



**Here For The Music Venue Guide  
to Improving Sexual Violence  
Prevention and Response**



calling all crows

# Introduction

There is a legal obligation to create a safe working environment free from harassment and discrimination for your employees - including harassment from other employees, contractors, vendors, touring parties, and patrons. Beyond this legal obligation, it's both good business and the right thing to do to create a safe environment for all those who enter your venue.

- What policies and protocols do you have in place?
- How are those communicated to all stakeholders?
- How do you support employees, vendors, contractors, touring parties, and patrons in understanding and upholding these policies?

This guide will provide you with a roadmap to achieve a safer venue for all to create and enjoy the music that we come together for night after night.

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## Here For The Music Campaign

Musician Chadwick Stokes and tour manager Sybil Gallagher founded Calling All Crows (CAC) in 2008 to bring their commitment to hands-on service and activism on the road, working with musicians, fans, and nonprofits to better the lives of women locally and globally. CAC works for a future where the success of live music is measured not only by ticket sales, but by the impact of fans and musicians mobilizing for change to improve the lives of women around the world.

In 2017, CAC launched the #HereForTheMusic Campaign to prevent sexual violence at shows and festivals through training and educating fans, artists, crew members, and venue/festival teams. This guide is one of many resources built by Calling All Crows to further this work.

Special thanks to [Kim Warnick](#) for authoring this guide and [Alyssa Buzzello](#) for her design work.

Visit <https://www.callingallcrows.org/hereforthemusic> for more information.

# Creating Your Policy

Crafting policies and protocols is a process that should take into account your company's values and brand identity. Below are key considerations and examples to guide you in this process.

## Define Stakeholders

**Who is affected by your policy or policies?**

Employees, contractors, patrons, artists and crew, promoters, vendors, etc.

## Define Scope

**Do you have one policy/protocol to apply to all stakeholders, or multiple for different parties?**

### Considerations:

- If you can have one consistent approach for all stakeholders, it simplifies communication of policy and training on response.
- Why have multiple? If your relationships with different stakeholders are unique enough that you would deal with them differently in practice, then you should write your policy to reflect that.
  - For example, with a complaint against an employee, you may want to put the accused on leave until a quick and thorough investigation can be conducted. With a complaint against a patron, you may immediately remove them with no additional follow up.
- It is important to understand how the *reporting process, intervention, possible consequences, and follow up* are different across stakeholders.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In a 2018 survey, we found that of the 528 people who experienced sexual harassment or assault at a concert in the past 5 years:

- 6% chose to report or seek help for one but not all incidents they experienced
- 13% chose to report or seek help for 2 or more but not all incidents they experienced
- 3% chose to report or seek help for all incidents they experienced
- 78% chose not to report or seek help for any incidents they experienced

# Creating Your Policy

## Who are the designated responders, and who can receive complaints?

### Who do you want to designate as people who can receive complaints?

#### Considerations:

- Barriers to reporting include:
  - victim isn't sure the incident is “bad enough”
  - victim or bystander is not able to find security nearby
  - victim or bystander doesn't know who is on staff
  - victim or bystander has prior negative experience reporting to security
  - victim does not believe that their complaint will be believed or acted on.
- To address these barriers, whichever people you identify to report to should:

Be easily visible & accessible  
(security, bartenders)

Include various types of authority (manager, security, guest services)

Include a group of people that reflect multiple races and genders where possible

- For employees, you will need to ensure there are multiple people to report to including someone who is not in their reporting structure in case, for example, their boss is the harasser.

### Who do you want to intervene and follow up?

Designated responders should have training on crisis intervention, de-escalation tactics, and should be trauma-informed. They do NOT need to be publicly identified, but your staff team must know who they are and understand when to call them in.

Because this is a higher skill and higher risk role than simply receiving a complaint, it is best to invest in training a small number of key staff, similar to how training is targeted for crowd managers.

# Creating Your Policy

## What is your response to different behaviors?

The goal is to craft a policy and protocols that you can successfully implement and that match your values, not that sounds great or achieves the legal bare minimum. It can be helpful to talk through how your team would handle a variety of scenarios as a starting point.

### Common behaviors include:

- Unwanted and/or harmful comments
- Persistent sexual advances
- Unwanted touching, dancing, groping
- Persistent staring, hovering, crowding personal space

### Common responses include:

- Verbal warning (e.g., request to leave a person/area or stop a specific behavior)
- Written warning
- Ejection
- Ban
- Police Report

### Considerations:

What evidence will you require to take action?

- Report from victim, report from victim + witness corroboration, report/witnessed by staff, reports from 2 victims, something else?
- It is helpful to remember that false reports are exceedingly rare, so requiring multiple witnesses or additional evidence should be deployed with caution

Required steps for reporting and possible responses should be clearly outlined in your policy.



# Creating Your Policy

## How and when do you involve law enforcement?

Some people will want the police involved and others will not for a variety of valid reasons. Communicating whether or not you will involve police is crucial in creating a safe environment for those involved.

