

Policy Name: Safe Workplace	
Policy Owner: SVP, Chief Human Resources Officer	Effective Date: 07/02/2013
Approved By: System Leadership Council	Last Reviewed Date: 07/02/2013
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1.0 Scope:

1.1 Applicable Entities:

This policy applies to Texas Health Resources and its member entities and excludes the Texas Health joint venture entities.

1.2 Applicable Departments:

This policy applies to all Texas Health departments.

2.0 Purpose:

2.1 To maintain an environment which is safe and free from violence, threats, and harassing behaviors for employees, patients, visitors, physicians, volunteers and all who interact in person or virtually with Texas Health. Texas Health complies with applicable federal, state and municipal laws, regulations and guidelines regarding workplace safety, Infection Prevention, and Workplace Violence prevention issues.

3.0 Policy Statement(s):

3.1 Texas Health is committed to provide a clean and safe environment in which all of our people can work and thrive. It is the responsibility of all of us to take whatever reasonable measures are necessary for accident and fire prevention and to protect the health, safety and well-being of employees, volunteers, patients, visitors and all who interact in person or virtually with Texas Health. This responsibility includes properly maintaining equipment in good working condition, taking proper safety precautions and complying with guidelines for safe working conditions, mandatory safety training and guidelines for healthcare worker fatigue management.

4.0 Policy Guidance:

4.1 Manager Responsibilities for a Safe Workplace

4.1.1 Managers are responsible for:

- a. Supervising that employees participate in appropriate health and safety training and holding employees accountable for compliance.

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- b. Monitoring that health and safety procedures and working practices are being followed and continually striving to make progressive improvements in health and safety.
- c. Promoting awareness of safe workplace issues throughout their department so that all employees are familiar with this policy, attend mandatory safe workplace trainings, and comply with guidelines for healthcare worker fatigue and safe working conditions.
- d. Monitoring safety rules and guidelines to be followed by employees and maintaining a good level of housekeeping.
- e. Supervising employees to wear necessary personal protective equipment and clothing to be worn as instructed.
- f. Taking appropriate action with regard to all reported defects and complaints related to a safe workplace and are reported within 24 hours. Managers will take appropriate preventive measures and appropriate follow-up measures to provide a safe workplace.

4.1.2 Managers are expected to take all suspicions and threats of violence in the workplace seriously.

- a. Managers should monitor the work environment for threatening behaviors or changes in behaviors of employees, patients, visitors, etc. and respond to potential threats and escalating situations immediately.
- b. Managers must immediately elevate suspicions or knowledge of a current or potentially threatening situation to Human Resources, Security, Employee Health Services, or to the next management level.
- c. Managers will assist with threat assessments, investigations and post incident actions and evaluations.
- d. All reports of violence or threats of violence will be managed in a confidential manner, with information released only on a need-to-know basis. Retaliation or harassment against any employee who, in good faith, reports threatening, disruptive or violent behavior is prohibited.
- e. Information about an employee will only be given with the employee's consent unless other employees, visitors, or patients

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may be endangered by withholding pertinent information that could be provided by the affected employee. Texas Health will honor all civil protection court orders.

- 4.1.3 Managers should take necessary steps to avoid Healthcare Worker Fatigue and to recognize and manage the potential for negative consequences of sleep deprivation and sustained work hours on patient outcomes and employee well-being.
 - a. Except in emergency situations, direct patient caregivers should not work in direct patient care assignments more than 16 consecutive hours in a 24 hour period, not more than 60 hours in a consecutive seven day period, not more than 100 hours in a consecutive 14 day period and not be scheduled for more than three consecutive 12 hour shifts. Working outside of these parameters requires director level approval.
 - b. Consideration will be given for additional time between shifts for direct patient care givers working extended shifts, extra shifts or lengthy periods of on-call and/call-back.
 - c. The number of on-call shifts assigned during a seven day period should reflect the above guidelines as to the number of work hours and appropriate recuperation period.
- 4.2 Employees (including Managers) Responsibilities for a Safe Workplace
 - 4.2.1 Employees are responsible to do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves, their fellow employees, patients and all others affected by their actions or behaviors at work.
 - 4.2.2 Employees are expected to make safety and accident prevention a critical part of their job and are required to use personal protective equipment. Employees should abide by safety rules, follow instructions and procedures designed to promote safety, and, if possible, remove any known hazards. Workplace safety hazards that cannot be easily corrected should be reported to the employee's manager.
 - 4.2.3 Employees are responsible for promptly reporting workplace accidents, unsafe conditions and workplace violence to their manager or Employee Health Services, Human Resources or Security. There is no retaliation for reporting accidents, injuries or unsafe conditions. Employees are expected to participate in safe workplace investigations and safe workplace process improvements.

