Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS)

Volunteer Orientation and Training Handbook

Austin, Temple, Waco

Voluntary Service

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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Welcome

We are happy you want to become part of our team! As part of the Department of Veterans of Affairs (VA), Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS), we extend a special welcome to you. We invite you to join us in a spirit of enthusiasm and dedication and hope you will benefit from your association with the Veterans and staff. The contributions you make will directly impact the quality of treatment that is provided to the Veterans and will support the professional and administrative staff which will add a dimension of joy and well-being to the Veteran's experience.

Since Veteran health care encompasses much more than treating the immediate illness and disability, our goal is to provide holistic care and which address all the unique needs of our Veterans. Volunteers play a major role in helping us accomplish this goal and introduce community involvement into this health care system allowing us to provide exemplary care.

About CTVHCS

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

Vision: VHA will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in health care and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both patient centered and evidence based.

This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery and continuous improvement.

It will emphasize prevention and population health and contribute to the nation's well-being through education, research and service in National emergencies.

Core Values: Integrity-Commitment-Advocacy-Respect-Excellence (I CARE)

All employees and volunteers are expected to commit to I CARE core values, aligning personal goals and behaviors with organizational goals and desired outcomes.

Principles: Patient Centered-Team Based-Data Driven/Evidence Based Prevention/ Population Health-Providing Value-Continuously Improving

Background: The Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS), accredited by the Joint Commission, is comprised of two large Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers located in Temple and Waco, a large stand-alone multi-specialty outpatient clinic in Austin, 4 outpatient clinics located in Brownwood, Bryan/College Station, Cedar Park and Palestine plus a rural outreach clinic in La Grange. The system is one of the largest integrated health care systems in the United States and provides a full range of services including medical, surgical, psychiatric and rehabilitation with inpatient medical/surgical hospital beds, a hospice unit and community living center (CLC) beds. Located on its Waco campus, CTVHCS has one of the largest inpatient psychiatric facilities and one of only 12 Blind Rehabilitation Centers in the country. CTVHCS serves a Veteran population of more than 252,000, covers 35,243 square miles and 11 congressional districts in 39 counties.

The main CTVHCS Campus is at the Olin E. Teague Veterans' Medical Center in Temple, Texas. On the Temple Campus is a full-service, 146-bed teaching hospital that serves as the medical/surgical referral center for all CTVHCS campuses as well as providing outpatient services to Veterans across the 32-county service catchment area. Also located at the Temple Campus is a 262-bed domiciliary, a new 80-bed Community Living Center (CLC) which includes a 20-bed hospice unit and an 8-bed Trauma Recovery Unit. A 160-bed State Veterans Home also resides on the Temple Campus grounds as well as an $11.5 million VA Research Institute which attracts world-class researchers to the Central Texas area. A new cardiac catherization suite was completed in the summer of 2013 and emergency department in 2016, both are fully operational.

For more information on CTVHS, please visit our web site or join us on Facebook

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Office

VAVS is the largest volunteer program in the Federal government and has provided over 70 years of service to America's Veterans seeking care in VA health care facilities. Since 1946, VAVS volunteers have donated 663.5 million hours of service. With more than 350 national and community organizations supporting the program, VAVS is also advised by a National Advisory Committee (NAC), composed of 63 major Veteran, civic and service organizations.

VAVS volunteers and their organizations annually contribute more than $50 million in gifts and donations, which supplement VA appropriations to medical centers, clinic and nursing homes. These contributions allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist in direct patient care programs, as well as support services and activities that may not be fiscal priorities from year to year.

Volunteer opportunities vary among the VA's network of hospitals, domiciliary and outpatient clinics. Voluntary Service is an official part of the medical center program. One important goal of VAVS is to provide excellent customer service. Customer Service as defined for the Voluntary Service Program is any activity that enhances the Veterans' experience and exceeds their expectations. Volunteers accomplish this by providing supplemental support which is consistent with the VA I CARE Core Values.

VAVS Committee

Although it is not necessary for you to be affiliated with a Veteran Service Organization (VSO) to be a volunteer, many individuals are. The VAVS Committee is a way for VSOs to participate in the Volunteer program. Each organization has a Representative and a Deputy Representative, both of whom are active volunteers in the medical center.

