

VA Loma Linda Healthcare

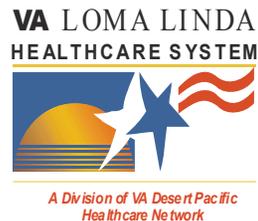
ORIENTATION
TO
VA LOMA LINDA HCS
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

*For Students, Interns, Volunteers, Contract
Workers, Work Without Compensation (WOC)
and FEE Basis*



Orientation to
VA Loma Linda Healthcare System
Policies

February, 2007



*VA Loma Linda
Healthcare System*

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TO ACCESS HEALTH SYSTEM POLICIES (HSP):GO TO

1. Doc-U-Share
 2. Click on Policies
 3. Find Loma Linda Policies
 4. Find the Service that is relevant to the specific policy responsibility .
- **Human Resources HSP 00-13**, Personnel Image & Appearance Protocol
 - **Human Resources HSP 05-23**, Employee Responsibilities and Conduct
 - **Human Resources HSP 00-39**, Language Usage
 - **Director's Office HSP 00-54**, Violent Behavior Prevention
 - **Information Technology Service Policy-** IT Coordinators, ADPACS and Security
 - **CV22 CBI Policy HSP 00-1R**, Compliance Program
 - **All Staff General HSP 00-1R4**, Privacy and Release of Information
 - **Police and Security HSP 07B-01**, Security Management Program
 - **Police and Security HSP 07B-05**, Occupational Safety, Health and Fire Protection Program.
 - **Policy and Security HSP 00-07B-06**, Parking and Traffic Regulations
 - **Director's Office HSP 00-34**, Prevention of Sexual Harassment
 - **All Staff General HSP 00-7**, Medical Center Smoke-Free Policy



Welcome

We are very pleased to welcome you to the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System.

The VA Loma Linda Healthcare System (VALLHS) is one of the top 50 employers in the Inland Empire; with over 2,268 employees and 1,270 volunteers that serve over 57,000 veterans who entrust their healthcare needs to the VA. VALLHS provides a wide variety of services through inpatient, outpatient and support program. The VALLHS has 142 beds and a 108 bed Nursing Home Care unit. The major bed services are Medicine, Surgery, Behavioral Medicine and Neurology.

The VALLHS is affiliated with two Readjustment Counseling Centers and works closely with county veterans' organizations and the State Veteran's Home in Barstow to provide services to area veterans. Postgraduate medical and dental education programs are conducted with Loma Linda University. In addition, the Medical Center is also affiliated with 65 other education institutions and provides training for a variety of allied health specialists. Enhancing access to VA care, the Medical Center, in partnership with its affiliate Loma Linda University Medical Center & Loma Linda University Health Care, operates five Primary Care Clinics in surrounding communities. (Corona, Palm Desert, Sun city, Upland and Victorville).

The LLVA has an active research program with 62 principle investigators who support over 151 research projects in all major areas of medicine and surgery, particularly musculoskeletal disease, molecular genetics, chronic heart failure molecular cytology and connective tissue.

Our Mission: Honor America's veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

Our Vision: To be a patient centered, integrated health care organization for veterans providing excellence in health care, research and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner; and a valued back-up for national emergencies.

Our Values: Trust, Respect, Excellence, Commitment and Compassion (TRECC).

EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

Our Veterans

Our male and female veterans come from many cultures, religions, and ethnicities. Some have served in battles as long ago as World War II while others are just returning from Iraqi Freedom. They deserve our respect and the best care we can provide.



Affirming the Commitment

Abraham Lincoln affirmed America's commitment to our veterans with the statement "To care for him who shall have borne the battle. . ." Many veterans face healthcare challenges as a result of their military service such as amputations, post-traumatic stress disorder, Agent Orange related illnesses, and Gulf War Syndrome. We are committed to help our veterans with these illnesses as well as primary care and to make their transition from military to VA services seamless.

Treating Veterans with CARE

Along with providing exceptional healthcare, comes the commitment to provide exceptional customer service. The Department of Veterans Affairs measures how well we provide customer service to our veterans. By following the following principles, you can help us reach exceptional Patient Satisfaction levels.

Connect—Choice of words, tone of voice, body language, and eye contact.

Appreciate—Listen, understand, acknowledge, and express concern. Let veterans know you appreciate the situations in which they find themselves.

Respond—to the veterans in ways that help. Listen, clarify, use common language, offer possible solutions, find someone to help when you can't, avoid using rules as absolutes, and create expectations.