### Considerations:

- Are there local laws or regulations that require you to make police reports for specific incidents?
  - If so, does the victim need to be involved? Can the report come later?
- Can you provide a victim advocate in cases where police must be or are requested to be involved?
- Will police be called to site, or will you go to the station to file a report?

## How do you reflect your brand & authentic voice?

Finding ways to make this policy your own is key to ensuring it is adopted and understood by stakeholders. Check out some examples in Appendix A.

## Use clear & concise language.

- Boil things down to what you will do in a situation. If you ask the victim what they want and then follow their lead, say that. If you have a two strikes you're out except in the case of corroborated assault which results in immediate ejection, say that.
- Don't get lost down the rabbit hole of every possible circumstance. State that you want the space to be safe and fun, who people can report to, what you're prepared to do if you receive a report of harmful behavior, and whose input you will seek to make that decision.

# Communicating Your Policy

If people don't know who to report to or what to expect when reporting, harmful behaviors may continue to go unaddressed. Ensuring all stakeholders know and understand your policies is key to effective implementation.

**Display throughout venue**

**Bathrooms, Screens, Bars, Entrance, Merch**

**Display digitally**

**On website, ticketing sites and Facebook event pages**

**Social channels**

**Regularly post on social outlets like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram**

**Incorporate into contracts**

**Incorporate into contracts with artists, vendors, employees and contractors**

## Example Message:

**Feel uncomfortable or unsafe? Speak to our security, bar staff, or management.**

Great Music Hall wants you to enjoy the show to the fullest. You should not be harassed or assaulted by anyone - other guests, staff, volunteers, your own friends, vendors, artists, or crew members. That's why we train our whole staff on how to safely intervene in instances of harassment and assault.

We hope you'll feel comfortable and safe asking our bartenders or security who are wearing Great Music Hall badges (pictured below) for help. We deal with each complaint discreetly and will take action up to and including ejection from the venue and police involvement (if requested), taking your input for a response to the harmful behavior into consideration.

# Training Staff & Contractors

It is crucial that your team is able to identify potentially harmful behavior, safely and effectively intervene in potentially harmful situations, and respond professionally and empathetically to reports of sexually violent behavior. See suggested resources for training in Appendix B.

## Suggested Training Modules

### Active Bystander

**Content:** Participants learn to identify potentially harmful behavior, learn strategies to safely and effectively intervene, and have time to practice and receive feedback.

**Personnel:** All staff, volunteers, and consistent contractors

**Frequency:** Annual renewal, with first as close to date of hire as possible

### Responding to Disclosures

**Content:** Participants learn how to respond to reports of sexual harassment and assault compassionately, consistently, and confidently to minimize harm to the victim and community.

**Personnel:** At a minimum, any staff you designate to receive complaints, respond to complaints, and who have a high volume of stakeholder interaction.

**Frequency:** Annual renewal, with first as close to date of hire as possible

### Legal Requirements and Crisis Management

**Content:** Legal compliance and considerations; planning for crisis management

**Personnel:** Managers, risk management, security leads

**Frequency:** Annual renewal, with first as close to date of hire as possible

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# Building Accountability + Trust

**Sexual violence is not a new problem - just newly talked about. In order to make progress toward creating a venue where these harmful behaviors don't exist, you need to acknowledge that they occur, work to understand how they occur and why people do/do not report at your venue, and proactively intervene and communicate to build trust that you will handle complaints professionally, compassionately, and fairly.**

## **Solicit feedback and share results**

Conduct a survey when you begin this work to get a baseline and better understanding of the scope of the problem.

Conduct an annual survey, solicit anonymous feedback after specific incidents, provide outlets for anonymous feedback, and share results to build community support.

## **Share your policy and intent, and solicit reports**

Open, honest, proactive communication about safety is a key step toward building trust with stakeholders.

Suggestions for how to do this have been covered on page 7 under "Communicating your policy."

## **Respond to reports consistently, compassionately, and professionally**

A policy that is not followed doesn't help anyone. That's why creating a policy that can be implemented is key.

Holding your staff accountable when they deviate from protocol is important to build trust and ensure that victims have a consistent reporting experience where they feel heard and supported.

Reporting can be deeply vulnerable for the victim, so it is important to be compassionate and professional.

This vulnerability should not be misinterpreted as therapeutic sharing or friendship - they are reporting to you formally and for help. This is why a "responding to disclosures" training is key.

# Appendix A: Sample Policies

## Policy A

We're all about creating an unparalleled experience of music, food, and strong community. **Harassment has no place here for any of our community members: attendees, staff, vendors, artists/crews, volunteers, and other guests.**

### What is harassment?

Harassment includes but is not limited to: stalking, physical assault and/or battery, unwelcome physical conduct such as touching, blocking, staring, making sexual gestures, and making or displaying sexual drawings or photographs, verbal or physical intimidation, and unwelcome verbal conduct, such as slurs, insults, sexual propositions, sexual jokes, and other sexual comments.

