

<b>Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Policy &amp; Procedure</b>		
<b>Escort – Secure Areas</b>		
Effective: July 2014	Revised: October 2024	Due for Review: October 2026

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH) to provide a safe and secure environment including escort within the secure areas of the facility. VPCH personnel shall maintain supervision when escorting hospitalized persons within the secure treatment areas of the VPCH facility. In all instances, VPCH personnel shall ensure that hospitalized persons are escorted in the least restrictive and most dignified manner possible.

**DEFINITIONS**

Escort: For the purposes of this policy, *escort* shall refer to the accompaniment and direct supervision of hospitalized persons when accessing secure, off-unit areas of the hospital.

Secure: For the purposes of this policy, *secure* shall refer to areas of the hospital outside of the care units in which an individual's mobility is limited by badge/key access and/or exit points.

**PROCEDURE**

A provider order must be written prior to any hospitalized person leaving a unit. Treatment teams will regularly review the clinical appropriateness of off-unit activities and order a level of autonomy consistent with this review.

Personnel are assigned to escort persons hospitalized within the secure areas of the hospital. An assigned nurse, in collaboration with assigned escorting personnel, shall conduct a clinical safety assessment prior to hospitalized persons leaving the care units. The purpose of this evaluation is to ensure that the circumstances are consistent with hospitalized persons' current treatment plan and provider order related to level of autonomy. The nurse's initials on the precaution monitoring sheet will signify the completion of this assessment.

Personnel providing escort will complete an environmental safety sweep of the area(s) identified prior to the initiation of the escort.

The assigned nurse, in conjunction with the personnel assigned to escort, will determine an appropriate personnel ratio to meet care and safety needs for the duration of the escort. The escorting personnel will announce the escort via two-way radio communication (*e.g.*, Snowflake escorting one individual to admissions).

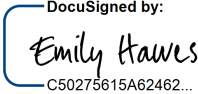
Personnel providing escort shall carry a two-way radio so that additional personnel can be notified of and respond to situations requiring additional support.

Escorting personnel and personnel receiving an individual returning from an escort share equally the responsibility of confirming that both the individual and the individual's corresponding precaution monitoring form are transitioned simultaneously at each handoff, verifying that all hospitalized individuals are accounted for (*e.g.*, one individual being sent to an off unit group is

received with their corresponding precaution monitoring form, and conversely, one individual is returning to unit must be received with their precaution monitoring form). Outside of bone fide emergency circumstances, there shall be no exception to this critical safety step.

Personnel providing escort will monitor hospitalized persons via visual supervision. Assigned personnel escorting hospitalized persons are responsible for addressing and communicating about safety needs during an escort.

Personnel escorting a hospitalized person back onto the unit when the escort is complete will communicate with the assigned Nurse to inform them of any clinically significant events from their time off unit.

Approved by	Signature	Date
Emily Hawes, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Mental Health	 DocuSigned by: <i>Emily Hawes</i> C50275615A62462...	10/15/2024