Empower—veterans to be partners in their own health care.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Phone Numbers

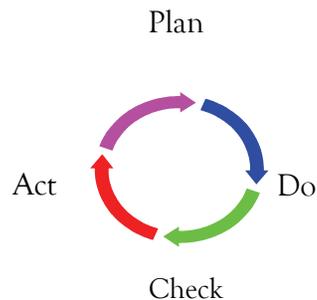
Code Blue	3333
Code Red for Fire	2222
Police Emergency	1444
Elect./Utility Failure	2889/2184

Additional Phone Numbers

Compliance/Privacy Officer	6183
EEO	2315
Emergency Room	2114
Engineering Emergency (24 hrs)	2184
Human Resources	2872
Industrial Hygiene	1510
Infection Control Office	2944
Information Management	6042
Information Security Officer	2993
Nurse Recruiter	6879
Occupational Health	2153
Patient Safety Office	2950
Performance Improvement	6171
Radiation Safety	2704
Safety Office	6036
VISN 22 Help Desk	4767
Workers Compensation	1734/2874

SYSTEM REDESIGN/CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The VA Loma Linda Healthcare System (HCS) continually strives to make changes in our system to improve what we do. We have a Systems Redesign Council that oversees improvements taking place throughout our HCS. The executive leadership team sits on this council in addition to representatives from various services. Improvements take place through the use of Redesign/Improvement Teams and several mechanisms. For example, we use System Redesign Collaborative teams to address VHA National performance measures; staff-initiated teams to address issues staff identify as needing improvement, and Goal Sharing teams to address opportunities for improvement identified by front-line staff. All teams are eligible to compete for cash awards in the annual System Redesign/Performance Improvement Fair. The HCS model for improvement is used by all teams.



Further information regarding System Redesign/Performance Improvement is available in Healthcare Quality at extension 6171.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures provide an accountability framework for driving performance. Performance measures supply specific information about an organization's performance in important care, treatment, and service areas and numerically display an organization's ability to affect change in clinical processes. These measures are a means to benchmark with VA facilities in our network and nationwide. Many of the clinical performance measures can be addressed during the patient's primary care visits.

Some of the clinical performance measures that we look at are:

- Colorectal Cancer Screening
- Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening
- Heart Failure
- Hypertension
- Acute Myocardial Infarction
- Wait Times
- Immunizations
- Major Depressive Disorder
- Alcohol Screening
- Tobacco Counseling
- Diabetes



PATIENT SAFETY

Reporting Adverse Events and Close Calls

You are encouraged to report adverse events or close calls to your supervisor and to the Patient Safety Manager, Risk Manager, or Safety Officer/Specialist. The Patient Incident Reporting Package is the preferred way of reporting adverse events or close calls connected to patient care events. The following are some of the types of incidents reported: suicide/suicide attempt, patient abuse, missing patient, homicide, falls, medication errors, patient involved in fire, sexual assaults, patient to patient/patient to staff assaults, transfusion errors, failure to obtain informed consent, deaths, and injury not otherwise listed. Each incident will be assessed and scored by the Patient Safety Manager. Some reported events/close calls may be trended over time and will require no immediate action. A root cause analysis will be completed on all events that caused a sentinel event. Sentinel events include death resulting from a medication error or other treatment related error, patient suicide in a setting where they receive 24-hour care, surgery on the wrong patient or body part, and hemolytic transfusion reaction involving the administration of blood or blood products having major group incompatibilities.



Root Cause Analysis (RCA)

Root Cause Analysis is a process used to identify the basic reasons that caused or contributed to an adverse event or close call. An RCA focuses on the processes or systems rather than individual performance. RCAs are based on the knowledge that most errors come from faulty systems rather than human error. During an RCA, an interdisciplinary team reviews the incident (s) by asking what and why until all aspects of the process are reviewed and all contributing factors identified.

Aggregate RCA teams review data on suicide attempts, medication errors, falls, and missing patients.

NURSING EMPLOYMENT

Join VALLHS nurses and learn why the VA is the leading employer of nurses across the nation. At VALLHS, nurses are respected as leaders in providing quality care. Nursing skills and professional accomplishments are supported and rewarded. Nurses at VALLHS practice in settings across the continuum of care including advanced practice as Nurse Practitioners and CRNAs, acute care nursing, specialty care, primary care, long term care, and home care.

Benefits include:

- RN, NP, CRNA: 26 vacation days per year
- LPN: 13–26 vacation days per year (increases with length of service)
- 13 days sick leave per year (accumulative)
- 10 paid Federal holidays per year
- 10% evening or night differential
- 25% week-end differential
- Health, Life, and Long Term Care Insurance
- Transfer opportunities
- Recruitment/Retention bonuses
- Education Assistance
- Education Leave



VALLHS always accepts nursing applications, so please call our Nurse Recruiter at (909) 825-7084, x6879 for additional information.

