Welcome

On behalf of our Veterans, VA Staff and VA Volunteers, welcome to VA San Diego Healthcare System. We appreciate your interest in volunteering to assist our Nation's Heroes and their families.

You are a special individual for choosing to give your talents in support of our Veterans through your compassionate attitude and thoughtfulness.

Information explaining our policies, regulations, procedures, expectations and privileges pertaining to Volunteers are explained in this handbook.

Our primary focus is to serve our Veteran patients.

If you have any questions, please feel free to stop by the Voluntary Service office located in Room 1603 or call our direct line at 858-642-3267.

Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sincerely,

Donna M. Fischer

Donna M. Fischer, CAVS, FACHE
Chief, Voluntary Service

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Volunteer Service
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VOLUNTEERING AT VA SAN DIEGO

Opening Your Heart to Veterans

Volunteering at the VA San Diego Healthcare System is about opening your heart to Veterans and tapping into your human spirit to make the time you spend volunteering satisfying and meaningful.

There are many reasons why people volunteer.

- Helping Veterans
- Connecting with the Community
- Job Training and Networking
- Opportunity to Support America's Heroes
- Stay Young and Healthy

Volunteers are committed to the mission of the organization and take pride in what they do. This mission encompasses various components to include: healthcare, research, education, training and emergency management to support our Veterans.

All Volunteers play a critical role as **Active Listeners** and **Customer Service Agents** whether on the front lines of patient care areas or behind the scenes in administrative areas to support the facility.

Active Listening enables the other person to feel validated. You have the ability and skill to reach out to every Veteran you encounter. Providing customer service shows the Veteran that someone cares about them.

Our Healthcare System treats all Veterans with the same dignity and courtesy regardless of when or where they served. These Veterans are our Nation's Heroes. We owe them the same courtesies they have given us: **Sacrifice, Duty, Service and Freedom.**

Our Volunteers assist with compassion and understanding. In doing so, this allows our Veterans to share their experiences without being judged.

VA Mission Statement

VA's Mission is: *To fulfill President Lincoln's promise* ***"To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan"*** *by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.*

VA Core Values & Characteristics (I.C.A.R.E)

The Core Values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence - (I.C.A.R.E.) are the basic elements of how we go about our work — they define "who we are" — and form the underlying principles we will use every day in our service to Veterans. The Core Characteristics define "what we stand for" and what we strive to be as an organization. The Core Values and Characteristics were announced and approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to apply universally across all of VA on June 20, 2011.

VHA Mission Statement

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

VHA Vision Statement

VHA will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in healthcare 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.

VOLUNTEER OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

Dependability and Attendance

Regularly Scheduled Volunteers are expected to report to their scheduled place of assignment on time. If you anticipate an absence, please notify your area supervisor prior to your absence so they can reschedule personnel to cover your job in your absence if necessary. All Volunteers must be at least 16 years old to volunteer at VA San Diego. Minors must have the parent signature on the application.

Short Term and Occasional Volunteers are required to check in with Voluntary Service upon arrival during normal business hours or when scheduled to receive a short briefing, temporary badge, and sign in.

ATTITUDE

Attitude is the most important factor that determines success on a job. Conducting yourself as a true professional will greatly enhance you time volunteering. Adaptability is critical for all Volunteers as no two days are alike.

Volunteer Dress Code

APPEARANCE, DRESS AND CLEANLINESS

Volunteers are expected to dress in an appropriate manner. If necessary, protective clothing will be provided for you as determined by your assigned area of service. Appropriate dress is defined as being neat and clean with good hygiene practices. Personal cleanliness is critical in any work environment.

Volunteers who are dressed inappropriately will be sent home.

PLEASE STRIVE TO DRESS PROFESSIONALLY.

Shorts, halters, T-shirts and sandals are considered a safety hazard at the facility.

Hair/Grooming: Hair, beards, sideburns, and mustaches must be clean and neatly groomed.

Shoes: Wear clean and appropriate shoes for a safe hospital environment. Closed-toed and closed-heeled tennis shoes are preferred. Shoes that have taps or are excessively noisy are considered unfit.

For safety reasons; “flip-flops,” stiletto heels, and sandals are ***not permitted*** in the workplace.

Clothing:

1. All clothing is to be neat, clean, and suitable to the position.
2. Denim jeans may not be worn.

3. T-shirts, or any garments with hate messages, sexual overtones, profanity, racial, political and discriminatory slogans are not acceptable in the workplace.

4. Tattoos are generally authorized. *However*, any artwork depicting hate language, Nazi or anti-American symbolism, gang affiliations, or sexually explicit imagery must be covered at all times. If the aforementioned art is in a location that cannot be covered (i.e. neck, hands, face), you may not be authorized to volunteer with this facility.

5. Piercings are generally authorized. Depending on your assignment, you may be asked to either cover or remove any piercing while you are working.

6. Inappropriate clothing includes but is not limited to: halter/tube tops, spaghetti straps, mid-riff blouses/shirts, exercise wear, spandex shorts, sheer leggings, see-through blouses (unless appropriate covering undergarments are worn – must cover majority of torso), shorts, skirts and dresses of a length that cause disruptions to the workplace. Clothing that is too tight or too baggy is not appropriate.

VOLUNTEER POLO SHIRT:

Any volunteer with a volunteer badge must work a minimum of 25 hours in a highly visible area prior to receiving or having the option of receiving a VA Volunteer polo shirt.

While not required for service, this shirt designates that you are part of hospital staff and makes it easier for patients to recognize you.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS CEREMONY

Each year Voluntary Services holds a Volunteer Recognition Ceremony. Honors and awards are based on your recorded input of volunteered hours for the preceding year, from January through December. If you are eligible, you will receive an invitation and a request to RSVP through the mail.

Voluntary Service

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES:
GENERAL INFORMATION

DISPATCHING PRIORITIES: The primary responsibility of the Volunteer Program is to enhance the Veteran Patient Care Experience at VA San Diego. Volunteers ensure our Veterans are properly accommodated during their visit to the VA.

1. **CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**: The Veteran is the priority. If a Veteran or members of his or her family require the use of a wheelchair, a Volunteer will provide one for them. Spend time talking with patients each time you volunteer.

