

RCW 49.95.020 Discrimination, abusive conduct, and challenging behavior—Written policy required. (1) Beginning July 1, 2021, each covered employer must adopt and maintain a comprehensive written policy concerning how the covered employer shall address instances of discrimination, abusive conduct, and challenging behavior and work to resolve issues impacting the provision of personal care. The covered employer must:

(a) Disseminate the comprehensive written policy to each employee at the beginning of employment, annually, and on the issuance of any substantive update to the comprehensive written policy;

(b) Post the comprehensive written policy in prominent locations at its place of business and in a prominent location on its website, such as an online payroll portal, if applicable. The covered employer must provide employees with a copy of the current policy within thirty days of the employee's date of hire, and at least once a year thereafter;

(c) Make the policy available in plain English and in each of the three languages spoken most by long-term care workers in the state;

(d) Review and update the adopted policy annually; and

(e) Ensure that all employees are aware of the current policy and the changes from the previous policy.

(2) At a minimum, the comprehensive written policy must include:

(a) A definition of discrimination, harassment, abusive conduct, and challenging behavior;

(b) A description of the types of discrimination and abusive conduct covered by the policy, with examples relevant to the long-term care workforce;

(c) The identification of multiple persons to whom an employee may report discrimination, abusive conduct, and challenging behavior;

(d) Stated permission and a process for allowing workers to leave situations where they feel their safety is at immediate risk. This process must include a requirement to notify the employer and applicable third parties such as department of social and health services case managers, emergency services, or service recipient decision makers as soon as possible. The process must not authorize abandonment as defined in RCW 74.34.020 unless the worker has called the phone number provided by the employer for emergency assistance and has a reasonable fear of imminent bodily harm;

(e) A stated prohibition against retaliation for actions related to disclosing, challenging, reporting, testifying, or assisting in an investigation regarding allegations of discrimination, abusive conduct, or challenging behavior, and a description of how the employer will protect employees against retaliation;

(f) A list of resources about discrimination and harassment for long-term care workers to utilize. At a minimum, the resources must include contact information of the equal employment opportunity commission, the Washington state human rights commission, and local advocacy groups focused on preventing harassment and discrimination and providing support for survivors; and

(g) Any additional components recommended by the work group established in RCW 49.95.060 for the purpose of preventing discrimination and abusive conduct and responding to challenging behavior. [2020 c 309 s 3.]