APPEARANCE CODE

Most employees at the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System have contact with patients, their families, and the public. Employees will wear dress appropriately according to their position at this facility.



Guidelines

Clothing: As an employee at the Loma Linda VA Healthcare System, staff are encouraged to reflect and promote a positive image in the performance of assigned duties to include wearing the appropriate clothing attire. Specifically, facility policy requires staff to wear attire that does not negatively reflect upon your position, our image, or our mission to the veteran. Staff are to refrain from wearing clothing that does not reflect these objectives to include, but not limited to, attire that may be seen as suggestive, t-shirts, blue jeans, shorts, sweats, flip-flops, halter/tube tops, tank tops, clothing with inappropriate messages and/or slogans, etc.. This would also include any type of clothing that is faded, ragged or torn. If staff are required to perform tasks that may dirty or damage their clothing, the supervisor may contact FMS to acquire disposable coveralls. Although we unofficially recognize a “casual Friday”, the actual phrase is “business casual” requiring staff to dress in a manner that represents a *professional work environment* promoting the VA’s image. Staff are also asked to adhere to acceptable grooming standards when representing the facility in the performance of their assigned duties. Some Services have specific uniform and grooming policies in place, which staff are to adhere. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff attire does not compromise the VA’s image and when needed, contact Employee Relations Section in Human Resources for advisory assistance. **Hair/Grooming:** All hair, beards, sideburns, and mustaches must be clean, and neatly groomed for its length in a related job assignment.

Shoes: Shoes conducive to a safe hospital environment will be worn. Shoes should be kept clean and appropriate to the employee’s position. For safety reasons, “flip-flops” are not permitted in the workplace unless there are medical reasons and safety concerns are minimal.

Jewelry: Employees working patient care areas will limit jewelry. Necklace and items worn around the neck will be worn under the clothing to the extent they will stay. Tasteful rings that are not safety problems may be worn. Small stud earrings and tight fitted hoops can be worn in the ear/nose. Personal pins may be worn if these do not exceed approximately 1 inch in size.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Continuous Readiness

The VA Loma Linda Healthcare System undergoes several surveys. One important survey is Joint Commission for Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAHO) for Hospitals, Long Term Care, Home Health Care, and Behavioral Health Care. These surveys focus on systems critical to the safety and the quality of care, treatment, and services. Maintaining these accreditations enables us to be looked on in the community as a leader in healthcare. By being continuously ready for surveys by complying with all standards, enables us to provide outstanding healthcare to our patients as well as pass the surveys. Key focus areas for the surveys include Assessment and Care, Communication, Credentialing and Privileging Practitioners, Assessing Competency, Equipment Use, Orientation and Training, Infection Control, Information Management, Medication Management, Organizational Structure, Patients’ Rights and Ethics, Staffing Effectiveness, Physical Environment, and Quality Improvement. Staff conduct mock tracer surveys to ensure we are compliant with all standards. During this process the survey team follows a patient through treatment and care at our facility. The team



- Assesses the interrelationships among disciplines and departments
- Evaluates performance processes relevant to the patient’s care and treatment with a focus on the integration and coordination of distinct but related processes
- Identifies vulnerabilities in the care process.

INFECTION CONTROL

Bloodborne Pathogens, Universal Precautions

The concept of Universal Precautions is designed to protect health-care workers (HCWs), patients and visitors from the transmission of bloodborne pathogens in the hospital setting. Such pathogens include Hepatitis B, C, and HIV. The basic concept is that every patient's blood/body fluids are to be considered as being potentially infectious and treated as such. TO PROTECT HEALTHCARE WORKERS, PATIENTS, AND VISITORS, the following are required.

- **Hand Hygiene**

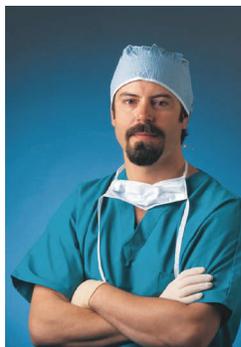
Hands must be washed prior to entering a patient's room, after any physical contact with the patient or potentially contaminated articles, upon leaving the patient's room, and after gloves or other barrier garments are removed. Antiseptic hand rinses may be used unless hands are visibly soiled. Healthcare workers providing direct patient care shall NOT wear artificial nails or extenders. Natural nail tips shall be kept less than ¼-inch long.