If you would like to be affiliated with a specific VAVS Service Organization and are not currently a member, the VAVS Office staff will put you in contact with the appropriate person. The VAVS Member Organizations are:

American Legion
American Legion Auxiliary
American Red Cross
AMVETS
AMVETS Auxiliary
Ben & Prot Order of Elks
Catholic War Veterans
Daughters of Union Vets of Civil War
Disabled American Veterans
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary
Knights of Columbus
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the Cootie
Military Order of the Cootie, Auxiliary
Military Order of the Purple Heart
Nat. Soc. Daughters American Rev
Sons of the American Revolution
The Salvation Army
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Women Army Corps
Women Marines Association

Donations

CTVHCS depends on the generosity of our community and volunteers to help enhance the Veterans' healthcare experience at our facility and to give back to our American heroes. Voluntary Service collects all donations and insures 100% distribution of contributions to our Veterans.

Volunteering Basics

Although every effort will be made to place the volunteer in an assignment best suited to their interest and skills, please remain flexible and realize not all services in our facility require the assistance of volunteers. We do not create an assignment to satisfy the volunteer, but rather rely on requests from the services for volunteer placement to support the needs in caring for our Veterans

What does it take to qualify to be a volunteer?

- Complete fingerprinting process and pass background checks
- Commit to 100 hours of volunteering in one year
- Accept VA medical center conduct standards and complete mandatory annual training
- Demonstrate a desire to serve others and willingness to work with and for the Veterans
- Be tactful, patient and understanding with Veterans, visitors and staff
- Accept assignments physically able to perform
- Commit to mutually agreed upon schedule and notify supervisor if unable to attend

Time and Attendance

From arrival through departure, VA issued ID badges must be worn visibly by volunteers on duty. You will be given an identification code to use for the computerized sign-in process. Volunteers are responsible for signing in the computer in the VAVS office or by calling/emailing the appropriate VAVS staff member. Signing into the computer system enables the VAVS staff to maintain accurate records of volunteer hours as well as to locate a volunteer in case of an emergency. Volunteers affiliated with an organization are invited to wear organizational insignia and uniforms.

Ethical Guidelines

Please:

- Be faithful in your attendance. Sign in and record time worked. Report to your supervisor when reporting for duty or leaving your assignment
- Demonstrate cooperative, positive and professional attitudes and behaviors with patients, staff and co-workers alike
- Be properly groomed
- Follow the rules of operation. All hospital regulations are based on sound medical reasons and hospital etiquette and must be observed
- Remain tactful, cheerful, friendly, courteous and empathetic, demonstrating excellence in customer service
- Refer financial, health, length of stay, discharge or family problems to the Veteran's doctor or social worker
- Report any unusual situations or requests to your supervisor or VAVS staff
- Always keep Veteran, staff and volunteer information confidential

Please ***do not***:

- Talk on a cell phone while volunteering
- Bring personal problems to the work site
- Bring unauthorized articles such as weapons and alcoholic beverages
- Enter a room marked "Isolation" or "No Visitors" without permission and direction from the nurse or doctor
- Smoke in any building. All facilities are smoke-free which applies to smokeless tobacco. You may smoke only in designated smoking areas
- Never discuss Veteran's conditions or confidences unless it is with his/her care provider
- Accept any gifts of real value from patients
- Accept or lend money to patients no matter what the situation
- Give out your address or phone number to any Veteran or family member
- Give food or drink to Veteran without prior approval from the physician or head nurse
- Distribute religious materials to patients unless instructed by Chaplain Service staff
- Visit unnecessarily with other volunteers, Veterans and staff

Dress Code

Volunteers who are not required to wear uniforms are expected to wear clothing that is suitable for business and to present themselves in a professional manner. All volunteers are expected to present a clean and neat appearance. This is a place of business, so volunteers should dress accordingly; therefore, shorts, dangling jewelry, tank or halter tops or heavy cologne/perfume are not considered appropriate while on duty as a volunteer. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended. Sandals, flip-flops and other open-toed are considered unsafe and inappropriate in patient care areas. Refer to CTVHCS Memorandum 05-029, available in the Volunteer Office, for further information and clarification on compliance.

Heath Requirements

At the beginning of each month, birthday cards and annual TB skin test forms are mailed to regularly scheduled volunteers. A TB skin test is provided to volunteers at no charge and is required annually by regulations usually retaken during the volunteer's birth month. If you have a history of a positive reaction to the skin test, then you should not take the TB skin test and will be referred to radiology for a chest X-ray.

All registered van drivers must complete an annual physical, which will be scheduled by VAVS office and provide proof of Texas Driver's License and personal insurance.

