

Version	Date	Comments / Changes
1.0	February 2010	Initial Alert System - Risk for Aggressive Behaviour Designation, Identification and Review - Policy Released
2.0	February 2022	Title changed to ALERT Process. Document type change from policy to clinical practice guideline, Revised Risk Profile and Care Plan forms plus expanded AVB Descriptors. Added new AVB Checklist and Alert Risk Review process, Removed Aggressive Violence Risk Assessment Form.

1. FOCUS

The focus of the Clinical Practice Guideline is to outline the ALERT process which provides violence prevention guidelines and standardized tools to assist Health Care staff in all patient/client/resident care areas to make decisions on how to identify, communicate, and assess persons in care with the potential for aggressive violent behaviour. This Clinical Practice Guideline applies to Acute Care and Long-Term Care.

Community and outpatient programs may be using different data/electronic systems as described in this guideline. These programs are to utilize their current systems to meet the same objectives for flagging and communicating risk, along with their established methods of assessment and prevention consistent with the Fraser Health [Violence Prevention - Policy](#).

2. BACKGROUND

Work-related violence puts Health Care staff at risk of physical injury and can cause a significant impact to mental health. The outcomes from work-related violence can also impact the quality of patient/client/resident care. The ALERT process meets the legal right of workers to know about hazards in the workplace and procedures available to ensure their safety. It provides Health Care staff with the tools to identify and assess patients/clients/residents for potential violence. Staff can then develop safety procedures in the form of care plans that mitigate risk to prevent work-related violence and ensure quality patient/client/resident care.

3. DEFINITIONS

Health Care staff: Includes nursing and Allied Health Professionals.

ALERT: A communication system with an AVB Critical Care Indicator and visual purple indicators to designate and flag a patient/client/resident who poses a potential risk of aggressive violent behaviour. This may also include the risk posed by a visitor in relation to the patient/client/resident and will be indicated in the ALERT as such.

Aggressive Violent Behaviour (AVB):

- The attempt or actual exercise of and physical force so as to cause injury. It includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a person reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury, whether or not an injury (physical or psychological) occurs.
- Any repercussions which activate security measures that arise from the issuance of a restraining order, protection order or peace bond for the protection of an individual from threatening or violent behaviour by a third party (Ministry of Health Services, Prevention and Management of Aggression and Violence in the B.C. Health Care System, October 31, 2005)
- Aggressive Violent Behaviour may be intentional or unintentional.

Critical Care Indicator (CCI): An electronic information application in MEDITECH® for identifying a patient/client/resident in care who poses a possible safety risk to self or others. (Fraser Health Policy; Critical Care Indicators). The CCI for the ALERT is the AVB.

4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Health Care staff in all patient/client/resident care areas will utilize the ALERT process to guide decisions on how to assess, identify, and communicate the potential for aggressive violent behaviour to the healthcare team.

Early identification of a patient/client/resident with the potential for aggressive violent behaviour will:

- minimize incidents of violence
- facilitate appropriate resources needed to keep Health Care staff safe

5. ASSESSMENT

5.1 Health Care staff

- Follow the ALERT process Decision Support Tools (DST) to flag, assess and develop a care plan within the competencies and/or scope of practice to prevent incidents of violence.
- Communicate relevant information regarding patient/client/resident Violent Behavior (AVB) status to team members and any other staff providing care or support to prevent incidents of violence.
- Document ALERT information as described within the ALERT DSTs and in accordance with program-specific protocols.

If a Visitor is aggressor:

- Contact site security
- Add CCI/AVB to patient/client/resident chart
- Include in [Behavioural Safety Care Plan - Form](#)

5.2 Support Personnel

- Building Services, Maintenance and Food and Nutrition must recognize purple dot stickers or other purple indicators located within the patient/client/resident care environment to assist with the prevention of violence.
- Obtain ALERT information from Health Care staff with respect to the patient/client/resident in care for AVB and how to safely provide support to prevent incidents of violence.

5.3 Emergency Departments

Health Care staff working in Fraser Health Emergency Departments (ED) will adhere to the [ALERT Procedure - Fraser Health Emergency Departments - Clinical Protocol](#).

This protocol outlines specific ED procedures to support staff to prevent incident of violence.

6. INTERVENTION & DOCUMENTATION

The following DSTs guide the assessment, identification, communication, flagging and documentation of AVB.

