Police & Security Procedures

Welcome

VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (VA NWIHCS) Police welcome you to your new position within the hospital. We would also like to pass on some information to assist you in your day-to-day activities here at VA NWIHCS.

VA NWIHCS Police Officers are trained and certified as federal law enforcement officers. They have full law enforcement authority on, and for the property of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Other personnel within VA NWIHCS Police include administrative assistants, security specialists, detectives and uniformed sergeants, lieutenants and police officers. These officers frequently patrol the buildings, parking lots and roadways.

Requesting the Police

Omaha: VA Police can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling ext. 3202 or 3203. If an officer is not by ext. 3202 or 3203, your call will automatically transfer to the police radios. Then, you will be advised that your call is being broadcast over a radio frequency. If you wish to program the Omaha VA Police’s telephone number into your cellular telephone, speed dial, etc. we recommend that you program 402-995-3202. This is what is known as the outside (non-government system) telephone number.

Grand Island: VA Police can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling ext. 2198. If an officer is not by ext. 2198, your call after four rings will be forwarded to the first patrol cellular phone, if that officer is busy after four rings, the call will be forwarded to the second patrol cellular phone. If you wish to program the Grand Island VA Police’s telephone number into your cellular telephone, speed dial, etc. we recommend that you program 308-389-5198. This is what is known as the outside (nongovernment system) telephone number.

VA NWIHCS Regulations

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Persons witnessing, or receiving a report of inappropriate or violent behavior, should immediately notify VA NWIHCS Police. This can be done by contacting VA NWIHCS Police directly or initiating a “Panic” alarm by dialing extension 3333. VA NWIHCS Police will respond quickly to all “Panic” calls. Panic buttons are located in many areas of VA NWIHCS. Become familiar with the buttons in your area. VA NWIHCS Police will assume control of any situation that has, or is about to become, violent in nature. Always notify VA NWIHCS Police if you
receive a threat through written correspondence or verbally. **Workplace violence will not be tolerated at VA NWIHCS.**

The Disruptive Behavior Reporting System

This is an online reporting system to report patient threatening or disruptive behaviors at NWIHCS to enhance safety and reduce risk for Veterans and staff. Report all patient disruptive behaviors including:

- Intimidating, threatening, or dangerous behaviors that cause concern for the health and/or safety of others
- Physical and/or verbal abuse
- Direct, indirect, and/or implied threats
- Possessing or brandishing of weapons
- Inappropriate electronic communication

**How to enter a disruptive behavior report:**

- The report can be found in two places.

  - Using any VA computer, open (double-click) the “Gold Star” (NWI-GUI Executables) on your desktop and open the “NWI Shortcuts” folder. Double-click the “DBRS Report” icon.
  - From the NWI Intranet homepage, click on the “Disruptive Behavior Reporting System” link under the “Forms, Publications” section of the page

- Click the Report button in the bottom left corner to begin
- Fill out the form until you completed all five sections

**IDENTIFICATION**

You must wear the identification issued to you by VA NWIHCS Police while at work.

**ALCOHOL AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

It is a federal offense to be in possession of, or to be under the influence of alcohol or any illegal controlled substance while on VA NWIHCS property.

**VISITING HOURS**

**Omaha:** The visiting hours will coincide with the hours set by nursing staff. The main entrance is locked from 8 p.m. until 4 a.m. Entry after these hours must be made through the Emergency Room entrance, on the west side of Building 1. Police will require official VA identification. Visitor passes will be issued to authorized visitors.

**Grand Island:** The visiting hours will coincide with the hours set by nursing staff. The entry points are locked from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. Entry after these hours must be made through use of the wall phones located at the entry points. Police will require official VA identification. Visitors should fill out the visitor log.
BOMB THREAT
Persons receiving a bomb threat need to immediately inform VA NWIHCS Police. If the threat is made by telephone, the person receiving the call should:
• Remain calm.
• Listen to what the caller is saying, and how they are saying it.
• If possible, prolong the conversation in order to obtain as much information as possible.
• Do not interrupt the caller.
• Ask as many questions about the bomb as possible. Refer to the yellow bomb threat sheet posted by every telephone. If you need a replacement bomb threat sheet, contact VA NWIHCS Police.

SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND MAIL
If you see or receive a suspicious package or piece of mail, do not open it. Contact VA NWIHCS Police immediately.

PARKING ON VA GROUNDS
For detailed information about read Policy POL-001 – TRAFFIC AND PARKING REGULATIONS available on the VA NWIHCS Intranet site, by clicking Policies. For updated regarding Omaha’s parking changes, click on the parking button on the Intranet site at vaww.nebraska.va.gov, and read the Daily Briefs.

Vehicle Registrations
All employees, contractors and students who drive and/or park a vehicle on VA NWIHCS property must register their vehicle with VA NWIHCS Police. Upon registration, employees will be issued a placard/sticker. Make sure that the parking placard/sticker issued to you represents the level of parking available for your employment and is clearly visible from the front of the vehicle. A placard not clearly visible may result in a citation from the VA NWIHCS Police.

Bicycle Parking
Bicycle racks and a bike storage garage are provided. Attaching bicycles to trees, signs, and items other than bicycle racks is prohibited. Bringing bicycles into the health care facility’s buildings is prohibited as well. Violators will have security chains cut and bicycles impounded by VA Police after a second violation.

Traffic Regulations
Unless otherwise posted, the speed limit on VA NWIHCS property is 15 miles per hour. For the safety of everyone, observe the speed limit and obey all traffic control signs. If you encounter VA NWIHCS Police on patrol, and the emergency lights are activated, immediately pull over.

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Courtesy Services

VEHICLE JUMP STARTS:
If your vehicle fails to start, you can contact VA NWIHCS Police for a courtesy jump start. Officers on duty have the right to deny the jump-start if they feel that it would be unsafe. Remember, police officers have other duties that take precedence over jump-starts. You may have to wait until they are available.

ESCORTS:
VA NWIHCS Police will provide an escort if you are leaving after your normal shift change, or are concerned for your safety. Again, remember police officers have other duties and/or commitments that take precedence over an escort. You may have to wait until they are available.

UNLOCKING DOORS:
If for some reason you lock yourself out of your office, contact your supervisor. If your supervisor cannot be reached, then contact VA NWIHCS locksmiths or an EMS worker in your area. In an emergency situation, contact VA NWIHCS Police. If you are working after your normal hours, please notify VA NWIHCS Police. This prevents embarrassing incidents. It also helps in case of an emergency.

OPENING VEHICLE DOORS:
For liability reasons, VA NWIHCS Police cannot unlock the doors of any privately-owned vehicle. You will have to contact a locksmith from the community.

Helpful Safety Tips

- Always lock your vehicle doors upon exit and entry into your vehicle.
- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended.
- Make sure your vehicle keys are with you upon exiting your vehicle.
- Never leave valuables visible in your vehicle, lock them in your trunk.
- If you arrive at VA NWIHCS after normal business hours or after dark, park in a well-lit area.
- Walk to or from your vehicle with another coworker.
- Carry your keys in your hand when walking to your car, they can be a self-defense tool.
- Check the back seat of your vehicle before entering; criminals often hide in the back seat.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. If you feel something is unsafe, it probably is. Stay away, and call VA NWIHCS Police.
- Lock your valuables in a secure location even though you may be in your office.
- Be careful walking on ice and snow. VA NWIHCS tries to keep the pathways free of debris. If you see a safety hazard, contact VA NWIHCS Police and we will contact the appropriate personnel.
- Always take your VA NWIHCS identification with you when leaving VA NWIHCS. In case of an emergency, you will not be allowed on facility grounds without your VA NWIHCS identification.
- Always lock your office when you leave, even briefly.
• Lock your computer when leaving your work site.
• Please do not hesitate to call VA NWIHCS Police (ext. 3202) if you feel threatened, suspect something or just feel there is a safety issue. We are here to help, and if we cannot help we will find someone who can. You call could prevent an unpleasant situation for someone else.

