requirements for reporting incidents and cooperating in investigations.
* To outline the procedures for reporting incidents.
* To ensure compliance with federal and state regulations.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It is the policy of this facility to maintain a safe environment free from violence. This policy prohibits:

* Direct or indirect threats or acts of violent behavior.
* Makes mandatory the reporting of threats or incidents of violence.
* Requires cooperation in the investigation of allegations.

Violations may lead to:

* Termination for employees
* Refusal of services to patients and visitors
* Cancellation of contracts with vendors and contractors
* If applicable, the pursuit of criminal actions.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Incident:** Any occurrence of perceived violence or threat of violence.

**Violence:** Includes, but is not limited to, intimidating, threatening or hostile behavior, physical or verbal abuse, harassment, stalking, vandalism, arson, sabotage, use of weapons, possession of weapons on institutional property, the threat of any of the above, or any other act inconsistent with this policy.

**Threats:** A communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on any person or on property. Threats may be oral, written or physical and typically fall into three categories:

*Direct:* Threats against a specific target, sometimes describing methods for committing violence.

*Conditional:* Threats that are contingent upon a certain set of circumstances (often uses the “if” term).

*Veiled:* Threats that are vague and subject to multiple interpretations.

**Weapon:** Any instrument or object used in injuring or harming a person or property. Weapons are classified as follows:

*Weapons of Choice:* Objects designed for the purpose of causing harm to others or to property.

*Weapons of Opportunity:* Objects designed for some other primary use, but used to cause harm or injury. Such weapons of opportunity can be a person’s hands, arms or legs, or other articles, such as paperweights, letter openers, tools, or chairs.

**Violation:** A confirmed incident of violence or the threat of violence as assessed and determined by the Investigating officer or team. Based on the severity of the violation and the history of prior incidents, the Investigating officer or team will make an independent determination of the appropriate penalty.

**SCOPE**

This is a hospital-wide policy affecting all persons on the property of this facility, including employees, patients, and visitors (e.g., guests, vendors, contractors).

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Managers have first-line responsibility and accountability for maintaining a work environment free from violence or threats. Managers review the warning signs of potentially violent behavior and take appropriate action to address any violations. This intervention may be through either counseling or disciplinary action.

**PROCEDURE**

**REPORTING AN INCIDENT**

Anyone may report an incident of perceived violence or threats of violence. It is permissible to place the call anonymously. An individual initiating a good faith complaint under this policy is not subject to discipline, penalty, restraint, or coercion.

To report an incident, call the operator. The operator will transfer the call to the appropriate personnel (i.e., Security, Nursing Supervisor).

*Bodily Harm Situations:* In the event of imminent bodily harm, individuals reporting should seek protective cover and call the pre-established emergency number as soon as possible.

*Confidentiality:* Persons accepting calls and/or investigating allegations are responsible for maintaining confidentiality.

**INVESTIGATION**

Security investigates all reported incidences in cooperation with Human Resources, Risk Management, and Administration. If criminal activity is involved, the investigation will be turned over to the Houston Police Department.

**DETERMINATION AND PENALTIES**

After determining that violent behavior has occurred, Security recommends appropriate action to management. Any individual, who knowingly makes false accusations, fails to report violations of this policy, or who fails to cooperate with an investigation, is in violation of the policy and is also subject to disciplinary action.

**MEDICAL MANAGEMENT**

Employees, who are victims of violence, will be provided with medical and emotional treatment. Employees who are abused by patients, visitors, clients or other, may experience long and short-term psychological trauma, post-traumatic stress, anger, anxiety, irritability, depression, shock, disbelief, self-blame, fear of returning to work, disturbed sleep patterns, headaches and changes in relationships with family and coworkers.

Employees, who have been the victims of violence will receive immediate physical evaluations, be removed from the worksite and treated for acute injuries. Additionally, referrals shall be made for appropriate evaluation, treatment, counseling and assistance both at the time of the incident and for any follow-up treatment necessary.

**RECORD KEEPING**

Record keeping should be used to provide information for analysis, evaluation of methods of control, severity determinations, identifying training needs and overall program evaluations.

Record keeping includes the following:

* Entry of injury on the OSHA Injury and Illness Log. Injuries that must be recorded include the following:
  + - Loss of consciousness
    - Restriction of work or motions
    - Transfer to another job or termination of employment
    - Medical treatment beyond first aid.
      * All incidents of abuse, verbal attacks or aggressive behavior;
      * Recording and communicating mechanism so that all staff that may provide care for an escalating or potentially aggressive, abusive or violent patient will be aware of the patient’s status and of any problems experienced in the past.

**APPROVED:**

**DATE:**