2. If a patient has a change in their physical appearance or personality:
   - Lock the wheelchair (place the patient's feet on the floor) or gurney.
   - Stay with the patient at all times.
   - Call out for help and ask the first individual in the area to call Ext. 53333 for Emergency.
   - The emergency number is Ext. 53333 and is posted throughout the hospital. If VA Police are needed when a patient becomes abusive, call VA Police Ext. 53333.
   - Wait for the emergency team to arrive and explain the situation.

The Volunteers will notify Voluntary Service Office (x53267) of any problems or issues that may arise and have details of what occurred, where, when and who…etc. Specific details are important.

PATIENTS NEEDING WHEELCHAIRS

Patient Transport

- Volunteers should receive instruction on the safe use of all equipment used in the transport of patients - wheelchairs are the only vehicles to be used.
- Volunteers will not use their phone or any other electrical equipment while transporting a patient. Cell phones are only to be used for emergencies while the Volunteer is working.
- When transporting an in-patient to his or her ward, please check the patient in with the ward nurse, **do not** take the patient back to his or her room.

Volunteers should not transport patients in the following circumstances:

- When patient is combative or hyperactive.
- Asks for transportation outside of the hospital grounds.
- If patient is receiving an IV.
- If the wheelchair is unsafe.

Transporting Patients

- Check patient in at the clinic.
- When transporting patients in the hospital, please stay to your right and use the mirrors for oncoming traffic.
- Remember gurneys have the right of way.
- When you reach your destination, make sure you set the brakes.
- When entering the elevator, back the patient in so he/she is facing the door.
- When you push a patient to a ward, do not put them in their room. Stop at the nurse's station and check in with the ward nurse.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Feel free to discuss topics chosen by the patient, but DO NOT repeat your discussions with other people (HIPAA).
- Refrain from using inappropriate language while volunteering.
- Gifts from patients or their families are not to be accepted.
- Let your supervisor know if and when you need to leave.
- Fraternizing is not acceptable behavior while on duty.
- Refrain from sitting on patients' beds.
- Personal information should not be shared at any time.
- Be sure to pay attention to labeling on doors and patient rooms (precautions).
- Volunteers are not authorized to transport patients off grounds.
- Wheelchairs and gurneys are for patient use only.
- Patients are lifted by trained hospital staff only.
- Volunteers are expected to perform their duties unless there are physical or mental limitations (Voluntary Service will need to understand Volunteer limitations prior to assigning duties).
- If you don't know what to do, ASK.
- Volunteers and employees abide by the same rules, regulations and dress code.
- Extend the same courtesy to all patients, staff and visitors.
- Keep in mind that you are a Volunteer of a much larger picture than you may imagine. You represent the VA. Veterans, staff, visitors and other Volunteers depend on you and the time you give them.
- All donations for patients must be recorded in the Volunteer Office before distribution.

Voluntary Service
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

ASSISTING VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

You may encounter a patient who is visibly disabled while working as a Volunteer. Many of these men and women are Combat Veterans who served in war and/or hostile environments. These individuals are our country's Heroes and should never be looked down upon. Their sacrifices have enabled the rest of us to live in freedom.

Ask if he or she needs help, but refrain from insisting upon it. First ask the individual if he or she needs anything, and allow them to tell you if any, assistance is necessary.

Remember to walk at the pace set by the disabled person. Different people move at different speeds, and it is important not to rush. If the patient is in a wheelchair, do not be in a rush to reach your destination.

Treat each and every person you encounter equally. Men and women that may be disabled are entitled to the same common courtesy and dignity as those who aren't. All our Veterans deserve to be treated with respect, regardless of their medical status.

Some Veterans may have trouble communicating. It is okay to ask them to repeat the information communicated if you do not fully understand. You can also ask them to rephrase the question if you aren't sure what they meant.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

AGE SPECIFIC CARE

Patients at VA San Diego range from older generations of WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf to our younger generation OIF/OEF/OND Veterans. It is important to provide care specific to the patient's age. Highlights for these groups are:

Adults – (18-69 years)

- Consider role of cultural and lifestyle patterns as well as generational attitudes
- Utilize accurate information to assist in problem solving and decision making
- Need to be included in care decisions
- Consider role of significant others in patient care and education

Geriatric Adults – (70 years and above)

- Do experience changes in thought processes with normal aging
- May have unique physical limitations, psychosocial needs and age-associated illnesses
- May be psychosocially experiencing personal loss
- May experience age-related psychological limitations

Staffing and planned activities play a vital role in providing a positive self-image and preserving human dignity for our patients.

Things to Remember:

- Demonstrate a calm and caring manner
- Advise/discuss one item at a time with the individual
- Provide information in terms that can be understood
- Do not rush the individual; patience is critical
- Repeat information as needed and paraphrase if necessary
- Stand in front of the individual and make direct eye contact when communicating
- Repeat information and seek feedback to insure information communicated is clear
- Be distinct and slow when communicating information

VA will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, age, gender, color, national origin, disability, marital status, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation. Volunteers have the right to voice their concerns without fear of reprisal. Managers and supervisor must enforce standards for appropriate workplace behavior.

Antidiscrimination

A Federal agency cannot discriminate against an employee or applicant based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or political affiliation.

Alleged Discrimination

- If you believe you have been discriminated against based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability contact:
    - Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Lynette Hall can be reached by calling 858-642-3840 within 45 calendar days of the alleged Discriminatory action or effective date of personnel action.
- If you believe discrimination is based on age you must contact an EEO counselor or give your notice of intent to sue to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission within 180 days.
- If you believe you have been discriminated against based on marital status or political affiliation, you may file a complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel.

Whistleblower Protection Laws

Reporting information that you believe is:

- A violation of any law, rule, or regulation
- Gross mismanagement or a gross waste of funds
- Abuse of authority
- A significant danger to public health or safety

The President, Congress, and VHA feel that whistleblowers should be protected from punishment and reprisal (revenge) for telling what they know. Whistleblowers can ensure effective and appropriate use of tax dollars by the U.S. government.

