

NATIONAL STANDARD

OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL HAZARD PROTECTION (OPHP)

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**Protecting the Workforce.
Strengthening Organizations.**

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FRBH National Standard

Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection

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FRBH National Standard
Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection

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Closing Foundational Principle



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Authority

The FRBH National Standard for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP) is adopted by the FRBH Board of Directors as the authoritative organizational framework for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP).

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The Standard establishes nationally consistent organizational expectations for protecting personnel from predictable Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) across trauma-exposed public safety professions.

The Standard is maintained by the American Board of First Responder Behavioral Healthcare (FRBH) through documented governance procedures designed to preserve standards integrity, organizational relevance, institutional independence, transparency, and continuous improvement.

About FRBH

The American Board of First Responder Behavioral Healthcare (FRBH) is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit national standards-setting organization and steward of the FRBH National Standard for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP).

FRBH advances nationally consistent workforce protection as a public good across trauma-exposed public safety professions through the development, maintenance, and stewardship of the National Standard, Implementation Guidance, General Technical Assistance, Organizational Learning, and Voluntary Independent Accreditation.

FRBH does not provide clinical care, prescribe treatment models, regulate behavioral health providers, or provide organization-specific accreditation consulting.

About This Standard

The FRBH National Standard establishes nationally consistent organizational expectations for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP).

The Standard recognizes Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) as an inherent and foreseeable occupational hazard across trauma-exposed public safety professions and establishes a profession-neutral organizational framework for managing that hazard through governance-embedded workforce protection systems, exposure-informed activation, and structured organizational accountability.

The Standard establishes organizational expectations rather than prescriptive implementation methods. Organizations retain flexibility to determine how those expectations are achieved within their governance structures, operational environments, workforce protection systems, and available resources.



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Organizations seeking independent recognition of organizational conformity with this Standard may voluntarily pursue FRBH Accreditation. Accreditation is governed through separate policies, procedures, and evaluation criteria and is not part of this Standard.

Implementation Guidance, General Technical Assistance, Organizational Learning resources, and Accreditation publications are maintained separately to support adoption of the National Standard while preserving its stability as the authoritative framework for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection.

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Using This Standard

The FRBH National Standard is intended for governing bodies, executive leaders, public safety agencies, labor organizations, workforce protection professionals, policymakers, researchers, educators, accreditation applicants, and other stakeholders responsible for protecting personnel operating in trauma-exposed environments.

The Standard is designed to be applied across diverse organizational structures and operational environments while preserving implementation flexibility. Organizations are encouraged to use the Standard to evaluate workforce protection capability, strengthen governance, establish organizational accountability, guide implementation activities, support continuous improvement, and prepare for voluntary independent accreditation.

The National Standard should be read together with applicable organizational policies, legal requirements, collective bargaining obligations, occupational safety requirements, and other governing authorities relevant to the organization.

Board Foreword

Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure is an inherent and foreseeable condition of work across trauma-exposed public safety professions.

While occupational safety has long established nationally recognized principles for protecting workers from physical hazards, nationally consistent organizational expectations for protecting personnel from predictable occupational psychological hazards have remained limited.

The FRBH National Standard establishes a profession-neutral organizational framework for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP). Rather than prescribing clinical care or replacing existing workforce protection resources, the Standard applies occupational safety governance principles to the management of predictable Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) through governance-embedded workforce protection systems, exposure-informed activation, and structured organizational accountability.

On behalf of the FRBH Board of Directors, we adopt Version 3.0 of the FRBH National Standard and commend it to organizations committed to strengthening workforce protection across trauma-exposed public safety professions.



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Protecting the workforce strengthens organizations. Stronger organizations better serve their personnel, their missions, and the communities that depend upon them.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the FRBH National Standard is to establish nationally consistent organizational expectations for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP) across trauma-exposed public safety professions.

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The Standard recognizes Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) as a predictable occupational hazard and establishes a profession-neutral framework for protecting the workforce through governance-embedded workforce protection systems, exposure-informed organizational activation, and structured organizational accountability.

The Standard is intended to strengthen workforce protection capability while preserving organizational flexibility in implementation.

2. Scope

The FRBH National Standard applies to organizations whose personnel are routinely exposed to Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) in the performance of their duties.








The Standard establishes organizational expectations for governance, workforce protection systems, organizational accountability, exposure recognition, organizational activation, workforce protection pathways, organizational learning, and continuous improvement.