VA Staff Response to an Active Threat Event

PURPOSE
This appendix provides guidelines for a Medical Center Staff Response to an Active Threat Event on VA Medical Centers Campuses. Individual responses may vary on the layout and size of the facility.

POLICY
It is the Policy of the Department Of Veteran Affairs to provide an emergency plan to alert the hospital staff, patients, and visitors, in all cases where it appears that a threat is actively present.

DEFINITIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY:

Active Threat
A person or persons who is actively killing or attempting to kill a large number of people in a confined and populated area. There may be no pattern or method to the selection of victims and the subject’s overriding objective appears to be that of mass murder. In most cases Active Threats(s) will uses a firearm of some kind, and the majority of past incidents the threat had multiple weapons and stored them in various locations.

Active Threat Suspect
An Active Threat Suspect is any person or persons who has used or threatened to use deadly physical force on others and continues to do so while having unrestricted access to additional medical staff, patients and visitors. It is possible, that an active threat suspect(s) may use a variety of weapons or objects that can cause serious physical injury or death.

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR VA STAFF IN THE EVENT OF AN ACTIVE THREAT SITUATION
• Immediately upon learning of an Active Threat Event, the Public Address System should be used to announce there is an “Active Threat Event” on premises. If possible, give the specific location of the event in efforts to keep innocents away from the affected area(s).
• If feasible, medical staff should take Immediate Action to move people out of hallways, stairwells, etc. and seek cover (shelter in place); lock wards/doors, safeguard staff, patients and
visitors until the “ALL CLEAR” signal is given to evacuate the facility. Here are some good tips to remember at your facility.

**Evacuate**

*When an Active Threat is INSIDE a structure and in your immediate vicinity, you should:*
- If there is a safe path to escape, attempt to evacuate the area
- Evacuate whether others agree to or not, as this is a personal choice
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape if possible
- Prevent others from entering the area if possible
- Call 911 when you are safe to do so

*When an Active Threat is OUTSIDE a structure to your building, you should:*
- If possible, lock ALL external doors to prevent the suspect from entering.
- Shelter in place and away from windows. An internal room with locking door is preferred.
- If able to do so, find something to defend yourself should the gunman/threat enters your area.
- Notify the VA Police Department if possible by activating the panic alarm buttons, computer, hospital extension, or call your local law enforcement by dialing 911.

**Evade**

*If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide and shelter in place, you should:*
- Remain calm, quiet and stay out of sight
- Turn off all lights, radios, and computer monitors
- Lock and/or barricade the door with heavy furniture
- Silence your cell phone or any source of noise
- Hide behind large object(s)
- If possible, place signs in exterior windows with location and number of personnel, to include number of injured
- If possible, render first aid to victims
- Call 911 when you are safe to do so

**Your hiding place should be:**
- Out of sight of the suspect(s) view if possible
- Provide protection for yourself if shots are fired in your direction
- Try not to trap or restrict your options for movement

**Engage**

*As a last resort, and only if your life is in danger, you should:*
- Choose to attempt to incapacitate the Active Threat(s) if necessary
- Act with aggression
- Improvise weapons for protection
• Commit to your actions

NOTE: It is not mandatory to engage an Active Shooter, this option should only be exercised if the options Evade and Evacuate have been exhausted

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN THE VA POLICE OR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVE ON SCENE

The GOAL of the VA Police is to contain the location, control, and if necessary neutralize the threat(s). Here are some good tips to remember at your facility when the VA Police arrive on scene.

• Remain calm and follow ALL Instructions by VA Police
• Keep your hands visible at ALL times
• Avoid pointing or yelling
• Know that help for the injured is on its way
• Avoid all physical contact with responding officers
• Move to either side of the hallway or room upon seeing responding officers

INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TO THE VA POLICE OR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

• Location of the Active Threat
• Number of threats, if more than one
• Physical description of threat(s)
• Number and type of weapons held by the threat(s) if known
• Number of potential victims at the location if known
• Last known location of the suspect