Environment of Care Topics

Emergency Preparedness (Disaster Plan):

Emergencies may be internal (i.e., fire) or external (i.e., plane crash). Two disaster drills are conducted per year. Each service has developed a service-specific Emergency Management Plan for dealing with emergencies that may affect their service. All house officers and medical students should report to their respective service/ward in the event of a disaster.

At Omaha, in the event of a Tornado Warning (tornado has been sighted), evacuate the first floor outpatient clinic (OPC) by going to the basement of OPC or into the main building. In the main building, assist patients, visitors, and staff into corridors, close doors to patient rooms, and stay away from windows.

At Lincoln, in the event of a Tornado Warning, evacuate to the basement inner hall.

At Grand Island, in the event of a Tornado Warning, evacuate to the basement.

At CBOC, in the event of a Tornado Warning, evacuate to basement or inner-most area.

If you have any questions, please contact:
- Safety Officers – at Extension 4371 or at Extension 4461 (Omaha)
- Safety Officer – at Extension 2438

Equipment Management:

All equipment must have a ground prong or be double insulated to prevent electrical shock. Any equipment that malfunctions or appears to “short out” should be taken out of service, labeled as to the problem, and reported to the person in charge of the area. The patient’s well being should be immediately addressed.

Any personal electrical equipment must be checked by Facilities Management prior to use.

If you have any questions, please contact:
- Engineering at Extension 4456 (Omaha)
- Engineering at Extension 6400 (Lincoln)
- Engineering at Extension 2135 (Grand Island)

Fire Safety:

To report a fire – shout “Code Red,” the code word for fire. Think of RACE to a fire:
1. R – Rescue anyone in immediate danger.
2. A – Activate the manual pull station located near stairwell exits. Then call the Operator at X3333 and report the exact location of the fire.
3. C – Contain the fire (close the door).
4. E – Extinguish/evacuate:
Use the fire extinguisher if your safety can be assured. Extinguishers are located in hose cabinets near stairwell doors. To use the extinguisher, think of **PASS** the extinguisher:

- **P** – Pull the pin.
- **A** – Aim the nozzle at the BASE of the fire.
- **S** – Squeeze or depress the handle.
- **S** – Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire.

Evacuate horizontally first, across the same floor to the other side beyond smoke doors. If the evacuation route across the same floor is blocked, the next route is **DOWN** the stairs. Never use the elevators to evacuate.

All storage must be 18 inches below the sprinkler heads.

If you have any questions, please contact:
- **Safety Officers** – at Extension 4371 or at Extension 4461
- **Safety Officer** – at Extension 2438

**General Safety:**

All gas cylinders, either empty or full, must be secured. To prevent injury to the back, obtain assistance with lifting or use a lifting/moving device. Push – don’t pull. Lift with the legs.

If you have any questions, please contact:
- **Safety Officers** – at Extension 4371 or at Extension 4461
- **Safety Officer** – at Extension 2438

**Hazardous Materials:**

Each area is to have **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)** for the hazardous materials located in the area. An MSDS contains information on:

- Identity of the product
- Hazardous ingredients
- Physical and chemical characteristics
- Physical hazards such as fire or explosion
- Reactivity (stability)
- Health hazards – inhalation, ingestion, absorption
- Precautions for safe handling and spill cleanup
- Control measures – ventilation, personal protective equipment

Refer to these MSDS if you are unsure of how to protect yourself from a chemical or how to take immediate action should be exposed to a chemical.

Product labels must contain the chemical identity, hazard warning, and manufacturer name and address.

If you have any questions, please contact:
- **Safety Officers** – at Extension 4371 or at Extension 4461
Police and Security:

VA Police Officers are trained and certified as Federal Law Enforcement Officers by the VA. They have full law enforcement authority on and for the property of the VA.

The Chief of Police @ X3204 (Omaha).
The Police Service also can be reached:
---X3202 and X3203 (Omaha)
---X6640 (Lincoln)
---X2198 and X2195 (Grand Island)
---911 (CBOCs)

Workplace Violence:
Any person witnessing or receiving a report of inappropriate or violent behavior should immediately notify the VA Police. This can be done by contacting the VA Police directly or initiating the Code Green Alarm Code at X3333. Code Green is the designated code for special assistance for a potentially violent situation. This code will be announced over the intercom system and the Code Green Team will respond. Panic or Code Green Buttons are located in many areas in the hospital. Be familiar with the buttons in your area. The VA police will assume control of any situation that has or is about to become assaultive in nature. Notify the VA Police should you encounter a written or telephone contact of a threatening nature.

