



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: REPORTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE TO POLICE

For United Nurses of Alberta Employees working at Alberta Health Services, Assisted Living Alberta, Cancer Care Alberta, Emergency Health Services, Give Life Alberta, Primary Care Alberta, and Recovery Alberta.



1 Should I report workplace violence to police?

While not legally required, you are encouraged to report workplace violence to police. It is your legal right to do so. Consistent reporting helps promote accountability and discourages violence against healthcare workers. Even if you don't want to pursue charges, still consider reporting to police to help build a record and support data-gathering efforts.

You are required to report workplace violence to your employer (e.g., through the MySafetyNet system or its equivalent). Once they are aware of an incident, the employer needs to take steps to prevent future incidents and injuries and to support you after the incident.

If you are unsure about whether to report to police, you can seek guidance from your UNA Labour Relations Officer and/or Occupational Health and Safety Advisor or from the Director of AHS' Corporate Investigations Unit by emailing Darren.Leggatt@ahs.ca or by calling 403-955-4710 (email is preferred).



2 What types of workplace violence can be reported to police?

Police should investigate any potential criminal offence. Common criminal offences that healthcare workers may encounter include assault (s. 266 of the *Criminal Code*), intimidation impeding health services (s. 423.2), criminal harassment/uttering threats (s. 264), assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm (s. 267), aggravated assault (s. 268), sexual assault (s. 271), and mischief/property damage (s. 430).



3 Am I prohibited from reporting a violent patient to police because of patient confidentiality rules?

No, patient confidentiality does not prevent you from reporting a violent patient to police. As part of its *Reporting Patient Harassment & Violence to Police* (available on Insite), your employer has recognized that "[a]ll workers have the right to report patient-to-worker harassment or violence against them, including aggression from a designated family/support person or visitor to police."





What information should I provide to police?

If reporting to police, provide only the information necessary. Do not consult the patient's chart to access information for the purposes of police reporting. You may need to share information such as the patient's name, the nature of the incident, the location/date/time of the incident, and the last-known location of the individual you are reporting.



How should I contact police?

If anyone is in immediate danger, call 911. If the immediate danger has passed, call your local police non-emergency line.



Should my manager support my decision to report a violent patient or member of the public to police?

Yes. Article 34.11 of the UNA Provincial Agreement states:

*34.11 In the event of an assault on an Employee, (including but not limited to physical, sexual, verbal or psychological) **the Employer shall advise the Employee of their right to report the issue to the police and ensure the Employee is made aware of available supports.***

If your manager does not inform you of your right to report to police or is otherwise unsupportive, please inform your UNA Labour Relations Officer and/or Occupational Health and Safety Advisor.



What if law enforcement declines to investigate or seek charges?

While police investigate potential crimes, the decision to lay a charge is made by a Crown Prosecutor. If a police officer refuses to investigate or seek charges, you are entitled to ask why and to advocate respectfully for an investigation and charges. If the officer continues to decline, request the officer's name, badge number, and contact information for follow-up. If the officer has assigned a case number, request that as well.

Please provide the information you have gathered to AHS' Corporate Investigations Unit by emailing Darren.Leggatt@ahs.ca or by calling 403-955-4710 (email is preferred). AHS has established relationships with law enforcement and can advocate for an investigation/charge. It's best to clarify at the time of reporting whether the officer plans to investigate or is declining to do so.



What if mental illness, drug use, etc. is the justification used to decline charging the offender?

You have the right to report violence to police, even if a violent patient has a mental illness (including dementia or a "not criminally responsible" status) and/or was under the influence of drugs at the time of the violence. The decision to lay a charge is made by a Crown Prosecutor, not by a person reporting or by a police officer.



Quick Checklist Reporting to Police



IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER (E.G., ONGOING ASSAULT):

- ☐ Remove yourself from the danger, if possible.
- ☐ Call 911 and request police (and emergency health services if needed).
- ☐ Receive medical treatment if needed.
- ☐ Explain the incident to police who report to the site.
 - › You can provide the patient's name.
 - › Explain what happened without revealing the patient's health information (e.g., diagnosis/treatment).
 - › Do not consult the patient's chart for the purposes of reporting or provide copies of any patient healthcare documents to police at this time.
- ☐ Report incident and police reporting to your employer in writing (e.g., through the MySafetyNet system).
- ☐ Follow up with Protective Services' CIU and UNA with concerns or for further support.

TO REPORT POTENTIALLY CRIMINAL INCIDENTS THAT DO NOT PRESENT AN IMMEDIATE DANGER:

- ☐ Call your local police non-emergency phone line (see Appendix below).
- ☐ Explain incident to police who report to the site.
 - › You can provide the patient's name.
 - › Explain what happened without revealing the patient's health information (e.g., diagnosis/treatment).
 - › Do not consult the patient's chart for the purposes of reporting or provide copies of any patient healthcare documents to police at this time.
- ☐ Report incident and police reporting to your employer in writing (e.g., through the MySafetyNet system).
- ☐ Follow up with Protective Services' CIU and UNA with concerns or for further support.

APPENDIX:

COMMON POLICE CONTACT INFORMATION

Call 911 if in immediate danger.

Non-emergency police contact information:

Edmonton (EPS)

780-423-4567

Calgary (CPS)

403-266-1234

Red Deer

403-406-2200

Lethbridge (LPS)

403-328-4444

Medicine Hat (MHPS)

403-529-8481

**For other locations, search online for your local
police non-emergency contact information.**

