

Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Policy and Procedure		
Clinical Alarm Systems		
Effective: October 2023	Revised:	Due to Review: October 2025

POLICY

Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH) uses two (2) types of clinical alarm systems, a duress alarm system and an overhead door alarm system. These clinical alarm systems are intended to alert personnel to potential problems so they can initiate an appropriate mitigating response. VPCH understands the pivotal role these systems play in preserving the safety of those who receive services, work at, and/or visit our facility and prioritizes a systematic approach to maintaining and responding to these alarms and educates personnel about the purpose and proper operation of alarm systems for which they are responsible.

DEFINITIONS

Duress Alarm: VPCH has several mounted controls throughout the facility designed to, when pressed, activate an alarm alerting personnel to a possible security situation or other emergency.

Overhead Door Alarm: An overhead door alarm detects and alerts personnel to door(s) that may be being utilized to create a ligature point.

PROCEDURE

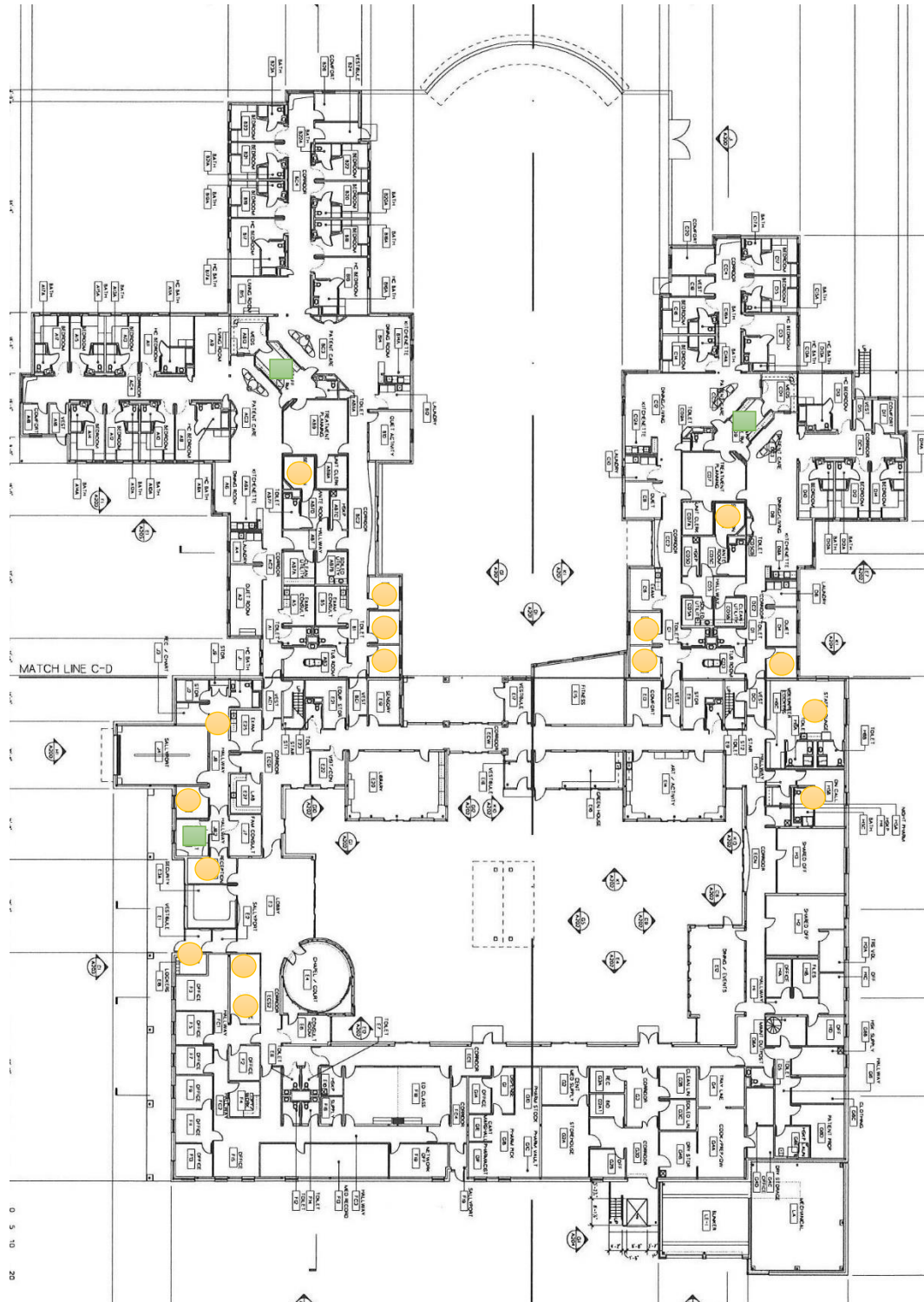
	Duress Alarm System	Overhead Door Alarm System
Activation	All VPCH personnel are authorized to activate a duress alarm if they feel a situation warrants additional emergency support/assistance from VPCH personnel.	This system activates when overdoor light beams are interrupted, indicating that it may be being utilized to create a ligature point and therefore may be an individual's attempt to self-harm.
Alert	VPCH duress buttons alert personnel via an audible tone and designated display panels (located in Admissions, A/B Team Station, and C/D Team Station) which indicates the location of individual(s) in need of assistance.	VPCH overhead door alarms alert personnel via an audible tone and visual indicators to door(s) on a specific unit that may be being utilized to create a ligature point.
Alarm Parameters	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Responsible Responders	On-duty Admissions staff, Registered Nurses, and Mental Health Specialists at all levels are expected to respond to an alerting duress panel.	Registered Nurses and Mental Health Specialists at all levels are expected to respond to an overhead door alarm that alerts