If you observe any unusual activity, such as possible thefts or drug activities, call the **VA POLICE x53647**.

You do not need to give your name. Being concerned is the most effective way to reduce or prevent crime. If a crime does occur, report it. Sounds easy and it is. It may be what you tell the police that may result in any arrest. No fact is too trivial; give a good description of the offender including as many of the following items as you can: race, age, height, weight, clothing, piercings and/or tattoos, color of eyes and hair, and direction of flight.

The responsibility for apprehending offenders belongs to the VA Police. They cannot apprehend anyone if the crime is not reported. The faster you act in reporting the crime, the faster the police can act in apprehending the offender.

Main Line to Veterans Affairs San Diego
858-552-8585

VA Police
For non-emergency business – Ext. 3647
For EMERGENCY – Ext. 3333

VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

Violent Behavior Prevention Program

VA Healthcare System has adopted a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy regarding inappropriate (disruptive, threatening or violent) behavior. Persons (patients, beneficiaries, volunteers, visitors, employees) committing acts of violence will be reported for appropriate action.

Workplace violence is any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse that occurs while working. Violent behavior includes one or more of the following:

- Intimidation – An intentional act toward another person, the result of which causes the other person to reasonably fear for his/her safety or that of others.
- Threat of Violence (Assault) – An intentional act that threatens bodily harm, however slight, to another person or damage to the property of another.
- Act of Violence (Battery) – An intentional act, which causes bodily harm, however slight, to another person or damage to the property of another.

Employees and volunteers who suspect a violent situation developing or has developed should immediately call the VA police at extension 53647.

Theft Alert

We may experience an unusually high number of thefts of personal property that are left unsecured in employee offices and patient bedside stands. **PLEASE** secure all personal property, especially wallets and purses. There are lockers available for daily use in the Volunteer Lounge. The lockers will be cleared out each evening. Advise all patients to leave personal property at home and secure money at the Patient's Funds. **REPORT SUSPICIOUS PERSONS.**

Stop and Question

The VA Police have the right to inspect any packages, luggage, containers, etc., leaving or entering this Medical Center. Proper notice is posted in the main lobby entrance. This action is done on a random basis and is used to deter the introduction of contraband.

Patient Abuse

VA San Diego Healthcare System has a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy for Patient abuse. Behaviors listed below are justification for the dismissal from the VA Voluntary Service Program.

Intimidation and/or harassment include:

- Teasing and/or insulting a patient
- Speaking harshly, rudely to a patient
- Laughing at or ridiculing a patient
- Scolding a patient
- Indifference

Indicators of Patient Abuse

- Frequent unexplained injuries or complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Burns or bruises suggesting the use of instruments (i.e. cigarettes)
- Sudden weight loss
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Bedsores and/or skin lesions
- Fear of being left alone with caregivers
- Patient-on-patient violence

The VA is committed to providing high quality care to its patients. Patients are in no way to be mistreated or abused, physically, verbally or psychologically in any other way by a VA employee or volunteer.

The abuse of a patient is cause for immediate termination.

Reporting Procedures

- If you identify a potential victim, you must report the situation immediately.
- Notify the attending provider and the area supervisor immediately and notify Voluntary Service.
- If necessary, call the VA Police to evaluate the situation.

Abandonment

Abandonment is defined as, "the desertion of an elderly or mentally handicapped person by an individual who has assumed responsibility for providing care for an individual or by a person with physical custody.

Signs of Abandonment

- Deserting an individual at VA San Diego
- Deserting an individual at a public location (i.e., a shopping center)
- Individual is disoriented or unaware of where he or she is
- Individual does not know how they got to the location where he or she is found
- Individual reports of being abandoned
- In need of medical or dental care
- Begs for food or water

Psychological/Emotional Abuse

The willful infliction of mental suffering by a trusted person is considered psychological and emotional abuse. This includes verbal assaults, threats, intimidation and humiliation.

Patient abuse is **not** tolerated at VA. If you become aware of a patient being or having been abused, ***call the VA Police at once at Ext. 53647***. This includes any act of violating a patient's rights, physical aggression toward any patient, verbal threats or abuse or requests for money or favors.

Sexual Harassment

VA San Diego has a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy for Sexual Harassment. The prevention of sexual harassment at the Medical Center is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers. Words or behaviors that one person finds amusing or inoffensive, another person may find embarrassing or humiliating. Sexual harassment is a form of inappropriate conduct that could warrant administrative action.

Sexually Abusive conduct takes the form of unwelcome sexual advances to include: touching, offensive comments (that can be direct or indirect) to any person. Behavior can include; flirting, joking and unwelcomed behavior or that which involves inappropriate sexual content. Below are some examples:

- It is not appropriate to discuss graphically sexual content in areas where people are not involved in the conversation can potentially overhear the conversation.

- Sexual harassment does not have to involve physical touching. Words alone may harass others. Similarly, an inappropriate gesture or look may constitute harassment.

- Gender based discrimination is a form of sexual harassment and will not be tolerated at VA San Diego.

*****No person should have to put up with abuse when volunteering.*****

REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

If you believe you are a victim of sexual harassment, contact your VA supervisor. He or she will guide you on the proper steps for proper action. Communication is imperative to early resolution. The Voluntary Service Chief will need to be contacted also.

If you are a witness to an incident of Sexual Harassment, please report the incident to your area supervisor and Voluntary Service Office as soon as possible.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

The concept of Universal Precautions is that all patients' blood, body fluids and tissues are assumed to be infectious.

Hand Hygiene

Washing your hands is the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs and infection.

- Before patient contact
- After patient contact
- After removal of gloves
- Whenever hands are contaminated
- Before eating
- After pushing a wheelchair or gurney
- When you have nothing else to do
- Refrain from eating and drinking in patient care areas or any area where blood or body fluids are handled

Hand Washing Techniques

- Wet hands with warm water and apply soap
- Work up a lather for 15 seconds
- Rinse hands
- Grab a paper towel and dry hands
- Shut off faucet with paper towels
- Open the restroom door with the towels
- Dispose of the towels in the waste basket as you leave the washroom

Clean under your nails by rubbing for one full minute.