Volunteers and Monetary Activities

Volunteers will not engage in monetary activities with Veterans, staff, other volunteers or visitors. This includes cashing patient checks or acting as intermediaries in cashing patients' checks. Volunteers may shop for patients provided accountability is established for all transactions through VAVS. Volunteers will not be held liable for losses if established procedures are followed and no apparent negligence exists. It is a violation of policy and grounds for immediate termination for a volunteer to ask Veterans, staff, volunteers and/or visitors for money or other monetary assistance. Do not sign wills, legal documents or business papers of any kind.

Volunteer Accident/Illness

Any volunteer incurring an injury while on duty should be escorted by their supervisor to One Stop ASISTS Shop with Occupational Health Service. The volunteer's supervisor will complete an accident report form VA Form 2162 and forward to the Safety Officer within 24 hours of the incident. The supervisor will also complete accident report form CA-1 and CA-2 and forward to the Office of Worker's Compensation Programs office within 24 hours of the incident. All illnesses should also be reported to your supervisor and in most cases, if you have a severe cold, flu or other communicable diseases, you will probably be advised not to report to work to prevent the spread of your disease or infection to others.

Emergency medical treatment will be furnished to volunteers who are injured or incapacitated while on duty in a volunteer assignment. All uncompensated volunteer workers who serve on a regularly scheduled basis are eligible for injury compensation benefits as provided by Section 108 (b) of Public Law 357, 81st Congress, as long as they are performing their assigned duties. All injuries, regardless of how minor, will be reported to your VA supervisor and the Voluntary Service Office, who will assist you in the process.

Meals

Regular Scheduled (RS) volunteers whose assignments extend over a four-hour period are entitled to a meal, valued at $6.00, purchased at the Patriot Café. Meal vouchers are available for print upon signing into the computerized system and are only valid for the day printed. If you have any problems printing your meal voucher, please contact one of the VAVS staff members.

Termination/Inactivity

A volunteer can be removed for unsatisfactory performance, inability to perform the assignment, or a violation of established policy and procedures addressed in this training handbook. When termination of a volunteer is warranted, written notification of termination is mailed to the volunteer.

Volunteers who have not performed any hours of service for a consecutive 6 month period will be automatically terminated. Should you decide to end your volunteer services, please inform VAVS staff in person or by letter and turn-in your name badge.

Smoking Policy

Tobacco use is prohibited within any CTVHCS building and government vehicles. Tobacco use on CTVHCS campuses is permitted in designated tobacco use areas only. This includes use of cigarettes, cigars, E-Cigarettes, pipes, snuff and chewing tobacco. As posted, oxygen cylinders and other oxygen delivery equipment are not permitted within designated tobacco use shelters and areas. With the exception of the smoking and tobacco use designated areas, all buildings, entrance areas, entrance paths, the valet parking area (Temple Campus) and government vehicles are designated as tobacco-free areas. Tobacco refuse will be disposed of in appropriate disposal receptacles provided at designated areas.

Police Service

The VA Police are responsible for safety and security at CTVHCS. It is the responsibility of the Police Service to enforce federal regulations, protect patients, Veterans, staff, volunteers and visitors; to protect private and government property; and to preserve a peaceful environment at the VA facility. VA Police patrol throughout the premises 24 hours a day. The police desk is open to receive calls and dispatch officers. We recommend that you park your vehicle in a well-lit area and remain aware of your surroundings. To secure a VA Police escort to your vehicle or to alert them of an emergency situation, please contact the VA Police at extension 44911-Temple, 55911-Waco or 56911- Austin.

If you witness suspicious activity, it is very important to immediately report it to the VA Police. Security and crime prevention are a cooperative effort. The VA Police rely on information and cooperation from all employees and volunteers to accomplish their goals. Use self-help security measures such as wearing your volunteer ID badge, securing your possessions, walking in groups and using commons sense. With your help, this can be an enjoyable and safe place for everyone.

Traffic Courtesy and Parking

Please observe all posted speed limits at the facility. If someone is entering a crosswalk, it is standard procedure for you to automatically stop, let them cross and then proceed on your journey. This is a mandatory practice. If you are given a speeding ticket on VA grounds, it is a federal citation, not state or local. So, please use caution, observe posted speeds and drive slowly. The use of hand-held phones by a driver while operating vehicles on VA property is strongly discouraged. Volunteers should not park in designated employee parking areas and out of courtesy leave close parking spaces available for Veterans.

