

RIGHTS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEALTH WORKERS, INCLUDING OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

EMPLOYERS AND MANAGERS IN HEALTH FACILITIES:

- assume overall responsibility to ensure that all necessary preventive and protective measures are taken to minimize health risks including implementation of occupational safety and health management systems to identify hazards and assess risks to health and safety; infection prevention and control (IPC) measures; zero-tolerance policies towards workplace violence and harassment;
- provide information, instruction and training on occupational safety and health, including;
 - Refresher training on infection prevention and control (IPC); and
 - Use, putting on, taking off and disposal of personal protective equipment (PPE);
- provide adequate IPC and PPE supplies (masks, gloves, goggles, gowns, hand sanitizer, soap and water, cleaning supplies) in sufficient quantity to healthcare or other staff caring for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients, such that workers do not incur expenses for occupational safety and health requirements;
- familiarize personnel with technical updates on COVID-19 and provide appropriate tools to assess, triage, test and treat patients and to share infection prevention and control information with patients and the public;
- as needed, provide with appropriate security measures for personal safety;
- provide a blame-free environment for workers to report on incidents, such as exposures to blood or bodily fluids from the respiratory system or to cases of violence, and to adopt measures for immediate follow up, including support to victims;
- advise workers on self-assessment, symptom reporting and staying home when ill;
- maintain appropriate working hours with breaks;
- consult with health workers on occupational safety and health aspects of their work and notify the labor inspectorate of cases of occupational diseases;
- not be required to return to a work situation where there is continuing or serious danger to life or health, until the employer has taken any necessary remedial action;
- allow workers to exercise the right to remove themselves from a work situation that they have reasonable justification to believe presents an imminent and serious danger to their life or health. When a health worker exercises this right, they shall be protected from any undue consequences;
- honor the right to compensation, rehabilitation and curative services if infected with COVID-19 following exposure in the workplace. This would be considered occupational exposure and resulting illness would be considered an occupational disease;
- provide access to mental health and counselling resources; and
- enable co-operation between management and workers and/or their representatives.

HEALTH WORKERS SHOULD:

- follow established occupational safety and health procedures, avoid exposing others to health and safety risks and participate in employer-provided occupational safety and health training;
- use provided protocols to assess, triage and treat patients;
- treat patients with respect, compassion and dignity;
- maintain patient confidentiality;
- swiftly follow established public health reporting procedures of suspect and confirmed cases;
- provide or reinforce accurate infection prevention and control and public health information, including to concerned people who have neither symptoms nor risk;
- put on, use, take off and dispose of personal protective equipment properly;
- self-monitor for signs of illness and self-isolate or report illness to managers, if it occurs;
- advise management if they are experiencing signs of undue stress or mental health challenges that require support interventions; and
- report to their immediate supervisor any situation which they have reasonable justification to believe presents an imminent and serious danger to life or health.

Reference:

- https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/who-rights-roles-respon-hw-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=bcabd401_0