- Rub vigorously
- Rub one hand against the other hand and wrist
- Rub between your fingers
- Rub up and down to reach all skin surfaces on your hands and between fingers
- Rub tips of fingers against palms to clean nail beds
- Wash two inches above your wrists
- Rinse well. Rinse from two inches above your wrists down to your hands. Hold your hands and fingertips down, under running water.
- When turning off the faucet, use a paper towel between your hand and the faucet. Never touch the faucet with your hands after washing. The faucet is considered infectious. Throw the paper towel into the wastebasket. Do not touch the basket.

Hand Washing Tips

- Completely wet your hands and wrists. Keep your fingers pointed downwards.
- Apply soap or detergent and hold your hands lower than your elbows while washing.
- Work up a good lather. Spread it over the entire area of your hands and wrists. Get soap under your nails and between your fingers.

Remember: You must wash before *and* after contact to prevent the spread of disease.

Gloves

Wear disposable gloves for any anticipated contact with patients. They are designed to form a barrier between your hands and another surface. Change them frequently while working. You must wash your hands after you remove gloves. Disposable gloves may NOT be washed or reused. Various size gloves are available.

Blood Borne Pathogens

Defined

- Pathogens are germs that can cause disease
- Blood borne pathogens are viruses such as Hepatitis and HIV that can potentially be spread to others through exchange of body fluids. This can include:
    - Blood
    - Saliva
    - Urine

Potential Routes of Exposure

- Use of a dirty needle
- Punctures or cuts from dirty sharps or blades
- Direct contact with an open wound
- Touching unclean surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, handles, phones, and keyboards)
- Exposure to eyes, nose, and mouth

Tuberculosis (T.B.)

Signs and Symptoms

- Deep chested "smoker's cough" (lasting more than 2-3 weeks)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Coughing up blood
- Persistent fatigue
- Fever
- Chills

Risk factors for TB transmission:

- Having other lung or immune system disease
- Being homeless
- Substance abuse
- Living close to the border

Any Volunteer with TB symptoms must be:

- Provided with a surgical mask
- Receive immediate medical evaluation by Occupational Health after notifying Voluntary Service

Care of the Environment

- You are responsible to ensure that your work spaces remain clear of clutter and debris
- Use only approved cleaners and disinfectants provided by the organization

Volunteer Responsibilities

- *Infection Control is everyone's responsibility*
- Utilize personal hygiene techniques to minimize the threat of spreading and acquiring contagious disease.
- Hand Hygiene: The single most important infection control measure!

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TB Screening

Preventing the spread of TB has become an important public health issue in recent years. If you exhibit any symptoms of TB you should let the Voluntary Service staff know during initial appointment; so the Volunteer can be cleared by Occupational Health staff prior to starting. Also if a volunteer develops symptoms similar to TB at any time during their tenure as a volunteer they should report to Occupational Health for testing and notify Voluntary Service.

Steps for TB Screening

- Fill out highlighted areas on TB Screening form provided by Voluntary Service.
- Volunteers will be asked if they have any symptoms of TB at the beginning of the interview.
- You will self-certify that no symptoms are present.
- Volunteers with symptoms will be referred to Occupational Health for evaluation and /or testing prior to being cleared to work as a volunteer.
- No annual TB screening/test is required unless you have symptoms.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Official VA Identification Badge

You will receive an ID badge on your first day. The badge is required to be visible above the waistline anytime you are volunteering. If your badge is left at home, go to Voluntary Service to receive a Temporary Badge for the day.

- ID Badges require a cleared Special Agreement Background Check that reviews all national, state, and local police and court records

When you are no longer able to volunteer please return your badge at the Voluntary Service Office.

Parking Regulations

VA Police has the authority to issue Violation Notices to illegally parked vehicles.

This is a federal facility, and violations are federally issued. Refusal to attend to tickets will be treated as a felony.

- Volunteers attending UCSD may only park on the VA premises during their tour of duty on VA property. UCSD students that park on VA property while attending class at UCSD will be given a ticket by VA Police or your vehicle will be towed away.

Parking Area

- All volunteers may park in Patient Parking Lot.
- Volunteers can park in Handicap Parking with a Disabled Placard/Plate.
- Volunteers can park in the Off-Site Parking Lot near the Miramar Naval Base and ride the VA shuttle.

Traffic Regulations

- Speed limit is **10 miles** per hour.
- Pedestrians have the right of way at **ALL** times.
- The Medical Center is considered a quiet zone; therefore, loud mufflers and unnecessary racing of the engine or blowing of the horn are prohibited.
- Always give VA shuttles, golf carts and emergency vehicles the right of way.
-

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LOGGING HOURS WORKED AND PRINTING MEAL

VSS Kiosk Quick Reference

1. Logging in from the Home Screen:

1. Enter your identfying code in the "Identifying Code" box .
2. Enter your date of birth in the "Date of Birth" box.
3. Click the "Log in" button.

2. Entering your time:

After logging in, you should see an entry field similar to the one below:

VOUCHER

1. Click on the drop-down arrow under the "Hours" column to select the number of hours you contributed.
2. Click on the drop-down arrow under the "Minutes" column to select the number of minutes you contributed. Round to the nearest 15 minutes.
3. To submit your time contribution, click on the "Post All" button located just below the time entry field.

3. Printing a meal ticket:

Once you have submitted your time, you may qualify for a meal ticket. If so, you will be taken to the following screen:

1. To print your meal ticket, click the "Print Meal Tickets" button. Your meal ticket will print and you will automatically be logged out of VSS.

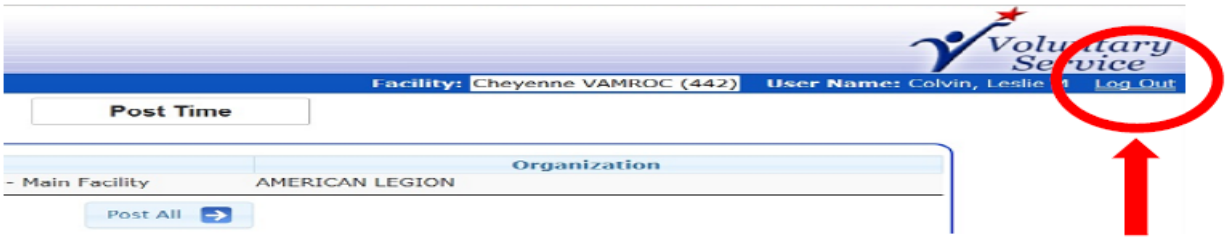
2. If you do not wish to print your meal ticket at this time, click the "Do Not Print Meal Tickets" button. You will automatically be logged out of VSS.