The Standard establishes organizational expectations rather than prescribing operational procedures, staffing models, clinical interventions, treatment protocols, or implementation methods.

Organizations determine how these expectations are achieved based upon their operational environment, organizational structure, workforce protection resources, legal obligations, and mission requirements.

3. Applicability

The FRBH National Standard is profession-neutral and applies across trauma-exposed public safety professions, including but not limited to:

-  Fire Service
-  Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
-  Law Enforcement
-  Public Safety Communications / Dispatch
-  Corrections
-  Wildland Fire
-  Emergency Management
-  Federal Public Safety Organizations



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The Standard may also be applicable to other organizations whose personnel experience predictable Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure as an inherent condition of work.

4. Foundational Principles

The FRBH National Standard is founded upon the following principles.

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4.1 Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure is Predictable.

Repeated exposure to traumatic events, fatalities, serious injuries, violence, disasters, human suffering, and other operationally significant experiences is an inherent and foreseeable condition of work across trauma-exposed public safety professions.

4.2 Predictable Hazards Require Predictable Organizational Protection.

Organizations routinely establish governance systems to protect personnel from recognized occupational hazards.

Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure warrants the same systematic organizational attention afforded to other predictable workplace hazards.

4.3 Workforce Protection is an Organizational Responsibility.

Organizations are responsible for establishing governance-embedded workforce protection systems capable of recognizing and responding to qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure.

4.4 Exposure Creates Organizational Responsibility.

Qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure creates an organizational responsibility to activate established workforce protection systems.

Organizational responsibility is created by qualifying exposure rather than reliance upon individual recognition of distress, voluntary disclosure, or help-seeking behavior.

4.5 Organizational Protection Preserves Workforce Autonomy.

Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection strengthens organizational responsibility while preserving individual autonomy.

Personnel retain the freedom to determine whether and how they engage with available workforce protection resources.

4.6 Workforce Protection Strengthens Organizations.

Protecting the workforce and strengthening organizations are mutually reinforcing objectives. Effective organizational workforce protection enhances workforce readiness, operational continuity, workforce sustainability, organizational resilience, and public confidence.

4.7 Continuous Improvement Sustains Organizational Capability.

Organizations should periodically evaluate workforce protection capability, organizational learning, implementation effectiveness, identified gaps, failures, near misses, and



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opportunities for improvement to strengthen workforce protection over time while preserving the foundational principles established by this Standard.

5. Definitions

For the purposes of this Standard, the following definitions apply.

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5.1 Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP)

Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP) is the organizational workforce protection discipline that applies occupational safety governance principles to the management of predictable Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) through governance-embedded workforce protection systems, exposure-informed organizational activation, and structured organizational accountability.

The objective of Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection is to strengthen workforce readiness, operational continuity, workforce sustainability, organizational resilience, and long-term workforce protection capability.

5.2 Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE)

Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) is exposure to traumatic events, fatalities, serious injuries, violence, disasters, human suffering, and other operationally significant experiences encountered in the performance of occupational duties.

Within trauma-exposed professions, Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure is an inherent and foreseeable condition of work rather than an isolated occurrence.

5.3 Organizational Responsibility

Organizational Responsibility is the obligation of an organization to establish, maintain, and activate workforce protection systems capable of recognizing and responding to qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure.

Within this Standard, qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure creates organizational responsibility to activate established workforce protection systems.

5.4 Workforce Protection System

A Workforce Protection System is the coordinated organizational framework through which governance, leadership, organizational accountability, exposure-informed activation, workforce protection resources, and continuous improvement are integrated to manage Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure.

Organizations determine the specific workforce protection resources appropriate to their operational environment.

5.5 Exposure-Informed Organizational Activation



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Exposure-Informed Organizational Activation is the predefined organizational process through which qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure initiates established workforce protection actions consistent with organizational policy and this Standard.

Activation is based upon defined exposure conditions rather than reliance upon individual recognition of distress, voluntary disclosure, or help-seeking behavior.

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5.6 Governance

Governance is the system through which organizational leadership establishes authority, accountability, oversight, policies, and responsibilities necessary to maintain effective Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection.

5.7 Workforce Protection Resources

Workforce Protection Resources are the organizational capabilities available to support personnel following Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure.

Examples may include Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), peer support, chaplain services, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), behavioral health providers, family support resources, and other organizational support capabilities.

This Standard does not prescribe, endorse, or require specific workforce protection resources.

