

## ***UME Trainee Health and Safety Supplemental Guidelines – Personal Safety and Occupational Hazards***

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***Approved by:*** Undergraduate Medical Education Executive Committee

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### **1. PURPOSE**

This Guideline is to **supplement** the existing documents which cover Personal, Occupational, and Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines for Undergraduate Medical Students. These other guidelines and policies are entitled 1) Protocol for Incidents of Medical Student Workplace Injury and Exposure to Infectious Disease in Clinical Settings , 2) Protocol for UME Students to Report Mistreatment and Other Kinds of Unprofessional Behaviour, 3) Guidelines Regarding Infectious Diseases and Occupational Health for Applicants to and Learners of the Faculty of Medicine Academic Programs, and 4) Respiratory Protection Policy (“mask-fit policy”) and Procedure for University of Toronto Faculty of medicine undergraduate medical students. This Guideline will deal with Personal Safety and Occupational Hazards related to working in the health care environment.

This guideline promotes a safe environment that minimizes the risk of injury or harm at all University of Toronto affiliated teaching sites, provides a protocol to report unsafe or hazardous training conditions, and a mechanism to take corrective action. It identifies the roles and responsibilities the University, the Academies, and Clinical Sites, and Students play in supporting a safe working environment.

### **2. PREAMBLE**

Accreditation Standard MS-30 requires that “a medical education program must have policies that effectively address medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards”. Accreditation Canada standards indicate that member hospitals must have an operational safety and security program for staff and patients. The Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990, (OHSA) outlines minimum standards for health and safety and establishes procedures for dealing with workplace hazards and protection against risks of workplace violence. The University of Toronto Health and Safety Policy (Governing Council October 24, 2011) states that the University is committed to the promotion of the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the University community, to the provision of a safe and healthy work and study environment, and to the prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses.

In the course of their training, undergraduate students may be exposed to risk of personal injury or hazardous agents. The University and teaching sites including hospitals, laboratories and community clinical settings, and medical students are jointly responsible for supporting a culture promoting health and safety and preventing injury and incidents. Although medical students are not employees, when students work in the health care environment, hospital occupational health and safety regulations and protection programs are extended to them. It is expected that undergraduate students will adhere to the relevant health and safety policies and procedures of their training site. Accidents, incidents and environmental exposures occurring during training will be reported and administered according to the reporting policies and procedures of the University, hospital or clinical teaching location.

### **3. SCOPE**

These guidelines pertain to the following items under the categories:

**Personal Safety including:**

- Access to secure lockers and facilities including call rooms;
- Safe travel between call facilities and service location, and to private vehicle or public transportation between workplace and home;
- Safety while working in isolated or remote situations including visiting patients in their homes or after hours;
- Safeguarding of personal information;
- Protection from workplace violence.

**Occupational Hazards including:**

- Hazardous workplace materials as named in the Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Radiation safety, chemical spills, indoor air quality.

**4. PERSONAL SAFETY**

**Responsibility of the Academies, Clinical Sites and Clinical Clerkships:**

- Academies, Clinical Sites, and Clinical Clerkships share in the responsibility that students are adequately oriented to personal safety risks and policies prior to starting on clinical services.
- Medical students are entitled to secure and private call rooms and secure access between call room facilities and service areas.
- Medical students are entitled to personal safety programs normally available to hospital staff which promote safe travel between workplace and private vehicles or public transportation, for travel between workplace and home.
- Clinical Clerkships and Clinical Sites should train students in their ability to assess personal safety risks specific to each rotation or clinical setting.
- Where safety risks exist or are uncertain, students are not expected to see a patient in hospital, clinic or at home, during regular or after hours, without the presence of a supervisor and security personnel (as required).
- Clinical sites must endeavour to safeguard trainees' personal information, other than identifying them by name when communicating with patients, staff and families.
- Medical students should obtain training on prevention, management, and reporting of workplace violence, harassment and intimidation.

**Responsibility of the Student:**

- Students must use all necessary personal protective equipment, precautions and safeguards, including back up from supervisors, when engaging in clinical and/or educational experiences.
- Students must exercise judgment and be aware of alternate options when exposing themselves to workplace risks or during travel to and from the clinical site (i.e., driving a personal vehicle when fatigued).
- Students must use caution when offering personal information to patients, families or staff.
- Students are expected to call patients from a hospital or clinic telephone lines. The use of personal mobile phones for such calls is discouraged; if used, the call blocking feature should be engaged.
- Students must promptly report any safety concerns (e.g. risk of personal safety, fatigue, etc.) to their supervisor.
- Students must participate in training in the prevention and management of workplace violence, intimidation and harassment.

**Reporting Protocol and Procedure for Managing Breaches of Personal Safety:**

- Students who feel their personal safety or security is immediately threatened should remove themselves immediately from the situation in a professional manner and seek urgent assistance from their immediate supervisor, the institution's security services, call "Code White", or 911 where applicable.

