Workplace Violence: Basic Reporting Requirements

Note: This is the first in a series of HR Bulletins describing UC Davis Health’s efforts to protect employees from violence in the workplace.

Recent legislation established new requirements pertaining to Workplace Violence (WPV) occurring in health care facilities throughout California. On July 1, 2017, UC Davis Health began reporting certain WPV acts to Cal/OSHA as required by the new law. All staff should become aware of the new regulation and resulting procedural changes at UCDH.

What is Workplace Violence?
Simply put, “Workplace Violence” is any act of violence or threat of violence against an employee that occurs at the work site, including the threat or use of physical force, regardless of whether the employee is injured.

Beyond the general definition, there are several types of WPV. The most frequent occurrences at UC Davis Health are patient-on-staff violence and visitor-on-staff violence.

Regardless of who commits an act of violence against staff, all WPV events must be reported to the Workplace Violence Prevention Unit using the RL Solutions (RLS) reporting system.

Who is affected?
The regulation applies to all UC Davis Health facilities and employees, including those who work at clinics, home health and hospice, and other off-campus locations.

Employee responsibilities
Whenever a WPV event occurs, the affected employee must submit a report of the incident using the “Safety/Security/Workplace Violence” icon in the RLS incident reporting system (shown here).

Completing a report
The Submission Form will prompt the employee to provide specific details of the WPV event. When completing the report, please provide as much information and detail as possible, especially in the open narrative portion of the Event Description section.
It is important to be articulate and clear, including a full description of any actions by and remarks made by the person who committed the violence. For example, “PT stated ‘I’ll hit you,’ and then struck the left side of my face with his right fist.”

It is also important to provide a description of any injuries the employee receives, including their severity and any medical attention that was provided.

Finally, please describe whether security or police responded and, if known, any related actions that followed.

After a report is made
Workplace violence reports submitted in RLS are transmitted immediately to the UC Davis Health Workplace Violence Prevention Unit and are promptly examined by a WPV Investigator, day or night. By law, some WPV incidents must be reported to Cal/OSHA within 24 to 72 hours, depending on the nature and severity of the event. Others may not be reportable at all.

Members of the WPV Prevention Unit will assess each WPV event reported in RLS and determine which are to be reported to Cal/OSHA. Employees, supervisors, and managers need not concern themselves with Cal/OSHA reporting because this is a specific function of the WPV Prevention Unit.

Unsure if an RLS report is required?
There is no harm in submitting an RLS incident report to the WPV Prevention Unit if you aren’t sure. When in doubt, submit a report. A WPV Investigator can always reclassify it upon review, if necessary.

What else does the regulation cover?
Among its many mandates, the regulation requires that all health care facilities adopt a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan, maintain a Violent Incident Log, and provide specialized training to staff. Some of these topics will be addressed more thoroughly in future HR Bulletins.

What if I have questions?
Anyone with questions about reporting requirements and other WPV issues are encouraged to contact the WPV Prevention Unit, day or night, at (916) 734-2826, or by email at hs-reportviolence@ucdavis.edu.

You may also contact members of the WPV Prevention Unit directly:

Geoff Britton, WPV Administrator  (916) 734-2826  gbritton@ucdavis.edu
Mark Helms, Investigator  (916) 734-3242  mahelms@ucdavis.edu
Michael Lillie, Investigator  (916) 734-7711  mlillie@ucdavis.edu