Bomb Threat:
Any person who receives a written or telephone bomb threat needs to immediately inform the VA Police. If the threat is made by telephone the person receiving the call should do the following:
- Remain calm and listen to what the caller is saying and how they are saying it
- If possible, prolong the conversation to obtain as much information as possible
- DO NOT interrupt the caller
- If the caller seems cooperative, ask as many questions about the bomb as possible (i.e., type of explosive, location, time of detonation, caller’s location, and name). A bomb threat checklist has been provided to service chiefs and is a helpful tool in obtaining information from the caller.

Handling Suspicious Packages And Mail:
Contact the VA Police immediately to report any suspicious activities or to report a suspicious package. If you see an unopened suspicious letter or package, DO NOT OPEN IT!
Parking:
Parking in unauthorized spaces, on the grass, on the gravel or creating a space where there are no lines is a violation of 38 CFR 1.128 (b) 25-29 and could result in a parking citation or courtesy violation notice.

Vehicle Registrations: ALL EMPLOYEES WHO DRIVE AND PARK A VEHICLE ON VA PROPERTY WILL REGISTER WITH THE VA POLICE.

Police Courtesies:
- **Vehicle Jump Starts.** If for some reason your vehicle’s electrical system fails to start your vehicle, you can contact the Police Service for a courtesy jump-start.
- **Opening Office Doors:** If you lock yourself out of your office/work space during administrative hours, first contact EMS for assistance to get into your office. In accordance with NWIHC Policy POL-003, Paragraph 4a, VA Police will not unlock doors unless prior arrangements have been made by the service manager, nursing coordinator or for emergency situations.
- **Employee Security Escorts:** The VA Police Service makes an attempt to patrol the parking lots during shift changes. If you are leaving the facility during the nighttime hours you can contact the Police Service for an escort to your vehicle and an officer will provide the escort. Please keep in mind if the officers are busy at the time of your call, you may have to wait for the escort.
- **Opening Vehicle Doors:** Due to liability issues, the VA Police Service will not attempt to open any privately owned vehicles where the keys are locked inside. Individuals must call a locksmith.

Helpful Crime Prevention And Safety Hints:
1. Remember to lock your vehicle doors and turn off your headlights.
2. Do not keep valuables in plain view in your vehicle. If possible lock all valuables in your trunk.
3. Secure your valuables while in the Medical Center.
4. Be aware of your surroundings. IF YOU SEE ANY SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES PLEASE CONTACT THE VA POLICE IMMEDIATELY.
5. Check to make sure you have your keys before shutting your vehicle or office door.
6. Always have your keys in your hand when approaching your vehicle. Look inside your vehicle for possible intruders before getting in the vehicle.
7. Take care when walking on ice or snow. If you see a very icy area you can either utilize the orange and white barrels of salt/sand mixture and spread a little on the area or contact the Police Service. If you see a slippery spot in the hospital contact EMS and try to keep people out of the area until the problem can be resolved.
8. The "SPEED LIMIT" on VA Property is 15 miles per hour. Come to a complete stop at all stop signs.
9. ALWAYS HAVE YOUR VA PICTURE I.D. VISIBLE WHILE AT WORK.
10. TAKE YOUR VA PICTURE I.D. HOME. Do not leave your I.D. at work. In case the "THREAT LEVEL" is raised you will not be allowed on the property without it.
11. Please be mindful that some of veterans/guests may have slower reaction times while driving. Be cautious when driving on property and plan for someone backing out or pulling in front of you.
Utility Failure Management:

The Health Care System and each area have a contingency plan in the event of a utility failure. If a utility (electricity, plumbing, telephone, etc.) fails, report it and follow the directions of the area staff who will implement the contingency plan.

If you have any questions, please contact:
- Engineering at Extension 4456 (Omaha)
- Engineering at Extension 6400 (Lincoln)
- Engineering at Extension 2135 (Grand Island)

Designated Smoking Areas:

Check with your Service to learn the current smoking areas at your facility. It is every employee's responsibility to enforce the Smoking Policy.