3. If you need to make adjustments to your time entry, click the "Time Posting" button to return to the time entry screen.

4. Logging out:

STOP

If you were not automatically logged out of VSS after you finished, click the "Log Out" button located in the top right portion of your screen



VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

- MEAL – If you are working for more than 4 hours and your assignment begins before 11:30 a.m. and covers a meal time period.
- Uniforms are provided where applicable.
- Free Flu Shots (if desired).
- Recognition and Awards Ceremonies (after 100 hours have been logged) (50 hours for youth).
- Tax Free Shopping on Grounds.
- Free use of Medical Library.
- Privileged Parking (use of Patient and Free Valet Parking).
- Letters of Appreciation.
- Use of VA Credit Union.
- Weekly Farmers' Market.
- Daily Specialty Store Vendors

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SAFETY

Disaster/Emergency Preparedness

DISASTER – Significant Impact on;

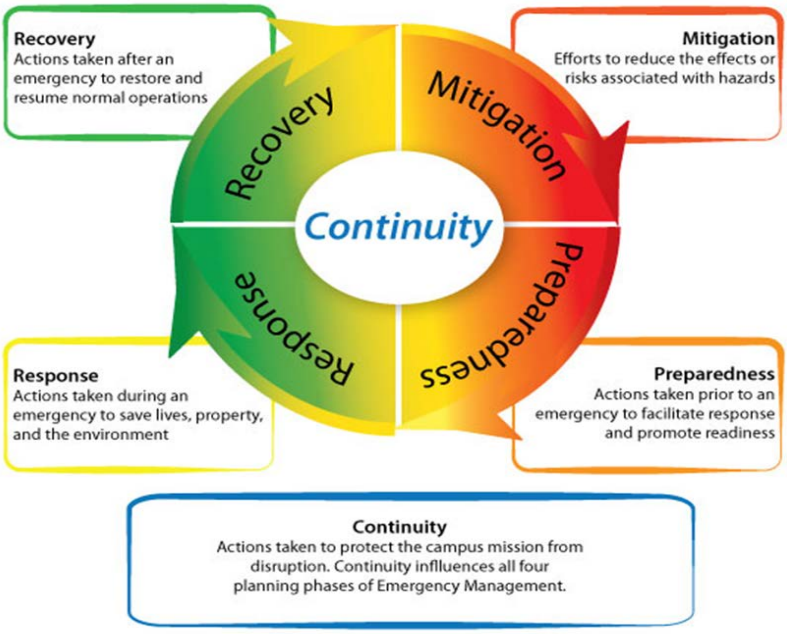
- Life Safety; Patient Care; Building Infrastructure; and Operational Systems
- Requires significant resources

EMERGENCY – Localized, contained using on-hand resources with minimal impact to patient care.

TYPES OF THREAT OR RISK ASSESSMENTS

- Natural Disasters
- Man-made Disasters
- Technological Disasters

****VASDHS utilizes the Incident Command System designed for hospitals, better known as the HICS System****



******DISASTER/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY. KNOWING YOUR PART IS MOST SIGNIFICANT******

Volunteer and Volunteer roles in a Disaster/Emergency situation:

- **Accountability/Responsibility on Station**
  - IF WILLING, assist where you are assigned to volunteer at VA
    - Check-in with your immediate Supervisor
    - Tell Your Supervisor you need to check in with Voluntary Service with your name and location at Extension 53267.

Hazardous Communications

ALL ACCIDENTS, INJURIES OR ILLNESS MUST BE REPORTED TO YOUR IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR who will notify Occupational Health. You must complete a REPORT OF INJURY form (CA-1) and you will be assisted and instructed by your immediate supervisor. The Voluntary Service staff must be notified of every incident.

Hazardous Situations

A hazard is defined as something causing danger or risk that may result in an unpredictable event, an accident. This is a wide range of situations such as; a spill, a frayed electrical cord or a gurney taped together.

It is extremely important to use caution when dealing with spills. Use the acronym **CLEAN** in working with spills. **In the event of a spill call Ext. 53301.**

Confirm that required protective equipment is in use and mark the spill area
Leave the area and close the door, restrict access if in a hall
Ensure those exposed are given emergency medical care and enact spill procedures
Access Medical Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and check clean-up procedures and precautions
Notify your area Supervisor and the Safety Manager **Ext. 51069**

If you are exposed to any type of chemical, you must be evaluated by the Emergency Department personnel after notifying your area supervisor.

You can prevent exposure by using personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves, aprons, goggles, masks and respirators. If you are exposed, flush the area with copious amounts of water.

Have someone check the MSDS binder for care or containment instructions.

Report all exposure to your Safety Manager, your Supervisor, Voluntary Service Office and Occupational Health Office. Fill out an incident report. Following policies and procedures when handling hazmat can reduce your exposure risks.

Utilities

We use major utilities every day and do not think about their convenience until the utility is disrupted: no natural gas to heat the home or cook, no electricity to turn on the lights or keep food cold, no water to drink or bathe in, no water to flush the toilet.

In the healthcare setting the loss of those and other utilities can be equally disruptive and affect patient care and safety. For example the loss of oxygen, nitrous oxide, medical gas, the vacuum system, steam and sewage.