Information Security

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) carefully guards the privacy of the Veterans and their records. In 2000, new privacy rules were published requiring every health care provider and health plan to revise its policies, including the VHA. All VHA employees, including volunteers, students, medical residents and some contractors are required to complete annual training of privacy policies.

The purpose of this training is to provide you with the required knowledge about the VHA Privacy Policies, including VHA Handbook 1605.1, Privacy Program, which encompasses the Privacy Act and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) Privacy Rule. VHA must comply with the six statues that govern the collection, maintenance and release of information generally from VHA records:

- The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552
- The Privacy Act (PA), 5 U.S.C. 552a
- The VA Claims Confidentiality Statue, 38 U.S.C. 5701
- Confidentiality of Drug Abuse, Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse, Infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Sickle Cell Anemia Medical Records, 38 U.S.C. 7332
- Health Information Privacy (HIPPA)
- Confidentially of Healthcare Quality Assurance Review Records, 38 U.S.C. 5705
- VHA Directive 1605 VHA Privacy Program, VHA Privacy

All VHA employees and volunteers shall comply with all Federal laws, regulations, VA and VHA policies. For more information, use the embedded hyperlinks.

Patient Privacy

Patient information is confidential under the Privacy Act of 1974 and you are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of information available to you, even if you do not have direct access to patient information. It is your responsibility to ensure that any patient information you see or hear is safeguarded. Any disclosure of information from a system of records that identifies an individual, whether Veteran, employee, volunteer or other, is governed by the Privacy Act and VA confidentiality regulations.

Any VA volunteer who knowingly and willfully violates provisions of the Privacy Act is guilty of a misdemeanor and will be fined not more than $5,000. Any person who violates the confidentiality of drug or alcohol abuse, HIV or Sickle Cell Anemia information will be fined not more than $20,000 for each subsequent offense. Administrative disciplinary action could also be imposed for violating the confidentiality of patient and facility records.

Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, the VHA is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of patient information. Since it is the responsibility of the entire VHA workforce to protect patient information, all VHA employees, including volunteers, medical residents, students and contractors are required to complete Privacy Policy Training, even if you may not have direct patient contact responsibilities.

VHA has established policies and procedures that grant the Veteran certain rights regarding his/her health information and provide guidance on the use and disclosure of Protected Health Information.

Protected Health Information (PHI) consists of the following:

- Individually Identifiable Information (Social Security number, health information, etc.)
- Demographic Information (i.e. address, phone, age, gender, etc.)
- Information is any form (verbal, written, electronic)

The Privacy Act, HIPAA Privacy Rule and VHA Privacy Policy provide the Veteran with the right to:

- Receive a copy of the VA Notice of Privacy Practices
- Receive a copy of his/her own protected health information
- Request an amendment to his/her personal records
- Request a listing of disclosures of health information from his/her personal records
- Request and receive communications confidentially
- Request a restriction on the use or disclosure of his/her health information

VHA also has established policies and procedures providing guidance on how PHI may be used within VHA and disclosed to organizations outside of VHA.

VHA workforce members including volunteers may only use PHI when the information is needed to perform their official VHA duties for the purpose of treatment, payment and health care operations. Use of PHI for any other purpose requires the written permission of the patient and should not be obtained by volunteers.

VHA may disclose PHI only if prior written permission from the patient has been obtained or other legal authority permits the disclosure. As a volunteer, you are required to keep all PHI that you may discover in the course of your assigned volunteer duties strictly confidential. Here are some requirements:

- No talking in public areas about Protected Health Information (PHI) as listed above
- Keep PHI out of public areas (i.e. elevators, stairways, open areas, etc.)
- Secure any records you may be working with before walking away
- No discussing with anyone, inside or outside the facility, any PHI you may learn while carrying out your assigned duties as a volunteer

The unlawful release of PHI could result in:

- Organization-specific sanctions (i.e. lawsuits, not receiving accreditation).
- Filing of a complaint by a victim of a Privacy Policy violation.
- Civil and criminal penalties for VHA Privacy Policy violators with fines up to $50,000 and/or imprisonment.
- Termination as a volunteer.

Summary of Patient Confidentiality

All volunteers must be responsible for safeguarding PHI. As a volunteer at CTVHCS, you have a responsibility to keep all patient information, learned in the course of your duties, confidential and secure. Do not discuss any PHI discovered in the course of your assignment with anyone. Remember that you would want your personal information and health records treated in the same confidential, professional manner.

