

Workplace violence and aggression policy

Purpose

Ahpra is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. We have a shared legal obligation to eliminate or minimise the risk of workplace violence and aggression, which includes between workers, practitioners, or members of the public with whom our workers are engaging, or where involving family members.

The commitment to provide a safe workplace is clearly stated in our *Code of conduct* and is consistent both with our corporate values and our legal obligations under work health and safety and industrial legislation.

The purpose of this policy is to make those covered by this policy aware of:

- what decisions, behaviours and actions constitute workplace violence and aggression, and
- the related policies and procedures Ahpra has in place to manage workplace disclosures and complaints related to workplace violence and aggression.

Scope

This policy applies to all Ahpra workers, defined in accordance with [Definitions – people policies and procedures PC002](#) as a person who carries out work with Ahpra including: the Ahpra Board, National Executive, employees, contractors, agency workers, volunteers, interns, work experience staff and statutory employees (board, committee, and panel members).

This policy applies to all workers at any time when they are engaging in work duties, interacting with others in the course of working, and/or when they are at the workplace (including when engaging with others using technology such as video meetings, working remotely, and/or when at social or off-site events in connection with their work). The protections under this policy extend to prospective workers at Ahpra, and members of the public or a registered health practitioner or student in their dealings with Ahpra.

Domestic or family violence is managed outside the Respect@Ahpra framework unless it occurs within the workplace or during work activities. Workers experiencing domestic or family violence, are encouraged to seek support and advice from their manager or People and Culture Business Partner.

Policy

Ahpra is committed to eliminating or minimising the risk of workplace violence and aggression between workers, and between workers and other people, including visitors, healthcare practitioners and family members or spouses, within the workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable. Ahpra will achieve this through a risk management approach involving:

- identifying the workplace violence and aggression hazards
- assessing the associated risks
- implementing control measures to eliminate or minimise risks, and
- regularly reviewing control measures to ensure they remain effective.

We will do this in consultation with workers and with the support of the national and local (state and territory) Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committees.

1. Responsibilities

- 1.1 The Respect@Ahpra framework, in conjunction with Ahpra's *Health, safety and wellbeing policy*, defines key roles and responsibilities related to creating and maintaining a healthy and safe work environment.

2. Guiding principles

- 2.1 Ahpra is committed to taking reasonable steps to reduce the risk of violence and aggression by:
 - 2.1.2 promoting an organisational culture that is inclusive of all and does not tolerate workplace violence or aggression in any form
 - 2.1.3 promoting a shared responsibility to combat workplace violence and aggression and supporting active bystanders to speak up
 - 2.1.4 managing all complaints of workplace violence and aggression sensitively and fairly, adopting a trauma-informed and culturally safe approach that actively listens to the needs of the complainant
 - 2.1.5 responding where there is an imminent threat to the safety of a worker, by contacting the police immediately
 - 2.1.6 ensuring that any incidents involving workplace violence and aggression are reported and investigated, to prevent recurrence and improve health and safety systems, and
 - 2.1.7 providing workers with adequate training and instruction to manage the risk of workplace violence and aggression in line with their role and the risks identified.

3. Responding to workplace violence and aggression

- 3.1 Workplace violence and aggression is any incident where a person is abused, threatened or assaulted at the workplace or while they are working (see definitions section for further information).
- 3.2 Workplace violence and aggression will be managed through appropriate strategies including, but not limited to:
 - physical and personal security e.g. through the design of the working environment and the provision of duress alarms
 - good work design
 - online security
 - flexible work arrangements, and
 - ensuring that staff are equipped with the appropriate skills, knowledge, and support for their role.

Self-management

- 3.3 If you are experiencing or witnessing workplace violence or aggression, only take action which may help resolve the issue if you feel comfortable and safe to do so.
- 3.4 Self-management is never appropriate if it is unsafe or against your wishes.

Reporting to a manager or People and Culture Business Partner

- 3.5 If you find yourself in an unsafe situation, remove yourself as quickly as possible and bring the matter to the attention of a manager or People and Culture Business Partner immediately.
- 3.6 Utilise the duress alarms provided or call triple zero if the circumstances require this action.

Guidance on how to make a report or complaint

- 3.7 Further guidance on how to make a report or complaint, including in relation to workplace violence and aggression, is found in the Workplace complaints and reporting procedure.

4. Lodging a workplace violence and aggression incident report

- 4.1 A workplace violence and aggression incident, hazard or near-miss can be lodged using the Health, safety and incident management system, [Log It](#).
- 4.2 If the incident, injury or hazard report is related to a sensitive matter and the worker would not like this shared with their manager, they can choose to report as a sensitive incident and they will be contacted directly by a member of the HSW team instead.
- 4.3 Where appropriate, an alternative person such as a manager/colleague, People and Culture Business Partner or HSW team member may report an incident on behalf of a worker.