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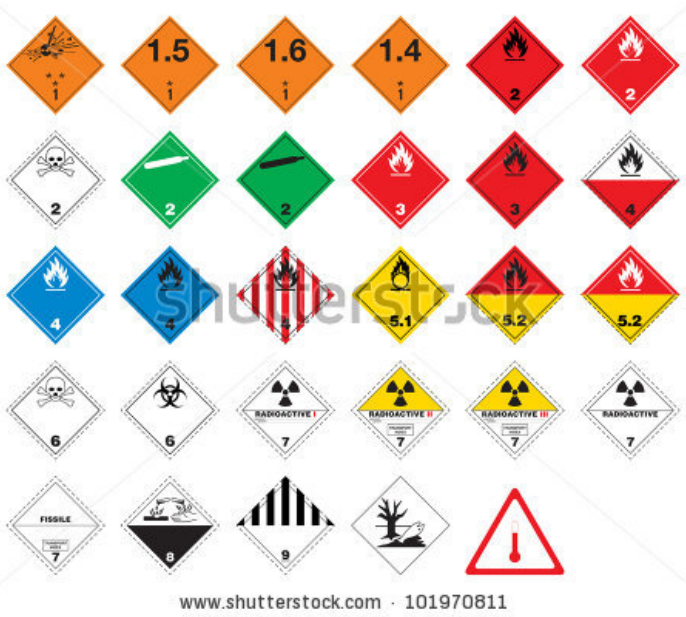
A major outage of a utility system is defined as a loss of utilities causing the use of back up sources. For example:

- Failure of incoming power causing emergency generators to be engaged
- Loss of water for drinking, cooking, and to support the fire suppression system requiring that water be transported and rationed and fire watches be instituted
- Loss of cooling systems in a heat wave requiring fans to maintain air circulation
- Loss of sewer systems requiring use of plastic bags inserted in toilets and rental of portable toilets.

Services or units experiencing what appears to be a utility failure should report the failure to **Facilities Management/Engineering Service Trouble Call Desk at Ext. 53301**

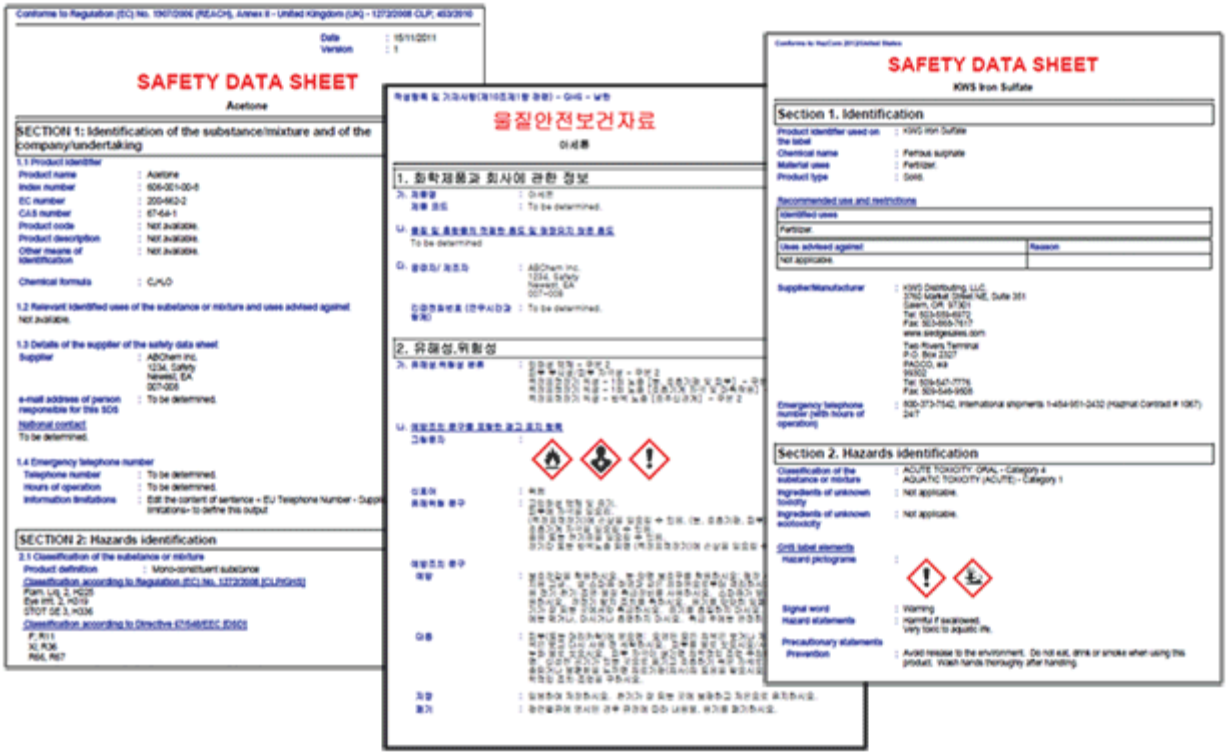


SAFETY DATA SHEETS

With the switch to the Global Harmonized System, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) have been replaced by Safety Data Sheets (SDS) providing information regarding hazardous materials used in the work area. SDS are designed to provide both workers and emergency personnel with the proper procedures for handling or working with a particular substance. SDS include information such as:

- Physical data (melting point, boiling point, flash points)
- Toxicity
- Health effects
- First aid
- Reactivity
- Storage
- Disposal
- Protective equipment
- Spill/lead procedures

Below is an example of an SDS. Know where they are located in your assigned area.



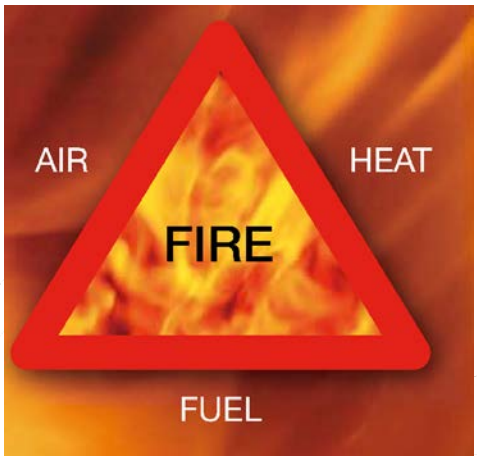
Fire & Safety

The Fire Triangle

The Fire Triangle is often used to illustrate the three components necessary for a fire to occur.