Discussions regarding a Veteran's medical condition should only occur with another individual who has a valid "need to know" and must always occur in private where it cannot be overheard. It is never appropriate to discuss medical information about a patient in a hallway, elevator or near a waiting area where others may overhear, even when the discussion meets the "need to know" criteria.

Remember, violation of confidentiality is against the law and would mean you fail to meet your volunteer assignment guidelines regarding a patient's privacy. It is every volunteer's responsibility to comply with the Privacy Act and VA regulations concerning confidentiality. As a volunteer, take pride and ownership in the fact that your organization is concerned about privacy and recognizes its importance in providing quality healthcare. If you have any questions concerning confidentiality and your role as a volunteer, please contact the Volunteer Office at (254) 743-0515.

Publicity/Photographs

Picture and voice rights of Veterans, staff and other volunteers are to be fully protected. Volunteers are not to take photos, audio records or videos of patients. Written consent of the patient on VA Form 10-3203 must be secured by VAVS staff prior to the use of photographs and voice recordings. The Director or Public Affairs Officer, in coordination with the VAVS staff, will determine the extent to which these pictures and recordings may be used. If a patient is photographed or videotaped without his/her permission, the person recording is in violation of patient confidentiality and privacy policies and subject to fines.

Physical & Psychological Safety

Violence in the Workplace

Healthcare workers are at an increased risk for workplace violence. From 2002 to 2013, incidents of serious workplace violence (those requiring days off for the injured worker to recuperate) were four times more common in healthcare than in private industry on average. It has long been recognized that emergency rooms, psychiatric units and pharmacies are statistically “high risk” areas. However, violence can occur in ANY area of the facility, so we must be well prepared.

Acts or threats of violence of any type are not tolerated. Anyone making verbal or physical threats or committing acts of violence must be reported to Police Service for appropriate action. As employees and volunteers at this facility, it is our individual responsibility to remain watchful and knowledgeable of the early signs of violence. Prevention is our greatest protection against violence. Early response and intervention is our goal. Remain aware of both pre-disposing (historical) and precipitating (triggering) factors which may help you recognize the risks for violence where you volunteer.

Pre-disposing factors are what people bring with them. These can include mental health problems, advancing age, poor impulse control, prior history of violence, personality style and alcohol or substance abuse. Precipitating factors include what is occurring at the moment such as pressures on the job, family problems, personal stress, economic problems and concerns about their health, frustration and feelings of despair or depression.

Some early indicators of possible violence may include behavior changes, breathing changes, finger drumming, hand wringing, fist clenching, jaw clenching, hostile comments, shouting, crying, profanity, pacing, muttering, restlessness and irritability.

When you see these behaviors, it is your responsibility to act! Your observations may be the last chance to intervene before a major incident occurs. Alert your supervisor or other staff that you have observed an upset Veteran or visitor so they can intervene.

Until a VA employee can assist you, use your best customer service skills:

- Use active listening skills
- Ask how you can provide assistance
- Acknowledge the person's feelings
- Let the person know that assistance is on the way

Once assistance has arrived let the staff or supervisor handle the situation. If necessary to protect yourself, call the VA Police for assistance. If possible, leave the area but remain available for questioning regarding the incident. If leaving is not an option, place as much space between you and the person as possible and preferably use a barrier such as a desk, counter or door.

Sexual Harassment

The definition of sexual harassment by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR 1604.11is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

In more common terms, sexual harassment includes unwelcomed behavior such as verbal abuse, insults, whistles, suggestive comments, jokes, notes, picture displays, touching, physical aggressiveness, pressure for dates, threats and sexual assaults.

Employees and volunteers, as well as supervisors and managers, are responsible for preventing sexual harassment in the workplace. Employees should make sure their behavior does not offend others. Avoid suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature and offensive displays. Avoid touching Veterans, visitors, staff or other volunteers in any way that could be interpreted as intimate or offensive. Respect the personal space of others and report incidents of sexual harassment immediately.

Sexual harassment infringes on your right to work in an environment that is free from any kind of sexual overtures or pressures that are unwanted by you. If you believe you are being sexually harassed: Recognize it-Confront it-Know it is not your fault. You have a right to take action. Tell the offending person that his or her conduct is offensive and unwelcome. Make it clear you are not interested and that the offender's behavior is unacceptable and that they are to stop. Write down the dates, places, acts and names of persons involved in the incidents of harassment, your complaints and any results. Report the conduct to your supervisor and/or VAVS staff.