- **Gloves**

Disposable gloves are worn for any anticipated contact with blood, blood products, or other potentially infectious materials and for ALL phlebotomy procedures. Gloves must be changed when they become contaminated, torn or punctured, and between patients. Hands must be washed after gloves are removed. Disposable gloves may NOT be washed or reused. Gloves are NOT to be worn for routine transport of bagged specimens or of patients.

- **Gowns, Aprons**

Gowns and/or plastic aprons are worn if soiling of personal clothing is likely or anticipated. Environmental Care Section (ECS) will



COMPLIANCE AND BUSINESS INTEGRITY

Compliance is an oversight process that ensures employee actions are consistent with the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System's Mission, Vision, and Values. Our Compliance Program focuses on patient registration, medical record documentation by health care providers, and medical coding and billing of health care services. Employees should understand the specific laws, rules, policies, and regulations that affect their jobs with VHA and our Network. This includes employee conduct and responsibilities. All employees have a role in the care of our patients, either directly or indirectly, and also have a role in Compliance.



All

Fraud Prevention

Healthcare Fraud is a crime. It's committed when dishonest providers or consumers intentionally submit, or make someone else submit false claims. Examples of healthcare fraud are:

- Billing for services not actually performed
- Falsifying a patient's diagnosis to justify tests, surgeries, or other procedures that aren't medically necessary.
- Billing for a more costly service than the one actually performed
- Accepting kickbacks for patient referrals

Patient fraud includes:

- Filing claims for services or medications not received.
- Using someone else's coverage or insurance card.

Reporting Fraud

Employees should know the process of reporting potential compliance failures. The chain of command for reporting fraud is

1. Your supervisor
2. A higher level manager
3. Your compliance officer
4. The Compliance and Business Integrity (CBI) HelpLine (1-866-842-4357).

Information provided to the HelpLine cannot remain confidential or the incident could not be investigated. You can remain anonymous. That means, your name will not be used as the source of the information. If you think you are being retaliated against for calling the HelpLine, you need to report that too.

RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING ABUSE OF VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

VA staff are required to recognize and report any “reasonable suspicion” of abuse committed by someone who has a special relationship with the person. This might be a caregiver, spouse, sibling, or child. Drawing upon your training and experience, within your capacity or scope of employment, you must report if you suspect child, elder, or vulnerable adult abuse.

Abuse may be:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Abandonment
- Psychological or emotional

The medical and/or non-medical practitioner who has actual knowledge that a child, dependent adult or elder has been the victim of abuse are required to report observed abuse to the Department of Children’s Service, the Adult/Elder Abuse Registry, or to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction, by telephone as soon as possible. In addition, providers of medical services to persons who have suffered injuries by means of a firearm or by another as a result of assault or abuse, are required to report the abuse and/or injuries to the local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction. The verbal report of child abuse must be followed by a written report within 36 hours. The verbal report of dependent adult, elder abuse, or other abuse cases must be followed by a written report within two working days. All licensed staff in this healthcare system are required to make child, dependent adult, and elder abuse reports.



UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

launder employees' uniforms that become contaminated with blood/body fluids during the course of performance of duties.

- **Surgical Masks, Eye Protection, Face Shields**

Face and eye protection are required when there is a potential for splashing, spraying, or splattering of blood/body fluids. Prescription eyeglasses may be used instead of goggles as long as these are equipped with solid side shields. If goggles or other protective eyewear are used in lieu of a face shield, a surgical mask must also be worn.

NOTE: All barrier garments must be removed immediately before leaving the work area and disposed of in regular (clear bag) trash containers. Reusable goggles or face shields, if used, must be cleaned with an approved germicide after use.

- **CPR Masks**

Disposable masks with one-way valves are utilized when performing CPR. These are stocked in wall-mounted clear plastic boxes throughout the medical center and on all emergency crash carts.

- **Specimens**

All specimens will be placed in a clear plastic bag (labeled "Biohazard"), in designated areas on nursing units, prior to transport to the Lab.

- **Needles, Scalpel Blades, and Other Disposable Sharp Instruments**

Disposable needles, syringes, scalpel blades, IV guide wires, blood tubes and other sharp objects are discarded in the red puncture-resistant containers. Needles are not to be recapped, sheared, broken or bent; however, if recapping is unavoidable, a resheathing device or a one-handed method is utilized. Forceps are to be used to remove needles from syringes and scalpel blades from holders. A variety of safety products are available for use; employees must seek instruction prior to using these products. All safety products must be used according to directions at all times.

INFECTION CONTROL

- **Blood/Body Fluid Spills**

Personnel shall immediately place paper towels over the area. LTS 13000 will then be used to solidify the contents; as an alternative, LpH (phenolic germicide) can be used to disinfect the area. Personnel shall wear disposable gloves.