5. Support

- 5.1 Immediately following an incident, it is important to seek support. In addition to the support of your manager/People and Culture Business Partner, you may seek further support from:
 - 5.1.1 Ahpra's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is a confidential counselling, coaching and wellbeing service that is available to all employees and their immediate family members. Alternatively, the I-CARE program (as part of Ahpra's EAP offering) provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with access to qualified, specialist, counselling services provided by First Nations Peoples.
 - 5.1.2 Ahpra's network of specially trained Respect Officers, who can assist with initial advice and guidance to navigate the Respect@Ahpra framework, policies, and procedures.
 - 5.1.3 Additional specialist support available externally. Contact numbers for these services can be found at Appendix A.

6. Non-compliance

- 6.1 Non-compliance with this policy will be managed in accordance with Ahpra's *Code of conduct*, *Code of conduct for board and committee members*, and other relevant policies listed in the related documents section of this policy.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Workplace violence and aggression	<p>Workplace violence and aggression can be any incident where a person is abused, threatened or assaulted at the workplace or while they are carrying out work. For example, violence or aggression may happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• at a worker's usual workplace• where a worker is working remotely, including if the person's workplace is their home• in a place where the worker is working at a different location (such as a client's home), or• when a worker is taking part in a work-related activity (such as a work-related corporate event or if you host a work-related social activity like a Christmas party). <p>Workplace violence and aggression covers a broad range of actions and behaviour that can cause significant short- and long-term physical and/or psychological harm, making it a risk to health and safety. This harm can affect both the person it is directed at and anyone witnessing it, and may lead to further impacts for the workers, their family, and their wider community.</p> <p>Workplace violence and aggression can come from a range of sources including other workers, managers, practitioners, or members of the public, and can be:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical or psychological • in person, verbal, written or online • one off or repeated, and • low-level behaviour such as name-calling through to more serious (including potentially criminal) acts like physical or sexual assault. <p>Workers may also experience violence and aggression when they are not at work from risks which arise at the workplace. For example, if a worker receives abusive text messages after work from a colleague or client.</p>
Reasonably practicable	<p>Something that is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the likelihood of the hazard or risk concerned occurring • the degree of harm that might/would result from the hazard or the risk if it eventuated • what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know about the hazard or risk, and about the ways to eliminate or minimise/reduce the risk • the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise/reduce the risk • after assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with these, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.
Visitor	A person who is not a worker attending an Ahpra workplace for any purpose.
Worker	A person who carries out work for Ahpra, including: National Executive, employees, contractors and agency staff, volunteers, interns, work experience staff and statutory appointees (board, committee and panel members).
Workplace	Any place where work is carried out for Ahpra, and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. This includes an Ahpra-controlled office, field-work locations and the work-from-home environment.

Related documents

- Ahpra Enterprise Agreement
- [PC011 - Code of conduct](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- Respect@Ahpra framework
- Anti-discrimination and equal opportunity policy
- Workplace bullying and harassment policy
- Workplace sexual, sex and gender-based harassment policy
- Workplace complaints and reporting procedure
- [HSW014 – Health, safety, and wellbeing policy](#)
- Health and safety policy
- [HSW010 - HSW responsibilities guideline](#)
- [Information and IT acceptable use policy – Ahpra staff – IS002](#)
- [Information and IT acceptable use policy – board and committee members IS010](#)
- Grievance policy
- Discipline policy
- [Flexible working policy PC012](#)
- [Ahpra office security policy](#)
- Duress alarm procedure

Relevant legislation

- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)*
- *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (Tas)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)*
- www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/hazards/workplace-violence-and-aggression
- [Preventing workplace violence and aggression – national guidance material Jan 2021](#)

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Appendix A – List of external supports

This is a list of organisations that can help you seek advice and support.

Name	Contact information
Australia-wide	
Police (in an emergency)	000
OurWatch	www.ourwatch.org.au/
Lifeline	Website: www.lifeline.org.au/ Phone: 13 11 14
Beyond Blue	Website: www.beyondblue.org.au/ Phone: 1300 224 636
ReachOut	https://au.reachout.com/
1800 Respect	1800 737 732
Australian Capital Territory	
WorkSafe ACT	02 6207 3000
New South Wales	
WorkSafe NSW	02 6207 3000
Northern Territory	
NT WorkSafe	1800 019 115
Queensland	
WorkSafe Queensland	1300 362 128
South Australia	
Working Women's Centre SA	Website: https://wwcsa.org.au Phone: (08) 8410 6499 or 1800 652 697
SafeWork SA	1300 365 255
Tasmania	
WorkSafe Tas	1300 365 255
Victoria	
WorkSafe Victoria	1800 136 089
Western Australia	
WorkSafe WA	1300 307 877