Wheelchair Safety

- If the Veteran needs to use a wheelchair and does not have one, ensure wheels are locked and provide verbal guidance if needed as they sit.
- Wheel chair must have foot rests; ensure the Veteran's feet are in them at all times.
- Ask the Veteran to keep hands in lap to prevent injury and ensure no personal belongings are preventing the wheels from turning freely.
- Communicate with the Veteran throughout the trip.
- When both of you are ready, stand upright in a natural posture close behind the chair grasping both handles.
- Do not twist your back or reach for handles, step closer if needed.
- Take forward, even steps; push from the thighs letting the wheels do the work.
- Keep a slow, steady pace walking close to the chair; do not reach for the handles.
- Plan alternative routes to avoid steep inclines, uneven surfaces and gravel.
- Avoid obstacles and sudden stops whenever possible.
- When going around corners and through doorways: slow down, look for mirrors near the ceiling, watch for people/obstacles and use short forward steps.
- Sharp turns and narrow doors may require you to adjust your path. If so, do not attempt to lift or shove the chair. Ensure no one is behind you and take small backward steps to make the correction.
- If using the elevator, back the chair in after ensuring your path is clear. This will help prevent wheels from becoming lodged in the gap and will be more comfortable for the Veteran.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Slipping hazards such as liquids or items on walking surfaces can cause serious injuries. It is important to immediately clean whatever we may have dropped or spilled. Environmental Management Service should be contacted to help clean a spill when necessary. One immediate step that can be taken to warn other people of a spill is to mark the area. Contact your supervisor for locations of caution signs. Do not clean a spill you did not make because the potential hazard of the substance is unknown, report it.

Tripping hazards such as electric cords, phone wires, drawers and loose carpeting should be prevented and reported to your supervisor when you cannot correct them. Facilities Management Service, Engineering section should be contacted for broken tiles, torn carpet or other damaged fixtures.

In order to help prevent slips, trips or falls, watch where you are going and do not run. Be conscious of pedestrian and wheelchair traffic at all times and remain considerate of slow moving patients. Hallway traffic mirrors should be used to prevent collisions at intersections and blind spots in the hallways.

Do not carry or push loads that block your vision. When working with carts, use pushing motions rather than pulling motions whenever possible. The pushing places less stress on the spine and reduces your risk of injury.

Back injuries are caused by many factors. When lifting loads or equipment we can reduce risk of back injury by using proper lifting techniques. Proper techniques include squatting to lift rather than bending from the waste to pick up or lift an object of any weight. When lifting, moving or carrying objects, the weight should be kept as close to your body as possible, using a broad base of support and when turning, pivot and avoid twisting. When you are changing direction you should point your feet in that direction, rather than twisting at the hips. The maximum weight recommended by OSHA that an individual should lift is 50 pounds. In all cases, when you need help moving an object, take the time to work safely and get help. Volunteers are not to lift or assist in transferring patients.

Fire Safety and Evacuation Process

In the event of a fire, the person detecting the fire should pull the alarm station and then call 911 to report the fire.

Within the main buildings of the facility, the fire alarm notification is announced on the overhead paging system, identifying the location of the fire and when there is an “All Clear.” Know the evacuation routes (primary, secondary, & backup) for your volunteer area. Also, know where the fire extinguishers, alarm pull station and fire exits are located in areas you frequently occupy. Evacuate horizontally and do not use the elevators until notice is given that the area is safe.

In case of a fire emergency, remember R-A-C-E:

Rescue anyone in danger
Alarm (pull box and phone)
Contain (close room doors)
Extinguish if possible/**E**vacuate

In all cases of fire or emergency, common sense must prevail and efforts should be directed toward remaining calm and following fire safety procedures. All fires, even though they appear to be small and completely extinguished, must be reported to the Safety Officer.

Hazardous Materials Management

Hazards associated with chemicals are communicated to individuals by the warning labels that are on the chemical containers. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all chemicals are available in the respective work sites. These data sheets provide detailed information regarding the safe handling, storage and disposal of chemicals. Be familiar with the location of the MSDS in your work area. All services, including the Volunteer Office, conduct annual chemical inventories.

If you are involved in a chemical spill: Call your supervisor; Safety Officer; and Chief, Environmental Management Service. Evacuate all persons from the area. Wait near the spill, but well out of danger. If a fire occurs, activate the fire alarm pull station.

