

McGill University, Royal College Emergency Medicine Training Program

Resident Health and Safety Policy

Preamble

The environment in the Emergency Department poses many potential threats to the personal safety of Emergency Medicine residents and staff Emergency Physicians. These risks are due to inherent risks of communicable disease, potential threat of physical violence, intimidation and harassment, risk of harm related to shift work, and risk of legal action by patients and families.

The safety and security of all Emergency Medicine residents is of the utmost importance to the McGill Emergency Medicine Program. The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the College of Family Physicians of Canada have collaborated in developing national standards for evaluating sites used for residency education.

Standard “A2.6” states that:

All participating sites must ensure resident safety at all times, particularly considering hazards such as environmental toxins, exposure to infectious agents transmitted through blood and fluid, radiation, and potential exposure to violence from patients and others.”

Furthermore, The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the Federation of Medical Residents of Quebec (FMRQ) and the Quebec Provincial government outlines requirements that all hospitals must have in place necessary measures to ensure the safe working environment for all medical residents

The Emergency Departments of all teaching sites are responsible for ensuring the safety and security of residents training in their facilities in compliance with existing employee safety and security policies/procedures as well as the requirements outlined by the FMRQ and the McGill Post Graduate office.

The purpose of these guidelines is to enhance the health and well-being of our residents by offering guidelines for personal safety during clinical shifts in the Emergency Department. This document also aims to provide residents with references to obtain furthermore information regarding all aspects of safety within their EM training

Resident Personal Safety

1. Residents should adhere to the standards of universal precautions and wear appropriate protective gear during high risk patient interactions (trauma patients, airway management procedures, bleeding patients, and patients presenting with

possible infectious illnesses) when necessary. Residents should adhere to hospital Infectious Disease prevention and reporting policies. Residents should keep their immunizations up to date, and should seek advice of the hospital's Occupational Health and Safety department to obtain appropriate immunization prior to and during rotations abroad.

2. Residents must possess adequate knowledge of technical skills and practice appropriate technique to protect themselves and others from needle-stick injuries. Residents must recognize the importance of reporting adverse events and be aware of the indications for post exposure prophylaxis.
3. Residents should recognize patients who pose a threat of physical violence and understand measures that can be taken to prevent and protect themselves from physical harm (nonviolent crisis intervention, panic buttons, safe interview rooms, police or security presence, physical and chemical restraints). Residents should be aware of emergency procedures if they feel threatened by a patient in the examining room. Examination of potentially psychotic or violent patients should be done in an area where help can be summoned quickly.

If a resident feels that his or her personal safety is threatened, he or she should remove him or herself from the situation in a professional manner and seek immediate assistance. The McGill Emergency Medicine Training program will provide, on a regular basis, special training to residents on how to manage these potentially difficult situations.

4. Residents must understand the threats related to shift work including signs of physician burnout or substance misuse, impact of shift schedules (i.e. Short shifting) and the impact of shift work on interpersonal as well as doctor-patient relationships. Residents are advised to seek assistance from available resources (Program Director, Occupational Health, PAMQ/FMRQ) if they are experiencing negative effects related to their work/schedule.
5. Residents should be aware of the importance of safe transportation to and from work. Residents are expected to take precautions when walking alone at night. The request for a security escort to transportation home (e.g.. parking lot, bus stop) especially after evening shifts is encouraged.
6. Residents are advised to have a chaperone for pelvic, breast and rectal exams on women and selected male patients. Residents are advised to ask for a witness during anticipated or developing difficult patient encounters and the importance of careful documentation of these encounters.
7. Residents are advised of the importance of careful documentation in patient encounters that are likely to proceed through the judicial system (ie. sexual assault, motor vehicle accidents, physical assault/domestic violence).

8. Threatening behavior, harassment, and intimidation are never acceptable; whether the source be a patient (or family member), a colleague, an allied health professional, or a supervisor. The McGill EM program holds strong a zero-tolerance policy with respect to this behavior. We encourage all residents to be fully aware of the Faculty policy on intimidation, and should be made aware that they may report such behavior without fear of reprisal. The McGill Post Graduate policy on intimidation and harassment can be found at: <http://www.mcgill.ca/harass/>
9. Pregnant residents should be aware of specific risks to themselves and their fetus in the training environment, and request accommodations when indicated. Residents are encouraged to consult the FMRQ CBA for specific guidelines with respect to their safety.

Residents are encouraged to review the following guidelines established by the Postgraduate Medical Education office and the FMRQ:

FMRQ Collective Bargaining agreement:

http://www.fmrq.qc.ca/PDF/Ententecollective2010-2015avecsignature_nonscannee.pdf

The McGill Post Graduate policy on intimidation and harassment:

http://www.medicine.mcgill.ca/postgrad/welcometopostgrad_standards.htm

The McGill Post Graduate policy on Resident health and safety: TBA

Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination Office:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/harass/>

Standards of behavior in the learning environment:

http://www.medicine.mcgill.ca/postgrad/welcometopostgrad_standards.htm

McGill Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/rights/>

McGill Student and Resident Affairs: <http://www.mcgill.ca/harass/>

The Quebec Physicians' Health Program – QPHP: <http://www.pamq.org/>