5.8 Organizational Learning

Organizational Learning is the systematic process through which organizations evaluate implementation experience, workforce protection capability, activation performance, identified gaps, failures, near misses, and emerging practices to strengthen workforce protection systems over time.

5.9 Organizational Conformity

Organizational Conformity is the demonstrated alignment of an organization's workforce protection systems with the organizational expectations established by the FRBH National Standard.

Organizational conformity may be evaluated through voluntary independent accreditation conducted under separate accreditation policies and procedures.

5.10 Workforce Autonomy

Workforce Autonomy is the principle that personnel retain individual choice regarding whether and how they engage with available workforce protection resources following organizational activation.

Organizational responsibility to establish and activate workforce protection systems does not diminish individual privacy, self-determination, or informed decision-making.



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5.11 Implementation Guidance

Implementation Guidance consists of educational resources developed by FRBH to support organizational understanding and implementation of the National Standard.

Implementation Guidance is maintained separately from this Standard and does not establish additional organizational requirements.

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5.12 General Technical Assistance

General Technical Assistance consists of educational activities and organizational support provided by FRBH to promote consistent understanding and adoption of the National Standard.

General Technical Assistance is educational in nature, is not organization-specific accreditation consulting, and does not influence accreditation eligibility, evaluation, determinations, or status.

6. Organizational Expectations

The FRBH National Standard establishes nationally consistent organizational expectations for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP).

Organizations retain flexibility regarding governance structures, operational procedures, workforce protection resources, and implementation strategies while demonstrating organizational capability consistent with this Standard.

The organizational expectations that follow define the essential elements of effective Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection.

6.1 Organizational Philosophy

Organizations should recognize Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) as an inherent and foreseeable occupational hazard within trauma-exposed professions.

Organizations should acknowledge that protecting personnel from predictable occupational psychological hazards is an organizational responsibility supported through governance, leadership, organizational accountability, and coordinated workforce protection systems.

6.2 Governance & Leadership

Organizations should establish governance structures that:

- Assign executive responsibility for workforce protection capability.
- Establish organizational accountability for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection.
- Integrate workforce protection into governance, policy, and leadership oversight.
- Periodically evaluate workforce protection capability.
- Support continuous organizational improvement.



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Governance should ensure that workforce protection remains sustainable across changes in leadership, staffing, operational priorities, and organizational structure.

6.3 Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure Recognition

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Organizations should establish documented processes for recognizing Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure.

Recognition processes should include:

- Defined qualifying exposure conditions.
- Consideration of cumulative occupational exposure.
- Organizational mechanisms for identifying qualifying exposure.

Organizations determine the operational thresholds appropriate to their environment.

6.4 Organizational Activation

Organizations should establish predefined activation procedures through which qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure initiates workforce protection activities.

Activation should:

- Be based upon qualifying exposure.
- Occur through documented organizational processes.
- Support timely organizational response.
- Preserve workforce autonomy.

Organizational activation should not depend solely upon voluntary disclosure, self-identification, or individual recognition of distress.

6.5 Workforce Protection Systems

Organizations should establish workforce protection systems capable of coordinating available workforce protection resources following qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure.

Systems should:

- Support confidential workforce access.
- Coordinate organizational responsibilities.
- Integrate existing workforce protection resources.
- Maintain organizational accountability.
- Preserve implementation flexibility.



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This Standard does not prescribe specific workforce protection programs, staffing models, vendors, or clinical resources.

6.6 Confidential Workforce Protection Pathways

Organizations should maintain confidential pathways through which personnel may access available workforce protection resources consistent with organizational policy and applicable legal requirements.

Confidential pathways should support workforce trust while preserving organizational accountability.

6.7 Organizational Learning

Organizations should periodically evaluate workforce protection capability.

Evaluation should consider:

- Organizational activation performance.
- Workforce protection capability.
- Implementation experience.
- Organizational learning.
- Emerging practices.
- Opportunities for system improvement.

Organizational learning should strengthen workforce protection capability while preserving the foundational principles established by this Standard.

6.8 Continuous Improvement

Organizations should maintain a systematic process for continuous improvement.

Continuous improvement activities should include periodic review of:

- Governance effectiveness.
- Workforce protection systems.
- Activation performance.
- Organizational learning.
- Identified gaps.
- Failures and near misses.
- Corrective actions.
- Opportunities for improvement.



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Organizations should use implementation experience to strengthen workforce protection capability over time while preserving organizational flexibility.