Bomb Threats

Any bomb threat needs to be taken seriously. A bomb threat can be the result of an individual who wishes to disrupt the activities of the institution. Usually the threat is not real, but the individual making the threat achieves their goal by making the institution react. However, there are occasions when the threat is real.

A threatening telephone call may be received either by a Veteran, visitor, volunteer or an employee. Threatening telephone calls may be directed toward a staff member or the announcement of an explosive or other harmful threat directed toward a person or government property. The extent of search, evacuation and activation of other aspects of the program will be determined by the Medical Center Director or designated representative. Employees or volunteers receiving calls that convey a threat against medical center property, personnel, patients, etc., should remain calm and insure the following steps occur:

- Attempt to keep the caller talking as long as possible without increasing the caller's antagonism
- Continue to keep the caller talking to allow time for tracing the call
- Alert personnel in the immediate area to contact VA Police Service
- Inform the police dispatcher that a threatening call has been received and identify the extension number.
- VA Police will attempt to trace the call
- "Code Brown" will be used to identify all bomb threats

Any employee or volunteer who receives a threatening call that announces a bomb threat will immediately write down the exact wording of the threatening conversation, time received and the extension number on which the call was received. Also note any description of the voice or any background noise that was heard. This information should be provided to Police Service who will take action according to predetermined procedures.

Disaster Plan

Volunteers on duty at the time of a disaster should continue their assigned duties until their supervisor determines that they might be more useful in another area. Volunteers not on duty at the time of the disaster may be called if additional assistance is needed.

Infection Prevention and Control

Simply defined, infection control is the prevention of the spread of an infection. Your hands can pick up transient pathogens anytime you touch body fluids or contaminated objects. Your hands can carry these pathogens to one person or many. Good hand hygiene is the most effective defense against the spread of bacteria and viruses. Infection control is an activity that prevents germs from moving from one individual to another by hands, improperly cleaned equipment and surfaces or through the air. Infection control is the responsibility of everyone.

As part of our Infection Prevention program, this facility requires the use of "Standard Precautions" whenever an employee might encounter blood or body fluids from any person.

These fluids are considered to be potentially infectious. Various types of personal protective equipment (PPE) are available to prevent their hands, face or other body surfaces from coming into direct contact with blood and body fluids, including gloves, safety glasses, masks, full-face shields, gowns and protective aprons. Potentially infectious waste is stored in red containers or bags. The Universal Biohazard Symbol can be on any type of bag or container that contains a potential risk.

To help prevent the spread of infection, please follow the following procedures:

- Use alcohol based hand sanitizer found throughout the facility on your hands, covering the entire surface, including fingernails. Rub hands together for 20-30 seconds until dry. Develop the habit of performing hand hygiene every time you enter and leave a patient's room.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before leaving the patient's room, after using the restroom, before eating or handling food, when they are visibly soiled, after removing gloves and between different patient contacts. See Hand Washing Technique section below.
- To prevent airborne infections from spreading, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of the used tissue in the nearest trash can and clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol sanitizer. Another way to prevent your cough or sneeze from traveling is to cough into your sleeve.

Hand Washing Technique & Procedure

Hand washing is the cornerstone procedure in preventing the spread of infections. Proper hand washing uses soap, water and friction to remove contamination from the hands. The procedure is simple and takes less than 20 seconds to complete.

1. Remove all rings except plain bands.
2. Turn on faucet or use the pedal to regulate the water temperature (cool or lukewarm water removes less oil from the skin and is less drying than hot water).
3. Wet hands, wrists and forearms; Protect clothing from the sides of the sink since the sink is considered contaminated.
4. Apply dime size amount of soap to hands.
5. Wash all surfaces of hands, wrists and forearms using heavy lather of soap and vigorous friction in a circular motion. Give special attention to areas between fingers and around and under nail beds. Soap lowers the surface tension of water and acts as an emulsifying agent. With vigorous friction, the water gets into the crevices of the skin to remove bacteria.
6. Rinse thoroughly under running water. Thorough rinsing is necessary to remove all bacteria laden soap.
7. Dry hands, wrists and forearms thoroughly with a paper towel. When hand controlled faucets are used, turn off the water with a paper towel to avoid contaminating clean hands.
8. Open any door leaving sink with paper towel.

