

Violence in the ED: New Joint Commission Standards for 2022

On January 1, 2022, The Joint Commission (TJC) will start enforcing new **workplace violence prevention requirements** to guide hospitals in developing strong workplace violence prevention programs. ACEP contributed to the development of these new requirements by participating in an expert workgroup and supplying **comments**.

Defining Workplace Violence

TJC has formally defined workplace violence as “an act or threat occurring at the workplace that can include any of the following:

- Verbal, nonverbal, written, or physical aggression
- Threatening, intimidating, harassing, or humiliating words or actions
- Bullying
- Sabotage
- Sexual harassment
- Physical assaults
- Other behaviors of concern involving staff, licensed practitioners, patients, or visitors.”

Need Help?

Concerned about workplace violence protections in your hospital? If so, please [reach out to ACEP](#) to let us know. We can connect you with appropriate resources, and your story can help to inform and enhance ACEP’s advocacy for stronger workplace protections.

Overview of New Standards

- **Workplace Assessment:** Hospitals must **conduct an annual worksite analysis related to their workplace violence prevention program**, and based upon findings, leadership must **take action to mitigate or resolve the workplace violence safety and security risks**.
- **Monitoring:** Hospitals must establish a process(es) for continually monitoring, internally reporting, and investigating workplace hazards, such as **safety and security incidents involving patients, staff, or others within its facilities**, including those related to workplace violence.
- **Education and Training:** Hospitals must provide training, education, and resources to leadership, staff, and licensed practitioners to address prevention, recognition, response, and reporting of workplace violence, including **training in de-escalation, nonphysical intervention skills, physical intervention techniques, and response to emergency incidents**.
- **Response Plans:** Hospital response plans will specify policies and procedures to prevent and respond to workplace violence, processes to report incidents to analyze incidents and trends, and processes for follow-up and support to affected victims and witnesses.

Top Priority For ACEP

Addressing violence in the emergency department (ED) has long been a top advocacy priority for ACEP. An ACEP survey showed that nearly half of emergency physicians have experienced violence in the ED and 80 percent of emergency physicians said that violence in the ED was harming patient care.

- ACEP launched “[No Silence on ED Violence](#)” together with the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) in 2019 to support, empower, and protect those working in EDs by raising awareness of the serious dangers emergency health clinicians face every day, and campaigning for action to ensure a violence-free workplace for emergency physicians and nurses.
- ACEP has participated in an [Action Team](#) sponsored by the National Quality Forum, which identified and [proposed ways](#) to overcome key barriers to appropriately responding to, reporting and preventing future violent incidents in health care settings.
- Congressionally, ACEP has worked closely with Rep. Courtney (D-CT) to develop and advance [H.R. 1195](#), the *Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act*. We continue to advocate for companion legislation to be introduced and advanced in the Senate.
- ACEP is expected to have a representative on a panel that will help guide the development of a new Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard. The panel will begin meeting in early 2022.