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- 4.2.4 Employees are required to report a work-related injury or illness immediately to their manager as soon as possible or within 24 hours. If the injury or illness occurs on the weekend or holiday, then the employee should still report the injury or illness to their manager and return to Employee Health Services on the next weekday or next non-holiday weekend.
- a. The employee must report to entity Employee Health Services or designee (when Employee Health Services is not available) for an occupational injury or illness assessment and post-accident drug/alcohol screen as soon as possible and within 24 hours. (Drug/alcohol screen is not required for needlesticks or other exposures).
 - b. The employee's manager is responsible for conducting an investigation surrounding the injury or illness and completing a Manager Review form. Investigations and incident reviews are to be conducted in a manner that incorporates Safe Choices and the Texas Health Promise.
 - c. Employees who miss work due to a workplace injury or illness must report to Employee Health Services for a return to work assessment prior to returning to work.
 - d. Transitional Duty may be available to any employee who sustains a work related injury or illness and whose current treating physician has provided written documentation of physical restrictions or limitations which prohibit the employee from performing the essential functions of his/her job.
 - e. An employee who reports a work-related injury or illness or who files a workers' compensation claim will not be subject to retaliation by Texas Health.
- 4.2.5 New employees will receive safety program and procedure information in their department orientation. Each employee is responsible for complying with Texas Health and department safety procedures and to participate in all required Employee Safety Training and in-service programs.
- 4.2.6 Employees are expected to make safe lifting, handling, and movement of patients and materials a critical part of their job.
- a. Employees are expected to assess all Lifting, Handling, and/or Movement Tasks prior to initiation of the task.

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- b. Employees are expected to seek assistance and develop a plan of action in situations in which the patient or employee may be exposed to a risk of injury.
- c. Employees are expected to follow safety procedures and to use proper techniques, mechanical lifting devices, and other approved equipment/aids, in accordance with instructions and training, during the performance of tasks.
- d. Employees are required to attend ongoing department training and in-service programs on safe lifting, handling, and movement of patients and/or materials.
- e. Employees in Lift Risk Departments must complete annual competency training in lifting, handling, and movement techniques and equipment.
- f. An employee who fails to complete the required safe lifting, handling and/or movement training will be subject to progressive corrective action up to and including termination of employment.
- g. In the event of a refusal to lift, initiated by the employee or patient, a Safety Action Learning Tool (SALT) must be completed.

4.2.7 Employees are expected to take personal responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others in the workplace. Violence in the Workplace will not be tolerated. Employees must evaluate each situation for potential violence. If there are signals that may be associated with threatening or imminent violence, the employee is responsible for seeking assistance and immediately reporting the incident to their manager, Employee Health Services, Human Resources, and/or Security immediately.

- a. Reportable incidents include, but are not limited to any sexual misconduct, violent, disruptive, harassing, threatening, or retaliatory behavior or actions be it verbal, visual, written, electronic, or printed, or any other behavior that causes others to feel unsafe.
- b. Sources of Workplace Violence may include:
 - 1) Individuals who do not have a connection to the workplace, including visitors, vendors/suppliers, sales representatives, etc.