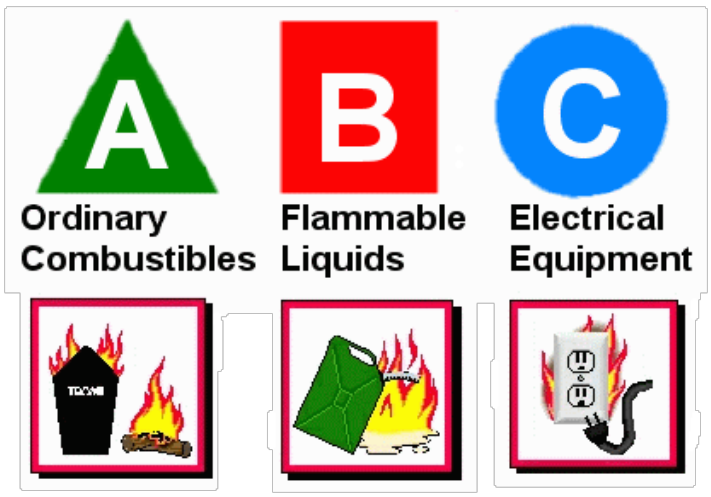
***HEAT*:** Sufficient to create ignition
***OXYGEN*:** Sufficient to sustain combustion
***FUEL*:** A material that combines with oxygen in the presence of heat

REMOVE ONE ELEMENT TO STOP THE CHEMICAL CHAIN REACTION.



COMMON TYPES OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- Class "A" Fires: Common combustible are burning, such as wood, paper, cloth
- Class "B" Fires: Flammable liquids. These are fires involving gasoline, oil, acetone, alcohol, paint, gases
- Class "C" Fires: Electrical fires



Fire Safety: THINK R.A.C.E.

R is for Rescue
A is for Alarm
C is for Contain
E is for Extinguish or Evacuate

R is for Rescue

- Evaluate the risk and determine if you can rescue anyone in danger without becoming a victim yourself.
- Never enter a room where there is fire to rescue someone.
- Never yell "fire." Use "Code Red" in a calm manner.

Heat and smoke collect at the top of the room. Keep low and check to make sure nobody is left behind. Help people out of the room and close the door behind you.

If your own clothes catch fire while you are rescuing someone, remember to **STOP, DROP, & ROLL to extinguish the fire.**

- Don't run; you will only feed the fire more oxygen causing it to burn hotter.
- Get on the floor and roll back and forth until the fire on your clothes is extinguished.

A is for Alarm (Report the Fire)

The most common factor in hospital fires is the delay in activating the fire alarm system.

If you suspect that there is a fire, pull the manual fire alarm. When the fire alarm is activated, call Ext. 53333 for the Emergency Management Team.

- Major fire doors will automatically shut helping to isolate the fire.
- Fans will shut down in the building ventilation system. This helps prevent smoke from spreading throughout the hospital building.
- The alarm alerts all staff and Volunteers to implement the **RACE** procedure.
- The rescue team is able to localize their efforts when the fire alarm is pulled.

C is for Contain:

- Contain the fire and smoke by closing the doors and windows.
- Containing the fire helps remove one element from the chain reaction and prevents the fire from spreading.

E is for Evacuate:

Leave the area in an orderly fashion. Notify your area supervisor if possible, the volunteers will meet in the patient parking lot next to the parking garage and there will be a flag posted.

Most importantly, protect yourself. Always make sure you have a way out. Never let the fire get between you and the exit.

Fire Extinguishers

Portable extinguishers are not designed to fight large fires. Do not use a fire extinguisher unless you have been trained by VA to do so.

- Be aware of your assigned area and location of fire extinguishers.
- The extinguisher must be fully charged and in working order.

WHERE ARE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS LOCATED?

- Fire extinguishers are located throughout the facility.
- VA uses ABC type fire extinguishers for all fires.

TO USE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER, JUST REMEMBER THE PASSWORD.

P Pull the pin. Twisting it as you pull it out will help break the seal.
A Aim the nozzle for the base of the flames. If you aim for the front, it will push the fire away from you.
S Squeeze the handle all the way down. Otherwise the valve will not open all the way.
S Sweep the nozzle slowly back and forth across the base of the flames pushing the fire back until the fire is extinguished.

IMPORTANT: Regardless of the amount of extinguishing agent used on a fire, report the use of the extinguisher to safety to be recharged. Contact the Safety Office at ext. 51069 and the discharged extinguisher will be replaced with a newly charged extinguisher.

TYPES OF EVACUATIONS:

- **Horizontal Evacuation** involves relocation to a safe area on the same floor, usually on the other side of the fire doors.
- **Vertical Evacuation** means relocation to a lower floor and possibly a complete building evacuation. DO NOT evacuate up as fires spread upwards. The goal is to move towards a ground exit for safety. Evacuate downward using a stairwell if you are on an upper floor.
- Buildings with healthcare occupancy (inpatients) will remain in place. You may be asked to help assist with inpatient evacuation, otherwise you need to evacuate.
- Business occupancies include non-patient wards and buildings such as: primary care, Voluntary Service, etc…will evacuate.

DO NOT USE ELEVATORS IN A FIRE EVACUATION.

NOTE: The San Diego Fire Department will assume full responsibility for fighting the fire on their arrival. However, VA Nursing Personnel will maintain control and treatment responsibilities of the patients and others.

Utility and Equipment Safety Training

Electrocutions rank *fourth* in causes of industrial deaths. Equipment safety requires the cooperation of all personnel in every office and department.

A small night-light with a 6-watt bulb can cause a fatal electrocution. Given the right circumstances it can even potentially start a fire.