### Where to report and/or get help:

**If you witness or experience harassment, please report it to bartenders, security, or management. If you are unable to access them, ask anyone in a staff t-shirt for help and they will call in the appropriate team member.** If you are not our employee and working in any capacity, please follow your company's complaint reporting procedures (typically found in your employee handbook) and know that we are also here to help and ensure your safety.

### What to expect from our team if someone harasses you or if you harass others:

Our staff take proactive steps to identify and address harmful behavior and take all reports of harassment seriously. When harassment is witnessed by or reported to our staff, we

- 1) ensure the victim's safety through connection to friends on-site plus referrals to local resources off-site as needed and
- 2) swiftly take action to ensure the safety of other community members through direct communication with the aggressor(s). This action with aggressor(s) can range from a formal documented warning to eviction from the venue depending on the severity of the behavior.

Law enforcement may be involved for behavior that is potentially criminal, though it is up to the victim whether they would like to participate in filing an official report with law enforcement.

**Harassment is never the fault of the victim.** It is our expectation that all community members behave appropriately, but if someone does harass you here, we hope we've created an environment where you feel safe and comfortable reporting it.

# Appendix A: Sample Policies

## Policy B\*

We believe everyone should feel safe during a show. We will help maintain this by not tolerating harmful behaviors, which may include non-consensual touching or verbal harassment. If a participant chooses to perpetrate harm they may be removed from the venue. If someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, no matter how minor it may seem, please do not stay silent. You can report it to any staff member and they will follow your lead and work with you to try to make sure it does not happen again and that you continue to feel safe at our venue.

Harassment of any kind is not welcome here, including but not limited to: race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender presentation, sexual orientation, age, body size, disability, appearance, religion, citizenship, pregnancy.

Harassment includes but is not limited to: stalking, verbal or physical intimidation, offensive verbal comments, physical assault and/or battery, harassing or non-consensual photography or recording, bathroom policing, inappropriate physical contact, unwelcome physical attention.

If you are still struggling to figure out what we mean by our anti-harassment policy here are some examples:

You see someone in the crowd who you think is attractive wearing your favorite band T-Shirt...

**DO** – Take a moment to ask yourself, “does that person really want you to stop their music experience to be ‘hit on’?”

Now, if you still think it’s a good idea, be prepared for rejection and be respectful by saying something specific like, ‘cool dance move’ or ‘great tee’

**DO** – Keep a reasonable distance between you and the person (NO ONE LIKES A CLOSE TALKER!). And be aware of social cues. If they move away from you or turn their head away that might be your cue to STOP TALKING.

**DO NOT** – Say “hey beautiful,” “sexy,” “cutie,” “punk-rocker,” or ask them things like, “Why aren’t you dancing?” Don’t continue to stand near them or try to engage them if they are not interested.

When the music moves you to start dancing...

**DO** – Respect people's space around you and dance in your own personal bubble and with your friends. If you happen to be part of a ‘mosh pit,’ just mosh with other people involved.

**DO NOT** – Grab someone and start dancing with them. Remember that song about whipping your hair back and forth? Even if it is great and fun, no one wants someone else's hair in their mouth!

You are trying to get through a crowd of people to see your favorite band...

**DO** – Remember that other people want to see the band. So if there’s no space ahead of them DON’T force your way to the front. If there is space, DO politely say excuse me.

**DO NOT**– Push, shove, or run over other humans. Know what’s a bummer? When someone pushes past you then stands right in front of you!

*\*This sample policy was adapted from [Riot Fest](#), who consulted with [Our Music My Body](#) in its creation.*

# Appendix B: Training & Expert Resources

## Training Providers

This is a non-exhaustive list of organizations who can facilitate trainings on these topics. For additional and up-to-date resources, download the most recent version of this guide from [our website](#).

[Calling All Crows](#): Boston HQ, work nationally

[RAINN](#): DC HQ, work nationally

[Our Music My Body](#): Chicago HQ, work nationally

[The Uncomfortable Conversation](#): Boston HQ, work nationally

[Safer Scenes](#): Ottawa, CA

[Hollaback!](#): NYC HQ, work nationally

[Safe Gigs for Women](#): UK

[Your Local Rape Crisis Center](#)

## Sexual Violence Response Resources

You can support stakeholders who experience sexual violence and your staff who receive complaints or respond to reports of sexual violence by providing referrals to specialized resources.

It's best to provide a local resource to your stakeholders. You can find your local rape crisis center and other service providers through a quick online search.

You can always provide the National Sexual Assault Hotline in the US (800.656.HOPE, [online.rainn.org](#) y [rainn.org/es](#)).

Thank you for using this guide and joining Calling All Crows and the many artists, venues, festivals, fans, and sexual violence prevention experts we have met along the way who want to see an end to sexual violence at shows and festivals. We hope this can be a helpful resource in achieving that vision.

[www.callingallcrows.org/hereforthemusic](http://www.callingallcrows.org/hereforthemusic)