- **Medical Waste**

Certain waste - suction canisters, thoracentesis/paracentesis containers, waste from lab, hemodialysis, etc. is considered to be potentially infectious and is disposed of as medical waste. Refer to Infection Control Guideline for Waste Management.

- **Eating and Drinking**

There shall be no eating, drinking, manipulating contact lenses, or applying lip balm in work areas where there is a potential for contamination with blood/body fluids.

- **Refrigerators**

Food may not be kept in the same refrigerators where specimens or medications are stored. Food must be stored at temperatures 34-40 degree F; medications at temperatures 38-45 deg. F. Temperature logs must be maintained for patient refrigerators.

Other Precautions

Selected patients are placed in Strict, Respiratory, Contact or Contact-plus Isolation:

- **Strict (Yellow sign)**

1. Communicable diseases transmitted by both air and direct contact e.g., herpes zoster, chickenpox.
2. The patient is placed in a private room with negative air and the door closed. All persons entering the room must wear gown, gloves, and surgical masks.

- **Respiratory (Blue sign)**

1. Communicable diseases transmitted via the airborne route - e.g., pulmonary TB, meningococcal disease, Rubella, Mumps,

PATIENT ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Patient abuse or neglect is any action or failure to act that causes unreasonable suffering, misery, or harm to the patient. It includes physically striking or sexually assaulting a patient. It also includes withholding of necessary food, physical care, and medical attention.



Abuse includes verbal or insulting behavior (provoked or not) or remarks towards or about a patient, abandonment, neglect, threats, intimidation, and/or harassment, unreasonable physical restraints, stealing from, or taking advantage of with regard to financial or other personal matters.

The abuse of a patient may be cause for dismissal.

Reporting is required for any “reasonable suspicion” of abuse. The intent to abuse is not required for abuse to have occurred. The patient’s perception of abuse is an essential component of whether or not abuse occurred. An employee who becomes aware of possible patient abuse must come forward immediately and report the incident to their supervisor or he/she may be subject to disciplinary action.

The staff person who first identifies a potential victim must ensure that the victim is stabilized medically and is protected physically. He/she should then notify their supervisor and the patient’s attending provider. The physician will evaluate the situation and conduct a physical and mental status examination. A “Report of Special Incident Involving a Beneficiary” (VA Form 10-2633) must then be completed.

PREVENTING VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Workplace violence is any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse that occurs while working. More assaults occur in healthcare and social services settings. Workplace violence and threats can be committed by co-workers, customers, strangers, and personal relations.



Zero Tolerance Standards

- Intimidation, threats, or acts of violence are prohibited. Threats include harassment, stalking, discrimination, threatening e-mail, manipulation, humiliation, demands, verbal abuse, and coercion.
- Guns, knives, as legally defined, are not allowed on VA property.
- If you are a victim of, or a witness to, a suspected violation of this standard, report the violation to your immediate supervisor (if that person is not a part of the violation). All incidents will be immediately reported to the VA Police at ext. 2135.
- Supervisors or persons in authority who receive a report of violation of the Zero Tolerance Standard should investigate, document, and report to appropriate authorities.
- Employees found in violation of this standard can face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal. Criminal charges may apply.

Tips to Help Avoid Violent Behavior

- Allow the person to express concern
- Be empathetic. Be an active listener.
- Avoid being defensive
- Follow through with their problem
- Apologize, if appropriate.
- Avoid blaming others or “its not my job.”

OTHER PRECAUTIONS

- H. flu meningitis and epiglottitis
2. The patient is placed in a private room with negative air and the door closed. All persons entering the room must wear the appropriate respiratory protection: surgical masks for diseases OTHER than TB; approved respirators for TB.
 3. Refer to Tuberculosis Control Plan for further details.
 4. Please call Infection Control for any questions.

- **Contact (Orange sign)**

1. Communicable diseases (epidemiologically significant microorganisms) transmitted by direct or indirect contact – e.g., MRSA, multiply-resistant gram-negative organisms, ESBL (extended spectrum beta lactamase-producing) organisms.
2. The patient is placed in a private room; patients with the same disease may be cohorted.
3. Personnel must wear gloves when entering the room; gowns and surgical masks for close contact with patient's secretions, excretions, or wound drainage.



- **Contact-Plus (Purple sign)**

1. Communicable diseases (epidemiologically significant microorganisms) transmitted with direct or indirect contact – e.g., VRE, *Clostridium difficile*.
2. The patient is placed in a private room; patients with same disease may be cohorted.
3. Personnel must wear gloves and gown when entering the room; surgical masks for close contact with patient's secretions, excretions or wound drainage.