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- 2) Patients, both violent and/or disoriented.
 - 3) Members of the workforce including co-workers, medical staff, volunteers, students, etc.
 - 4) Family members or any other another individual who has a relationship or connection with the workforce.
- c. Any employee who threatens, harasses, or abuses an individual in or from the workplace using any resources such as work time, inter-office mail, personal cellular telephones, work electronic equipment including telephones, internet social networking sites, FAX machines or email may be subject to corrective action.
 - d. Employees who have concerns that a co-worker may be a victim of Personal Violence or a potential Workplace Violence victim, should report any threats or violence that he/she witnesses or becomes aware of to the manager, Human Resources, Employee Health Services, or Security.
 - e. Employees who are victims of Personal Violence should work with the manager, Human Resources, entity Security, and/or a local Personal Violence intervention program representative to develop a Personal Safety Plan. Managers should be notified immediately of the possible need for employee absences due to Personal Violence. Leave options and possible alternate work arrangements, as well as plans to return to work will be discussed as appropriate.
 - f. Employees who are perpetrators of Personal Violence are strongly encouraged to contact the Texas Health Employee Assistance Program (EAP) where consultation and information regarding counseling and certified treatment resources are available.
- 4.2.8 All employees who drive vehicles while conducting Texas Health business must maintain a valid driver's license, adhere to license restrictions, and comply with state and federal laws in accordance with the type of vehicle authorized to drive by the state issuing the driver's license.
- a. It is the responsibility of employees who drive personal vehicles while conducting Texas Health business to maintain minimum liability limits as required by the State of Texas.

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- b. Employees involved in an accident while driving a personal car on Texas Health business must follow accident reporting instructions of the personal automobile insurance carrier.
 - 1) Texas Health will not provide reimbursement for accident related repairs, whether these costs result from the employee's own acts or acts of others.
 - 2) Employees who are injured as the result of driving a personal car on Texas Health business must cleared through Employee Health Services prior to returning to work.
- c. Employees authorized to drive Texas Health owned or leased vehicles must maintain a valid driver's license and adhere to license restrictions, state, and federal laws in accordance with the type of vehicle the employee is authorized to drive by the State of Texas.
 - 1) Employees authorized to drive Texas Health owned or leased vehicles must report any moving violations including temporary or permanent revocations or loss of driver's license to their manager or Texas Health Insurance Services immediately.
 - 2) Company vehicles may not be used for personal use, unless it is assigned on a permanent basis or business use not related to the operations of Texas Health.
 - 3) Employees involved in an accident while driving a Texas Health owned or leased vehicle must follow the accident reporting procedures of the Texas Health Insurance Services department.

4.2.9 Employees are expected to have personal strategies and preventative measures in place in order to maintain alertness and an acceptable level of work performance. Measures include practicing good Sleep Hygiene, preventing accumulative sleep loss, limiting outside work with other employers, recognizing and acting upon sleep deprivation in themselves or coworkers and taking responsibility to combat on the job fatigue. Off duty periods should be inclusive of an uninterrupted sleep period and a break from continuous professional responsibility of not less than eight hours.

4.3 Organizational Responsibilities for a Safe Workplace

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- 4.3.1 Integrated Disability Management (IDM) department will provide a quarterly occupational injury report to each entity Human Resources and Employee Health Services.
- 4.3.2 Each entity will appoint an interdisciplinary team that will meet regularly to review the occupational injury reports and related data, perform safety audits, conduct risk assessments, and coordinate job demands analysis.
 - a. The entity interdisciplinary team may include representatives from Employee Health Services, Physical/Occupational Therapy, Safety Committee, Education, department director/manager, Environment of Care, Risk Management, and Human Resources.
 - b. The team will conduct Incident Review meetings for high cost occupational injury/illness claims or for multiple claims submitted by a single individual.
 - c. The team will recommend ways to reduce or control the identified risks, monitor implementation of any changes, and evaluate the impact of the changes on risk or safety hazards.
- 4.3.3 Each entity will provide a patient and material lifting, handling, and movement program to promote safe working conditions that incorporates Patient Handling Aids, Mechanical Lifting Equipment and other safety equipment, as well as proper safety procedures and training for appropriate use of safety equipment and safe Manual Lifting practices.
 - a. Each entity will identify an interdisciplinary team to conduct risk assessment of each work area, identify Lift Risk Departments, and recommend ways to reduce or control those risks when lifting, handling or movement of patients or materials is involved.
 - b. The entity interdisciplinary team may include representatives from Employee Health Services, Physical/Occupational Therapy, Safety Committee, Education, department director/manager, and Human Resources.
 - c. The Safe Patient Lifting and Handling program will be a collaborative process with clinical, nonclinical, and support departments.
 - d. Each entity will conduct workplace audits of identified Lift Risk Departments based on assessments as well as other areas of risk of injury when lifting, handling or movement of patients or materials is involved.