6.1 Procedure - Decision Support Tools

6.1.1 Aggressive Violent Behaviour Checklist

The [Aggressive Violent Behaviour Checklist - Form](#) is a step-by-step process for implementation of the ALERT process and is to be completed by Health Care staff for each patient/client/resident and placed in the front of the chart.

6.1.2 Risk Profile ALERT Form

The [Risk Profile ALERT - Form](#) is to be completed for each patient/client/resident and placed at the front of the chart. The form includes criteria to determine the potential risk for aggressive violent behaviour and assessment of the degree of risk.

6.2 MEDITECH AVB Descriptors

- If a completed [Risk Profile ALERT - Form](#) meets ALERT criteria an AVB critical care indicator (CCI) must be entered via order entry in the MEDITECH CCI application. This requires entering the risk level descriptor that corresponds with the observed behaviour on the [Risk Profile ALERT - Form](#).
- Health Care staff will consult with the patient/client/resident's physician or other clinical health professionals on the team to discuss the assessment findings. Document findings in the Progress Notes or other reports in accordance with program-specific protocols.

6.3 Visual Purple Indicators

- The application of purple dot stickers or other practical purple indicators is required to communicate an AVB patient/client/resident to anyone required to provide care, other medical services, or supports.
- Purple indicators should be placed in visible areas including Charts, Kardex, room locations, or other forms and documents regularly utilized by Health Care staff. Application may vary and needs to be in accordance with program-specific protocols.

6.4 Behavioural Safety Care Plan (BSCP)

- The [Behavioural Safety Care Plan - Form](#) is a requirement to ensure there is a documented and consistent approach by the Healthcare Team for the provision of safe care for staff and an AVB patient/client/resident.
- The [Behavioural Safety Care Plan - Form](#) includes the AVB descriptors with a list of potential risk factors, warning signs and interventions that facilitate the development of an effective plan.
- [Behavioural Safety Care Plan - Form](#) is located in the front of the chart with the [Risk Profile ALERT - Form](#).

6.5 ALERT Risk Review Process

- The [ALERT Risk Review Process - Form](#) is for the review and/or revision by the Healthcare Team of a patient/client/resident AVB status at specified intervals. This is important to ensure the proper designation is always applied for the current potential risk of aggressive violent behaviour by a patient/client/resident.
- Staff must follow the timelines as indicated to complete the review process.
 - Review timeline:
 - Acute Care/Psychiatry – Every 3 days X 2 then weekly
 - Continuing care – Quarterly
 - Other – re-admission, discharge, change in condition, following new incident
- Dates for the review must be documented on the Kardex or other program-specific protocols.
- If the ALERT Review results in any change to the AVB risk level it requires process updates to the following:
 - [Risk Profile ALERT - Form](#)
 - MEDITECH AVB
 - [Behavioural Safety Care Plan - Form](#)

- Nursing note updates

Where changes to the risk level include removal of the AVB from MEDITECH, all purple indicators are to be removed.

6.6 AVB Incident Follow Up

- Where an incident of aggressive violent behaviour occurs, the ALERT process must be reassessed, updated and documented to reflect any required changes to the patient/client/resident AVB status and behavioural safety care plan.
- All employee injuries must be reported to the Workplace Health Contact Centre 1-866-922-9464.
- Patient Safety Learning System (PSLS) requirements are to be followed for aggressive violent incidents.
- [Critical Incident Stress Management and the Employee Assistance Program](#) are available resources for staff who have experienced a work-related traumatic event from violence.

6.7 Transferring to new unit/site

- When a patient/client/resident is to be transferred to a new Unit or Site, all ALERT process forms and documentation are to be provided in the handover process.

7. EDUCATION

ALERT process education is available for Fraser Health staff as an additional online module in the Violence Prevention Curriculum on [Learning Hub](#). This education describes application of the ALERT Process through the use of DSTs. Additional instructions are included regarding the Health Care staff role in the Fraser Health Code White Procedure and in site-specific protocols.

8. REFERENCES

- Fraser Health Violence Prevention Policy, December 2016
- WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Section 4.27-4.31 2003. Available from: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-04-general-conditions#SectionNumber:4.27>
- Heilbrun K, Witte G. The MacArthur Risk Assessment Study: implications for practice, research, and policy. Marq. L. Rev. 1998; 82:733.