Please refer to the Infection Control Manual for other details.

HIV Testing

Testing is only performed with informed, written consent, and must always be accompanied by pre- and post-test counseling. Consent

INFECTION CONTROL

forms are located in all clinical areas. Test results must always be presented to the patient in person.

Healthcare Worker Responsibilities

- **Hepatitis B Vaccine**

All HCWs are entitled to receive the vaccine at no charge. You should be aware of your immune status to childhood diseases.

- **TB Surveillance**

All new employees (including volunteers) will receive a TB skin test prior to employment, unless they have a documented history of a positive skin test or past disease. Employees and volunteers with negative skin tests will be retested annually; employees performing certain high-risk activities such as bronchoscopies, intubations, and administration of aerosolized pentamidine, should be retested every 6 months.

- **Blood/Body Fluid Exposures**

If you sustain such an exposure (needlestick injury, mucous membrane splash, etc) you must first wash the affected area with water, report the incident promptly to management. BBP experienced physician available 24/7 for medical management. If the incident occurs during off-tours, holidays and weekends, report to the ER; you must follow-up with Occupational Health the next regular working day. Please refer to the Occupational Health guideline in the Infection Control Manual for more information. The IC Manual is located on the VA Intranet under "Clinical Services."



Our main objective is to protect our patients from nosocomial infections and to provide a safe environment for our patients, visitors, employees, volunteers, and students. If you have questions, please contact Infection Control at extension 2944.

SECURITY

Be alert for persons or packages that look suspicious or out of place. Report all suspicious persons and packages to the VA Police at extension 2135. Also contact extension 1444, for emergencies, including disruptive behavior or assaults.

Contraband

All persons entering the VA grounds and building have implied consent to the inspection of all packages, luggage, and contents in their possession, including vehicles. Contraband includes:

- Firearms, ammunition, mace type products, and weapons
- Illicit drugs and drug taking devices
- Intoxicating beverages
- Flammable liquids

Items considered hazardous for a specific patient might include:

- Belts, shoe strings, and hosiery
- Manicure items, razors, and scissors
- Matches

Badges

ID Badges: All workers, whether they are VA employees, contract workers, or volunteers are required to wear Identification badges. Vendors must check in with the Police and obtain a badge. The badges are to be worn face-out (with name/photo showing) on clothing above the waist.

In these days of national threats, we cannot be too careful. Stop and question people who are in staff areas that are not wearing an appropriate ID badge.

Vehicle Permits

All privately owned vehicles and motorcycles operated on VA grounds by employees must be registered with the VA Police.



PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

VHA Privacy Policy Training

All staff, including contract staff, work without compensation (WOC), and fee basis staff and volunteers are required to complete VHA Privacy Policy Training within the first 30 days of employment and annually, thereafter.

The VA must comply with Privacy rules when creating, maintaining, using, and disclosing individually identifiable health information.

Our Commitment to Patient Privacy

To ensure that patient information remains confidential and private, please comply with the following:

- No unattended computers (logged-on) with patient information visible
- No unattended office documents or medical charts with patient information
- No unattended fax machines, copiers, shredding containers, or printers with patient information
- No overhead pages with patient clinic information
- No patient information in wastebaskets. De-identify any documents or other items before disposing in the trash. Shred items containing personal health information.
- No personal health information left on answering machines or voice-mail systems.
- No personal health information sent through Outlook unless it is de-identified or secured in some manner, such as encryption.
- No discussion of patient health information in public areas or with people who do not have a need to know.
- Do check patient Opt-Out preference* before providing patient name, location, or condition information to visitors and callers.

*Veterans have the right to request VHA to restrict its use of or disclosure of individually identifiable health information to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations. Veterans also may restrict the disclosure of this information to the next-of-kin, family, or significant others involved in the individual's care. Veterans also have the right to opt-out of the in-patient facility directory.



ETHICS

The Principles of Ethical Conduct

Staff are to refrain from situations that reflect unethical conduct, to indulge but not limited to:

1. Public service is a public trust.
2. Do not hold financial interests that conflict with your work.
3. Employees shall not engage in financial transactions with staff, veterans, or beneficiaries; adherence to Drug-Free Workplace requirements; conduct (on and off duty) unbecoming of a VA staff member; Hatch Act violations (political activities); misuse or damage to government property; HIPAA and/or Privacy Act violations; conflict of interest using (unethical relationships—financial, patient/staff, outside entities, etc.); and patient abuse.
4. An employee shall not solicit or accept a gift or other item of monetary value from a subordinate or prohibited source unless authorized to do so.
5. Employees shall put forth an honest effort in the performance of their duties.
6. Do not exceed your authority or make promises binding the Government.
7. You cannot use your employment at the VA for your private gain.
8. As a VA representative your actions must be impartial and fair. You cannot show preferential treatment.
9. Employees shall protect and conserve Federal property.
10. You are required to report fraud, waste, and abuse to appropriate authorities.
11. You are required to adhere to legal authorities providing equal opportunity for all regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age or handicap.