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e. Construction and/or remodeling design plans will take into consideration ergonomic design and also the feasibility of incorporating patient or material handling equipment or the physical space and construction of design needed to incorporate that equipment at a later date.

4.3.4 Training and in-service programs will be provided by each entity in the identification, assessment, and control of injury risks to patients and employees during patient or material lifting, handling, and movement. Employees are responsible for participating in all required training.

a. During on boarding, employees will complete safe lifting and handling training appropriate for their department and job physical demands, including training for the use of safe lifting and handling equipment and other aids.

4.3.5 In compliance with the Texas Health and Safety Code Safe Lifting, Handling and Movement Practices requirements, an annual report will be provided to each entity's Board of Trustees which will include the injuries related to patient handling and/or movement. This will be reported in conjunction with the activities related to the identification, assessment and development of strategies to control risk of injury to patients and employees associated with lifting, transferring, reposition, or movement of patients.

4.3.6 Each Texas Health entity will provide a Workplace Violence prevention and response program.

a. Each entity will identify an interdisciplinary Threat Management Team.

b. The Threat Management Team may include representatives from Security, Employee Health Services, Human Resources, Nursing, and Security/Safety. Additional resources, as appropriate for the situation, may include Chaplain, Legal Services, Risk Management, Social Services, Texas Health Employee Safety Specialist, Texas Health Employee Assistance Program (EAP) representative, and Communications.

c. Each Texas Health entity will conduct annual Workplace Violence hazard assessments and develop action plans designed to reduce or eliminate identified security hazards.

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- d. The entity Environment of Care committee will provide a quarterly status report to the system Environment of Care council on the status of the action plan as well as a summary of all threat assessments, violent incidents, and post-incident evaluations.
- e. Texas Health will provide available support and assistance to employees who are victims of Personal Violence. Managers of Texas Health will participate in Personal Violence training as provided. Texas Health will attempt to maintain, publish, and post information about Personal Violence in locations that protect the privacy of those seeking the information.

4.3.7 Company Vehicles safety – employees who drive company vehicles must have a current Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) from the State of Texas that is approved by the Texas Health Insurance Services Department.

- a. Texas Health Insurance Services maintains a Schedule (a list) naming all employees approved to drive Texas Health owned or leased vehicles and their MVR results.
- b. The manager must notify the Texas Health Insurance Services department to add or remove any potential drivers of Texas Health vehicles from the Schedule of Texas Health approved drivers.
- c. Texas Health Insurance Services requires a signed authorization from the employee to request an MVR. The authorization requires the employee's full name, driver's license number, and date of birth. Texas Health Insurance Services will request an MVR report annually and will provide to managers and directors the names of any drivers who receive unsatisfactory MVR report and must be removed from the schedule.
- d. Only vehicles owned or leased by Texas Health should be used by approved drivers to transport employees to work during inclement weather. Employees should not be directed to use personal vehicles to transport other employees during inclement weather.

5.0 Definitions:

- 5.1 Disruptive Behavior - Conduct by a healthcare professional or other member of the workforce that intimidates others working in the organization.
- 5.2 Employee Safety Training – A program that includes an orientation process for new employees with job safety procedures and incident/hazard reporting,

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ongoing safety education and specialized training for specific job hazards, safety problems or exposures.

