

<u>POLICY</u>		Page 1 of 3
WEAPONS IN THE WORKPLACE		
<u>EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP</u> Vice President, Employee Experience	<u>INITIALLY RELEASED DATE</u> June 2009	<u>VERSION DATE</u> August 2022

INTENT / PURPOSE

In support of a safe and secure environment of care, individuals are not to have [prohibited weapons](#) while present in Fraser Health facilities. Concerns or threats posed by the presence of weapons or other items that might be considered as a weapon will be mitigated and monitored through action, investigation and documentation.

POLICY

Staff, physicians and volunteers are responsible for taking appropriate actions to ensure safety and reporting and documenting all incidents involving weapons. In situations where certain weapons carry religious and/or ceremonial significance, appropriate recognition and respect of such ceremonial items shall be shown while ensuring the safety and security of individuals.

Integrated Protection Services (IPS) will liaise with internal and external stakeholders to report incidents that pose a safety and security concern and to resolve issues related to weapons within the workplace.

DEFINITIONS

Prohibited Weapon: refers to an instrument of any kind that can be used to injure, defeat, kill or destroy. See [Appendix A](#) for examples of prohibited weapons. For the purposes of this policy, common items not traditionally considered weapons (e.g., pens/pencils, furniture, dishes, or other common items, etc.) will be referred to as a weapon if there are concerns that the item may be used as one.

PROCEDURE

Note: Do not attempt to take possession of the weapon if there is a risk of confrontation. If an individual is threatening others or refuses to relinquish possession of the weapon, make yourself and others safe and call on-site security (*if available*) and police immediately. Staff are not expected to provide care for patients who are in possession of a weapon.

1. Staff, physicians and volunteers who become aware of situations involving the presence of a weapon will take any necessary actions to ensure safety and report the incident to their immediate supervisor.
2. The supervisor will assess the situation and take steps to identify and address the immediate safety risks.
3. Where a weapon is discovered, consider the following questions:
 - a) Are there concerns that the patient or person may pose a risk to staff or others?
 - b) Does the weapon pose an immediate/imminent threat of harm?
 - c) Is the weapon inherently dangerous?
 - d) Was the weapon discovered or used in light of a criminal and/or aggressive or suspicious act?

If the answer is yes to any of the above questions, consider the following actions:

- a) Call on-site security (where available), and/or the police. **Call 911 if the weapon poses an imminent threat of harm and take any other actions necessary to ensure the safety of staff and patients.**

<p><u>POLICY</u> WEAPONS IN THE WORKPLACE</p>	<p>Page 2 of 3</p>
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- b) Or, **if safe to do so**, take possession of the weapon and secure it in a safe location. Seized weapons may be turned over to on-site security (where available) or local law enforcement. If site security are available, they can be called to take initial possession of the weapon.
 - 1. Any weapons prohibited by the Canadian Criminal Code (CCC) will be turned over the law enforcement at the earliest opportunity (consult on site security or IPS if unsure).
 - 2. Seized weapons, not prohibited by the CCC, (e.g., box cutters, pocket knives, etc.) can be safely stored until such time as the item can be turned over to the patient's family/friends or the patient is discharged. Alternatively, if the item cannot be safely stored on the unit it can be given to site security (*if available*) for safe storage until discharge.
 - c) In the case of firearms, staff shall not touch or handle any firearm unless necessary to ensure safety. Access to the firearm shall be restricted and law enforcement will be called. Staff should only move a firearm if its location presents **an imminent threat to others and only as much as required to mitigate the threat**. Staff should never attempt to unload any firearm. **Law enforcement will be called in all instances where firearms are discovered.**
 - d) If the patient is unwilling to surrender the weapon and/or it is felt the individual may become confrontational, remove all persons from the immediate area to ensure safety and call 911 and site security (*where available*) for support.
 - e) At sites without on-site security, IPS may be contacted to support the process.
4. In the case of a weapon that:
- a) The person in possession of the weapon is not felt to pose a risk of harm;
 - b) Carries a religious and/or ceremonial significance; and/or.
 - c) The weapon itself does not pose a threat of immediate/imminent harm; and/or,
 - d) Was not discovered in light of a criminal and/or aggressive or suspicious act,

Staff will request the individual remove the weapon from site as soon as possible (e.g., give it to family or friends, lock it in their vehicle, etc.) or, if safe to do so, take possession of the weapon and secure it until arrangements can be made for its removal from the site. Where on-site security is available, security will assist with this process.

Where it is not feasible for the weapon to be removed from site, the weapon shall be secured in a safe place until such time as it can be safely returned to the patient upon discharge. Where site security are available, they will facilitate this process. When security takes possession of a weapon (not prohibited by the CCC) they will document and provide a receipt.

If returning the weapon is not felt to be a safe option, the weapon can be given to law enforcement who can facilitate the return of the patient's property or consideration of mailing the item to the patient's home can be given. IPS will support this process, as required.

In situations where there are concerns regarding the presence of religious or ceremonial items, staff should contact their supervisor in order to develop a safety plan for the provision of care.

- 5. The unit supervisor/manager will conduct a follow-up investigation and ensure that appropriate plans are in place to address such future situations. This should include the involvement of appropriate stakeholders and IPS personnel, as required.

POLICY	Page
WEAPONS IN THE WORKPLACE	3 of 3

6. Where staff are providing care to a patient/client in their residence, prohibited weapons must be safely locked away. Any firearm, or other weapon of concern, not safely secured, should be considered a threat and staff should take necessary steps to ensure their safety (e.g., leave the premises).
- a) Report the incident to their immediate supervisor
 - b) A risk assessment shall be conducted prior to resuming services
 - c) IPS will provide support as required

7. Documentation

Staff will complete documentation of the incident:

- a) In the patient chart (*if applicable*)
- b) In the progress notes
- c) Complete a Patient Safety Learning System (PSLS) report
- d) Report the workplace incident by calling the Provincial Workplace Health Contact Centre at 1-866-922-9464

8. Information Privacy

Staff will adhere to information privacy requirements when managing an incident involving prohibited weapons. Individuals should not hesitate to contact the police out of concerns for their privacy obligations. Provisions in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* permit disclosure to law enforcement officials in appropriate circumstances and where health and safety issues may be a factor.

REFERENCES

- Criminal Code of Canada
- [Freedom of Information and Privacy Act](#)
- Fraser Health. [Confidentiality and Security of Personal Information - Policy](#)
- Fraser Health. [Providing Patient/Resident/Client Information to Law Enforcement Agencies - Policy](#)
- Fraser Health. (2022). [Patient Search - Policy](#)

DATE(S) REVISED / REVIEWED SUMMARY

Version	Date	Comments / Changes
1.0	June 2009	Initial Policy Released
2.0	September 2013	Policy revised
3.0	August 2022	Policy revised

APPENDICES:

[Appendix A: Prohibited Weapons](#)