Manual contains further information to HCS Policy 05-23, *Employee Responsibilities and Conduct*.

ETHICS

Fundraising

Personal fundraising, even for good causes is prohibited within Government office. You cannot raise funds for a cause by using your VA title. You can not raise funds from patients or staff that you supervise.



The only exceptions to these fundraising rules are the Combined Federal Campaign or other activities approved by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Rules pertaining to political fundraising are covered by the Hatch Act.

Bio-Ethics Consult

Each patient has the right to participate in the consideration of ethical issues that arise regarding his or her care. Conflicts in patient care decisions may be referred to the Healthcare System Bioethics Team.

All personnel involved in patient care decisions may request a Bioethics Consults. The team will hear cases at the request of an attending physician, VALLHS clinical staff closely connected with the case, administration, the patient, the patient's family, or a surrogate. A request for Bioethics consultation may be made through a consultation request. In emergent situations, any team member may be contacted regarding the consultation.



INFORMATION SECURITY

Cyber Security Training

All users must complete Information Security Training before he or she can be granted access to any VA automated (Computer) system.

Ethics and Confidentiality Awareness

- Never share any security codes
- Log off the computer each time you leave your work area
- You should never send sensitive information through any electronic method without using approved encryption method.
- Always be aware of your environment when discussing sensitive issues. Only discuss sensitive issues with those who have a legitimate need to know.
- All users are ethically responsible for safeguarding sensitive electronic and hard-copy information.
- Maintain control and dispose of hard-copy data properly.
- Understand that electronic mail (e-mail) is for appropriate, work-related use and is subject to monitoring and disciplinary actions if misused.
- Understand Internet access policies; users will be subject to monitoring and disciplinary actions for misuse of Internet access.
- Access only information needed for the performance of duties.



General IT Support-VISN 22 Help Desk

The staff at the VISN 22 Help Desk, extension 4767 are available to help you with your information security questions; computer, telephone, and pager problems and requests. When you contact them, they will enter a work order for your request so that an information management employee can respond to it.

INFORMATION SECURITY

Information security consists of measures and controls that protect information technology systems against denial of service and unauthorized (accidental or intentional) disclosure, modification, or destruction of the systems and their data. Information relating to patients, employees, and financial and research records are all examples of sensitive data that should be treated as confidential. Sensitive data should be kept confidential.

Passwords

A good password is hard to guess. It does not contain a word that others know is important to you like your spouse's name or your favorite football team. It contains at least eight characters that include upper case letters, lower case letters, numbers, and "special" characters such as #, &, and %. You should create several good passwords if you have access to multiple computer systems. Passwords are changed at least every 90 days. Never share your password with anyone. If you suspect someone is trying or may have obtained your password, change it immediately, and inform your Information Security Officer (ISO).



Antivirus Tips

Do not open any files attached to e-mail from an unknown, suspicious, or untrustworthy source. Be cautious of attachments even from people you know. Some viruses utilize e-mail to send infected attachments to everyone in the individual's address book to trick unsuspecting users into opening the attachments and infecting their machines. Delete chain e-mails and junk e-mail, also known as spam; do not forward or reply. Before downloading files from the internet, ensure the source is legitimate and reputable.

PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Zero Tolerance for Sexual Harassment

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.



The VA Loma Linda Healthcare System has a policy for zero tolerance for sexual harassment. There are two types of sexual harassment.

Quid Pro Quo is submission to sexual

demands as a condition of employment. The threat may be spoken or unspoken. Failure to comply can result in loss of job, unfavorable evaluations, and loss of promotions.

The Hostile Working Environment is more common and more subtle. This includes behaviors such as telling dirty jokes; making sexual comments or innuendoes; touching others inappropriately; making suggestive sounds or whistling at a person; making suggestive gestures, following a person or blocking a person's way; leering or ogling suggestively at a person; and displaying suggestive pictures, calendars, or magazines. The behaviors are repeated, unwelcome, offensive, and involve sexual content.

The best way to get the unwanted behavior to stop is to communicate with the individual responsible for the harassment and ask them to stop the behavior. If the behavior persists and you believe you are a victim of sexual harassment, contact your VA supervisor and/or the EEO Office at extension 2315 and/or your registry employer. Allegations of such conduct will be responded to immediately, appropriately, and with the seriousness they deserve. If you are a witness to an incident, which could be construed to be sexual harassment, you have the right to report the behavior to the appropriate officials.