- 5.3 Fatigue – A feeling of weariness or lack of energy resulting in a decrease in a person’s ability to be attentive or to mentally focus.
- 5.4 Hazardous Work Conditions – The potential for harm or damage to people, property, or the work environment. Hazards are classified as physical, chemical, biological, psychological or mechanical.
- 5.5 Incident Review - A methodology for investigation and root cause analysis on work-related injuries and illnesses designed to improve workplace safety and to comply with the THR Promise and Safe Choices.
- 5.6 Infection Prevention – The prevention and control of nosocomial infections of patients in hospitals and other health facilities.
- 5.7 Lift Risk Departments – Those with day-to-day operations that involve frequent Lifting, Handling, and Movement Tasks that lead to Hazardous Work Conditions. Such departments may include material handling and patient care areas with a high proportion of dependent patients.
- 5.8 Lifting, Handling and Movement Tasks – Patient or material related tasks that pose a high risk of musculoskeletal injury for the staff performing the tasks. These include but are not limited to transferring, lifting, repositioning, pushing, pulling and/or carrying tasks, bending or stooping, tasks with long durations, bathing patients, making occupied beds, dressing patients, and turning patients in bed.
- 5.9 Manual Lifting – Lifting, transferring, repositioning and moving patients or materials using the employee’s body strength without the use of lifting equipment or aids.
- 5.10 Mechanical Lifting Equipment – Equipment used to lift, transfer, reposition and move patients or materials.
- 5.11 Patient Handling Aids – Equipment used to assist in the lift or transfer process of patients. Examples include gait belts with handles, stand assist aids, sliding boards, and surface friction-reducing devices.
- 5.12 Personal Safety Plan – Strategies designed to increase the victim’s level of safety. The areas covered include safety during an explosive incident, on the job and in public, in the home, when he/she has a protective order and has left the abuser.

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- 5.13 Personal Violence (domestic violence, child abuse, and /or elder abuse) – An act or acts of assaultive and coercive behavior, including physical, verbal, sexual, and/or psychological attacks, as well as isolation and economic coercion, intended to establish and maintain control over the victim.
- 5.14 Sleep Hygiene – Behavior or habits that affect the length and quality of sleep and full alertness when awake.
- 5.15 Threat Management Team (TMT) - An entity based Workplace Violence threat assessment and response team.
- 5.16 Workplace Violence – An act or acts of aggressive or disruptive behavior in the workplace that may include verbal or physical harm or the threat of physical harm or, harassment, and /or intimidation.

6.0 Responsible Parties:

6.1 Entity Human Resources Officer

6.1.1 Implementation and oversight of the policy is the responsibility of the Entity Human Resources Officer at the entity level.

6.2 Employees

6.2.1 It is the responsibility of all employees to comply with this policy.

7.0 External References:

Not Applicable

8.0 Related Documentation and/or Attachments:

- 8.1 Code of Business Ethics
- 8.2 [Confidentiality Policy - THR System Policy](#)
- 8.3 [Drug Free Workplace Policy - THR System Policy](#)
- 8.4 Emergency Preparedness/Disaster Manual
- 8.5 Employee Health Policies
- 8.6 [Fitness for Duty Policy - THR System Policy](#)
- 8.7 [Harassment-Free Workplace Policy - THR System Policy](#)
- 8.8 Hazardous Material Manual

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- 8.9 Infection Control Policies
- 8.10 [Leave of Absence Policy - THR System Policy](#)
- 8.11 OSHA Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social
- 8.12 [Personal Conduct Policy - THR System Policy](#)
- 8.13 [Progressive Corrective Action Policy - THR System Policy](#)
- 8.14 [Property Search Policy - THR System Policy](#)
- 8.15 [Return to Work Policy - THR System Policy](#)
- 8.16 Texas Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers Handbook
- 8.17 Texas Health and Safety Code Safe Lifting, Handling and Movement Practices Act (SB 1525)
- 8.18 Texas Transportation Code Section 521 & 522

9.0 Required Statements:

Not Applicable