- Students identifying a personal safety or security breach must report it to their immediate supervisor, to the Academy Director/ Medical Education Lead, to allow a resolution of the issue at a local level, and to comply with the site reporting requirements, such as completion of an Incident Report Form.
- Students should follow clinical site protocols for the management of workplace violence, intimidation and harassment.
- Students in community-based practices or other non-institutional settings should discuss issues or concerns with the supervising faculty member or community-based coordinator, or bring any safety concerns to the attention of their Academy Director, Clerkship Course Director, Clerkship Director or Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs.
- Efforts will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the complainant where appropriate.
- The Protocol for UME students to report mistreatment and other kinds of unprofessional behaviour outlines reporting mechanisms related to mistreatment by faculty, staff or other learners.
- Students cannot be negatively impacted for refusing to engage in clinical or educational experiences prior to reviewing with supervisors.
- Some risks to personal safety may still remain in the clinical setting, but it is recognized that at times professional responsibility to patients may require engaging in care despite these risks. See University of Toronto Health Sciences Faculties Guidelines for Clinical Sites re: Student Clinical Placement in an Emergency Situation (Appendix 1)
- Pending investigation and resolution of identified concerns: The Clerkship Director and/or Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs (HPSA) have the authority to **remove students** from clinical placements if a risk is seen to be unacceptable.
- If a decision is taken to remove a student, this must be communicated promptly to: the Academy Director/Hospital Medical Education Lead or designate at the training site; the Vice Dean, UMPE.
- If the safety issue raised is not resolved at the local level, it must be reported to the Associate Dean Health Professions Student Affairs, who will investigate and may re-direct the issue to the relevant hospital medical education office or University office for resolution.
- The Associate Dean HPSA will bring the issue to the Academy Director and hospital office responsible for safety and security, and may involve the University Community Safety Office, Faculty of Medicine Health and Safety Office for resolution or further consultation, and will report annually to the Undergraduate Medical Education Executive Committee and the Hospital University Education Committee (HUEC) through the Vice-Dean, UMPE.
- Urgent medical student safety issues will be brought to the attention of the Vice-Dean, UMPE as well as to the relevant Academy Director/hospital VP Education/Hospital Medical Education Lead or as appropriate.
- The Associate Dean HPSA may at any time investigate and act upon health and safety systems issues that come to her/his attention by any means, including internal reviews, student/faculty/staff reporting, or police/security intervention.
- Students in breach of the occupational health policies of their training site are subject to the procedures by that site consistent with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. If attempts to resolve the situation by internal protocols are not successful, it may be brought to the attention of the training site Academy Director/Medical Education Lead.

## 5. OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

Academies, Clinical Sites, and Clinical Clerkships share in the responsibility that students are adequately oriented to workplace hazards and safety policies prior to starting on clinical services.

### **Responsibilities of the Academies, Clinical Clerkships and Clinical Site:**

- The Academies, Clinical Clerkships and Clinical sites must ensure medical students are appropriately oriented to current best practices for workplace safety guidelines.
- Training will be provided in WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System).

- Clerkships must have guidelines to address exposures specific to each training site (e.g. radiation safety, hazardous materials), communicate these to trainees at site-specific orientation sessions, and assess trainees for appropriate understanding prior to involvement in activities which may involve potential exposure to hazardous materials.

#### **Responsibilities of the Student:**

- Students must participate in required safety sessions as determined by the Academy, Clerkship or Clinical Training site.
- Students must complete WHMIS training before working in clinical settings.
- Students must follow all of the occupational health and safety policies and procedures of the training site including, but not limited to, the appropriate use of personal protective equipment.
- Students must agree to report unsafe training conditions as per the protocol outlined below and in accordance with clinical site policies.

#### **Reporting Protocol for Workplace Hazard Exposure or Incident**

- A) During **daytime hours** while working at an affiliated hospital or site associated with an affiliated hospital:
- 1)The student should follow post exposure protocols and must go immediately to the Employee/Occupational Health Office of the institution if there are personal health risks associated with the exposure.
  - 2)The student must complete the incident report form as required by the institution's protocol.
  - 3)The student must report the incident to his/her immediate supervisor.
- B) During **evenings or weekends** or at a training site with no Occupational Health Office:
- 1)The student must follow immediate post exposure protocols and if there are personal health risks associated with the exposure, go immediately to the nearest emergency room and identify him/herself as medical student at the University of Toronto and request to be seen on an urgent basis.
  - 2)The student must report to the available supervisor, comply with the institution's protocol for completion of appropriate incident report.

#### **APPENDIX 1:**

##### **Related Documents:**

Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990

[www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90o01\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm)

A Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, May 2011

[http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pdf/ohsa\\_g.pdf](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pdf/ohsa_g.pdf)

University of Toronto, Health and Safety Policy (Governing Council, 24 October 2011)

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppmar292004.pdf>

<http://www.utoronto.ca/safety.abroad/progmanual/healthsa.pdf>

University of Toronto Health Sciences Faculties Guidelines for Clinical Sites re: Student Clinical Placement in an Emergency Situation

<http://medicine.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/Guidelines%20for%20Clinical%20Sites%20re.pdf>

##### **Resources:**

- 1.Occupational/Employee Health Offices at all University affiliated teaching hospitals
- 2.Academy Office
- 3.UMPE Office
- 4.Office of Health Professions Student Affairs