6.9 Organizational Capability

Organizations implementing Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection should demonstrate capability to:

- Recognize qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure.
- Establish governance accountability.
- Activate workforce protection systems.
- Coordinate workforce protection resources.
- Preserve workforce autonomy.
- Support confidential access pathways.
- Evaluate workforce protection capability.
- Strengthen systems through organizational learning and continuous improvement.

The organizational expectations established by this Standard collectively define organizational capability for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection.

7. Organizational Self-Evaluation

The FRBH National Standard encourages organizations to periodically evaluate workforce protection capability through executive review and governance oversight.

The following questions are intended to support organizational reflection, implementation planning, continuous improvement, and preparation for voluntary independent accreditation.

Affirmative responses indicate increasing organizational capability consistent with the expectations established by this Standard.

7.1 Organizational Philosophy

- ✓ Does the organization recognize Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) as an inherent and foreseeable occupational hazard?
- ✓ Is workforce protection recognized as an organizational responsibility?

7.2 Governance & Leadership

- ✓ Has executive leadership established accountability for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection?
- ✓ Is workforce protection integrated into governance and organizational oversight?



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- ✓ Does leadership periodically evaluate workforce protection capability?

7.3 Exposure Recognition

- ✓ Has the organization established qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure criteria?
- ✓ Are cumulative occupational exposures considered within organizational processes?

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7.4 Organizational Activation

- ✓ Does qualifying Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure activate predefined organizational workforce protection processes?
- ✓ Can organizational activation occur without relying primarily upon individual recognition of distress or voluntary disclosure?

7.5 Workforce Protection Systems

- ✓ Are workforce protection systems established and maintained?
- ✓ Are confidential workforce protection pathways available?
- ✓ Are available workforce protection resources coordinated through organizational processes?

7.6 Organizational Learning

- ✓ Does the organization periodically evaluate implementation effectiveness?
- ✓ Are organizational learning, implementation experience, identified gaps, failures, near misses, and opportunities for improvement incorporated into continuous improvement activities?

8. Voluntary Independent Accreditation

Organizations seeking independent recognition of organizational conformity with the FRBH National Standard may voluntarily pursue FRBH Accreditation.

Accreditation is an independent evaluation of organizational conformity with the expectations established by this Standard.

Accreditation evaluates organizational capability rather than individual personnel, clinicians, clinical interventions, or workforce mental health outcomes.



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Accreditation policies, procedures, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and governance safeguards are maintained separately from this Standard.

Participation in Implementation Guidance, General Technical Assistance, or Organizational Learning activities does not influence accreditation eligibility, evaluation, determinations, or accreditation status.

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9. Standards Governance

The American Board of First Responder Behavioral Healthcare (FRBH) maintains the National Standard through documented governance procedures designed to preserve standards integrity, organizational relevance, institutional independence, transparency, and continuous improvement.

The FRBH Board of Directors serves as the final standards adoption authority.

Implementation Guidance, General Technical Assistance, Organizational Learning, and implementation experience may inform future revisions while preserving the structural independence of standards governance and accreditation activities.

Future revisions are adopted through documented governance procedures following appropriate technical review and stakeholder engagement.

10. Document Stewardship

FRBH serves as the independent national standards-setting organization and steward of the FRBH National Standard for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP).

As steward of the National Standard, FRBH advances nationally consistent workforce protection as a public good through:

- National Standards
- Implementation Guidance
- General Technical Assistance
- Organizational Learning
- Voluntary Independent Accreditation

These institutional functions collectively support national adoption of Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection while preserving the independence, integrity, and long-term stability of the National Standard.

11. Copyright & Document Control

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The FRBH National Standard for Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP) is maintained by FRBH through documented governance procedures adopted by the FRBH Board of Directors.

Only officially published versions of this Standard represent the authoritative organizational expectations established by FRBH.

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Future revisions are adopted through documented standards governance procedures.

Closing Foundational Principle

Occupational Psychological Hazard Exposure (OPHE) is an inherent and foreseeable condition of work across trauma-exposed public safety professions.

Predictable occupational hazards require predictable organizational protection.

Occupational Psychological Hazard Protection (OPHP) establishes the organizational framework through which governance, leadership, exposure-informed activation, workforce protection systems, and organizational accountability strengthen workforce protection capability.

Exposure creates organizational responsibility.

Protection strengthens the workforce.

Stronger workforces strengthen organizations.

Stronger organizations better serve the communities that depend upon them.