Summary of Volunteer Responsibilities

- Follow the guidelines and rules set forth in this handbook.
- Please inform your VA Supervisor and the VAVS Office, of any changes in address, telephone number, emergency contact, etc.
- Be punctual and regular in your assignment. If you cannot report for duty, please notify your supervisor, if it is impossible to directly notify your supervisor, contact the Volunteer Office.
- Please do not discuss race, religion, politics or patient illness with patients.
- Do not make suggestions to patients about treatments or suggest remedies and never administer medications.
- Never enter a room, which is posted “Isolation” or “No Visitors” unless asked to do so by a Nurse or Doctor. If there is a wide red line on the floor around a patient’s bed, do not cross it.
- Observe the VA and service specific polices. Consult your supervisor in the event you wish to learn the reason for some specific rule or regulation.
- Report any unusual behavior to the Charge Nurse or your Staff Supervisor.
- Report to your supervisor whenever entering or leaving your assignment area.
- Do not take food, beverages or medicine to a patient without permission from proper authority such as a Doctor or Nurse.
- Exercise good judgment in completing your assignments and show initiative where required.
- Do not work in an assignment that causes you any mental or physical strain or anguish. Report such problems to your supervisor and/or the VAVS Office for reassignment.
- Perform only those duties to which you have been assigned by your supervisor.
- Conduct yourself with dignity and courtesy. While a good sense of humor is desirable, avoid loud talking and boisterousness.
- Take pride in your work at the CTVHCS. Assist our patients in having complete confidence in the care we are providing.
- Practice good personal hygiene.
- Be courteous and cooperative with the members of other volunteer organizations who are also volunteering. Remember, all volunteers are working toward the same goal; improving the comfort, welfare and morale of the patients.
- Remember, you have volunteered to serve. Do your work cheerfully and willingly.

Volunteers are the valued! Thank you for your commitment and dedication to the Veterans at the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System.

VHA Privacy & HIPAA Volunteer Training Acknowledgment

I hereby state that I have received training on the VHA Privacy and Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Policy and understand my responsibility, as a VA volunteer, to safeguard and keep confidential any Protected Health Information (PHI) that I discover in the course of performing my assigned volunteer duties.

_____ ____/_____/_____
Volunteer's Signature Date

_____
Print Name

*Volunteers assigned to volunteer roles requiring computer access must complete a more extensive Privacy & HIPAA Training through VA's online Talent Management System (TMS)

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Central Texas Veterans Health Care System

Training Acknowledgement

Training Statement:

I have reviewed the CTVHCS Volunteer Orientation & Training Handbook in its entirety and comprehend the contents and expectations set forth outlining my role as a volunteer with CTVHCS. I understand that it is my responsibility to decline any task that is outside the limits and boundaries of the CTVHCS policies and to decline any task that I am not educationally, physically or emotionally prepared to safety perform. I acknowledge the importance of immediately asking questions to my supervisors and VAVS to clarify any lack of knowledge related to my duties as a volunteer.

Confidentiality Statement:

The CTVHCS believes all medical, financial, computer and personal information pertaining to all persons at the facility is confidential and is protected from unauthorized viewing, discussion and disclosure. Therefore, volunteers may look at, use or disclose patient information ONLY as it relates to the performance of their duties. Any unauthorized viewing, discussion or disclosure will provide grounds for immediate dismissal. Whenever it is questionable as to what information is confidential, it is my responsibility to discuss the matter with my supervisor before any breach of confidentiality occurs.

I acknowledge and have read the statements above and agree to abide by the expectations of the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System. I further acknowledge violation of expectations could result in termination as a volunteer.

_____ ____/_____/_____

Volunteer's Signature Date

_____

Print Name

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Central Texas Veterans Health Care System

Volunteer Competency Quiz

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

VA's Mission Statement is to honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

◯ True ◯ False

You do not have to comply with the federal law pertaining to discrimination and sexual harassment.

◯ True ◯ False

Any VA volunteer who knowingly and willfully violates provisions of the Privacy Act will only receive a warning.

◯ True ◯ False

As a volunteer you must be tested for TB (Tuberculosis) annually.

◯ True ◯ False

Volunteers can take pictures of Veterans with personal cameras if the Veteran verbally approves.

◯ True ◯ False

The best method to prevent and control spread of infection is handwashing.

◯ True ◯ False

Volunteer ID badges must be worn at all times while volunteering.

◯ True ◯ False

Volunteers can be terminated for infractions related to the content covered in the Volunteer Orientation Handbook.

◯ True ◯ False

The definition of R.A.C.E. stands for Rescue, Alarm, Contain and Extinguish/Evacuate

◯ True ◯ False

Regular scheduled volunteers are required to commit to 50 hours in a year.

◯ True ◯ False