		on the unit to which they are assigned to work.
Response	Response includes an immediate in-person response to each designated display panel to determine the alert location and an evaluation at that location to determine the circumstances triggering the alarm. Based on this determination, necessary action should be in accordance with applicable VPCH policy and/or emergency operations plan.	Response includes an immediate, in-person evaluation of what triggered the alarm and, based on this determination, the initiation of necessary action in accordance with applicable VPCH policy.
Alert Deactivation	Responsible responders are authorized to deactivate an alarm following determination of the alert location and deployment of responders to that location. Alarm deactivation occurs at each designated panel via the reset switch.	Responsible responders are authorized to deactivate an alarm following determination of the alarm trigger. Alarm deactivation occurs at the point of incident via the corresponding keyed reset switch.
Reactivation	System deactivation and reactivation occurs simultaneously.	System deactivation and reactivation occurs simultaneously.
System Deactivation	In the event that a system shutdown is warranted for testing/maintenance, this must be done in coordination with clinical leadership so that appropriate risk mitigation plans can be established.	In the event that a system shutdown is warranted for testing/maintenance, this must be done in coordination with clinical leadership so that appropriate risk mitigation plans can be established.
Preventative Maintenance	<u>Annually</u> : The VPCH operations team conducts systemwide settings, proper operation, and detectability testing.	<u>Monthly</u> : The Senior Mental Health Specialists assigned to each unit are responsible for conducting monthly top-door alarm testing for proper operation, and detectability. <u>Annually</u> : The contracted vendor is onsite for systemwide settings, proper operation, and detectability testing.
Malfunction	Even if the failure is immediately corrected, an event report shall be completed, submitted, and followed up on	Even if the failure is immediately corrected, an event report shall be completed, submitted, and followed up on

	<p>based on the assessed needs and in accordance with VPCH policy.</p>	<p>based on the assessed needs and in accordance with VPCH policy.</p> <p>**If the malfunctioning alarm is in an occupied room, the hospitalized individual's treatment team shall assess and determine if an alternate safety plan, in lieu of the alarm, may be warranted, and initiate as applicable.</p>
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Approved by	Signature	Date
<p>Emily Hawes Commissioner Vermont Department of Mental Health</p>	<p>DocuSigned by: <i>Emily Hawes</i> C50275615A62462...</p>	<p>10/4/2023</p>

VPCH Duress Button and Panel Locations



● **Duress button locations**

- A/B Seclusion Ante Room
- Office B2
- Office B4
- Office B6
- C/D Seclusion Ante Room
- Office C2
- Office C4
- Office D2
- On-Call Suite
- Staff Lounge
- Staffing Office (2)
- Admissions/Reception
- Entrance Vestibule
- Admissions Hall
- Interview Room

■ **Duress Panel Locations**

- A/B Nursing Station
- C/D Nursing Station
- Admissions Office