SAFETY

Goal

The goal of Safety, Occupational Health, and Environment of Care is to provide a safe environment for patients, staff, visitors, volunteers, contract workers, and others who enter the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System. This is accomplished by complying with JCAHO, OSHA, VA Central Office (VACO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other regulatory agencies, providing ongoing education to workers, conducting routine inspections of the environment, and investigating safety hazard complaints.

General Safety

1. Unhealthy or unsafe conditions: EC Guideline-1.2, “Unsafe or Unhealthy Condition Reporting Program,” describes the procedure for reporting such conditions to Safety. Our staff will respond, assess the condition, and make immediate and long-term recommendations as necessary. We work closely with Engineering and other services/healthcare groups to ensure resolution.
2. Always be aware of your surroundings – e.g., protruding objects, sharp objects, slip/trip hazards, and floods.
3. Hazardous chemicals, radiation: Know policies and procedures for your area regarding use, disposal, and emergencies.

Biomedical Engineering

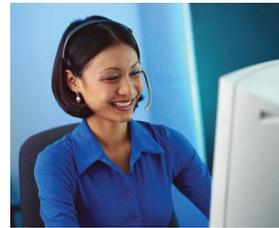
The Medical Equipment Management Program (Biomedical Engineering Section) ensures that medical equipment is checked prior to initial use and performs routine maintenance to reduce hazards to patients and staff. The staff also repair damaged equipment. They can be reached at Ext. 2578.



SAFETY

Ergonomics

Ergonomics is the practice of arranging your workstation to fit your body. It also means rearranging your work area to keep your body in a comfortable position. Avoid reaching, straining, and twisting by positioning your computer screen, keyboard, and other workstation tools correctly. Employ good body mechanics and posture throughout your daily work routine. If you have any questions or need assistance with your workstation, please call Lynn Scrgihdes at extension 1510.



Work-Related Injuries

These injuries must be reported to your supervisor and Occupational Health immediately. You will be asked to complete required forms: please be very specific when you report this incident.

Traffic Control

It is very important that designated entry and exit procedures are followed. It is the responsibility of all personnel to park in the appropriate designated parking areas. The posted speed limit is 20 mph. The VALL will not invalidate or make reimbursement for parking violations.



Accident/Damage to Grounds

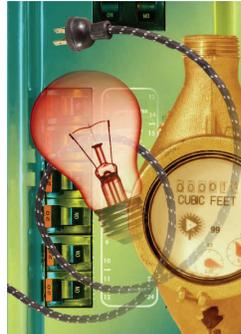
If an accident occurs while on the VA property which may or may not have resulted in damage to the grounds, please report it immediately to the Police at extension 2136.

SAFETY

Utilities

Know what to do in case of an emergency of failure of utility systems.

- **Medical gases**
 1. O₂: Portable tanks from SPD
 2. Medical air: Portable H-tanks from SPD
 3. Vacuum: Portable machines from SPD
- **Water**
 1. Use water from water tanks sparingly
 2. Bottled water
 3. Alcohol gel products for hand hygiene
 4. Bathing products from SPD
- **Electrical**
 1. Telephone, Pagers failure: Runner, Radios
 2. Patient call system: Buddy system, increase rounds, use of other things such as bells, and cohort patients
 3. Computer: Manual paper system
 4. Flashlights: Make sure you have flashlights and functioning batteries in your location.



Smoking

The VALLHS is a “no smoking” facility. This means that smoking is not allowed indoors, on patios and balconies, and is only allowed in designated areas.

SAFETY



Fire Safety

Fire safety is critical in the VALLHS, and everyone is responsible for being knowledgeable about our policies and participating in regular training sessions.

RACE

- R = Rescue
- A = Pull alarm, alert other occupants, call Ext 2222
- C = Confine fire (close doors)
- E = Extinguish or Evacuate

1. Become familiar with your evacuation plan (posted signs in each area).
 - a. Horizontal: move patients/staff away from hazardous area
 - b. Vertical: total evacuation
- Be knowledgeable regarding your responsibilities

Emergency Management

Your role during a drill or actual incident includes the following:

1. Follow your departmental plan
2. Check in with your supervisor
3. Report to your normal place of duty
4. Assess yourself – do you need medical treatment?
5. Assess your area – look for hazards, injuries
6. Assess supplies on hand – compare to need
7. Report status of area to supervisor



JERRY L. PETTIS MEMORIAL VETERANS HOSPITAL AND LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