Water conducts electricity. Your body is more than 70% water. That means severe injuries can potentially result from electrocution. Listed below are some of the more common injuries caused by electricity:

- Numbness and Tingling
- Loss of Consciousness and/or Memory
- Respiratory Distress
- Irregular Heartbeat
- Heart Attack
- Burns
- Kidney Injuries
- Blood Clots

Electrical Equipment

- Learn how to properly use prior to use
- Visually inspect before each use
- Do not stack anything on or behind it
- Turn off equipment before plugging or unplugging

Do Not Use Equipment

- If it is wet
- If your hands are wet
- That has been dropped or fallen
- If you suspect it may be broken or malfunctioning
- If you feel a tingling sensation upon touching it

Plugs/Cords/Outlets

- Make sure wall outlets are in good condition
- Make sure plugs fit snugly and securely into wall outlets
- Pull on the plug—*not* on the cord—to remove from an outlet
- Do not rest on equipment or electrical cords
- Do not run electrical cords through doors or windows
- *Do not* plug an extension cord into an extension cord (called a “daisy chain”)

Never Use

- Extension cords on patient care equipment
- 3-prong adapters (“cheaters” that convert 3-prong to 2-prong)
- Broken or bent 3-prong plugs
- 2-prong plugs on equipment (must be three prong)

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Always Remember To

- Tape long cords to the floor to prevent tripping
- Turn the equipment "OFF" when plugging in or disconnecting from wall outlets
- Turn off all equipment when it is not in use

Equipment Management

Disconnect any electrical/medical device that:

- Throws sparks
- Blows a fuse
- Gives even the slightest shock

Remove the device from the service immediately

- Attach tag/note: Do Not Use
- Report the broken equipment to the appropriate resource

Earthquake Preparedness

It is important to know how to protect yourself during an earthquake, if you find yourself in an earthquake at VA.

DROP

Drop down to the floor, preferably under a table or desk that can protect you from falling objects. If one is not nearby, stand under the nearest doorway. Stay away from heavy furniture, appliances, large panes of glass, shelves holding heavy objects and masonry.

COVER

Whether you are under a table, desk, patient bed or a doorway. You will need to **cover your head**. Kneel on the ground and roll your body forward. This will keep your center of gravity as low to the ground as possible.
A hallway is one of the safest places to be that is not crowded with objects.

HOLD ON

If you take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture, hold on to it and be prepared to move with it. Hold your position until the ground stops shaking.

Always be aware of possible and alternative exits at your workplace for emergency situations. Long distance phone lines will be restored sooner than local phone lines. Refrain from using your phone immediately after an earthquake. Keep the lines open for EMERGENCY use only.

NOTE: *If you are outdoors during an earthquake, when the shaking starts, get to an open area away from trees, buildings, walls and power lines.*

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking by employees, volunteers, visitors, and patients is authorized **ONLY** in the designated outside areas. Smoking receptacles are provided on the second floor patio and the rose garden by SCI.

VA Police Officers, as part of their routine patrol will promote the enforcement and may issue citations to violators of this policy. This will include surveillance of public areas, corridors and other areas.

Service Chiefs will assure that every supervisor and their subordinates are fully briefed on the smoking policy. If an employee/volunteer refuses to adhere to procedures, the Service Chief may implement corrective measures necessary to promote compliance.

BODY MECHANICS\

Statistics show that majority of injuries are back related, and 5 out of 6 people will suffer a back injury sometime in their life. Awareness of back safety is essential.

Two Leading Causes of Back Injury

- The reach and lift injury
- The twist and lift injury

An example of a reach and lift injury would be to lift a heavy object higher than your waist or height level. The condition could worsen as you twist, turn or move in any direction. It is better to use your natural posture and reach without hyperextension with minimal spinal movement. Keep pressure on your legs and shoulders square while facing the object being lifted.

Ways to Prevent Back Injury

- Good general health
- Proper diet and fluid intake
- Good posture (includes standing, sitting and sleeping correctly)
- Proper footwear
- Proper use of equipment
- Proper lifting technique

Posture for a Healthy Back

Posture is the way you stand naturally with you back straight. Your body is its own natural alignment against gravity.

Proper Posture:

- Keeps bones and joints in the correct alignment so that muscles are being used properly.
- Decreases the normal wearing of joint surfaces that could result in arthritis.
- Decreases the stress on the ligaments holding the joints of the spine together.
- Prevents the spine from becoming fixed in abnormal positions.
- Prevents fatigue because muscles are being used more efficiently, allowing the body to use less energy.
- Prevents strain or overuse problems.
- Refrain from lifting objects that are heavier than what you can lift no matter the weight, size or shape.

Correct Standing Position for Lifting

- Hold your head up straight in a natural position.
- Keep your shoulder blades back and square.
- Keep your knees straight
- Tuck your stomach in. Do not tilt your pelvis forward or backward.
- Stand with your feet flat on the ground.
- Avoid standing in the same position for a long time

Good Work Habits

- Avoid any prolonged repetitive motion.
- Alternate activities.
- Notice how you sit and if you need to straighten up.
- In prolonged seating, get up to walk around and stretch to gain better circulation.

People often ignore symptoms of potential injury.

The early warning signs are:

- Soreness
- Tingling
- Numbness
- Stiffness
- Weakness/fatigue

GREEN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (GEMS)

The mission of the VA San Diego Healthcare System is to deliver quality healthcare to our nation's Veterans. In order to accomplish this mission, the VA San Diego Healthcare System recognizes that it must operate as to protect both the environment and the health and safety of patients, employees, volunteers and visitors.

In accomplishing its mission of providing quality healthcare to our nation's Veterans, it is the policy of the VA San Diego Healthcare System to:

- Be a good steward of the environment by complying with federal, state and local environmental laws and other requirements, preventing pollution, minimizing waste, conserving cultural and natural resources and continually improve environmental programs.

- Integrate pollution prevention, waste minimization, resource conservation and environmental compliance into VA San Diego Healthcare System operations, purchasing, planning and decision-making, wherever practical. Source reduction is the pollution prevention method of choice, followed by recycling, treatment of wastes and proper disposal.

- Use natural resources efficiently, and maintain the protection of plant and wildlife habitat consistent with the VA San Diego Healthcare System's mission.

- Recognize that the development and construction at the VA San Diego Healthcare System must consider the unique conditions of the environment of which the facility is part of.

Train VA San Diego Healthcare System volunteers as needed to carry out the environmental responsibilities of their positions.

You can help by:

- Recycling of paper, cans, bottles, newspapers, magazines, printer cartridges, and cardboard
- Encouraging carpooling and the use of public transportation
- Using recycle bins
- Turning off lights, appliances, radios and fans before leaving work
- Seeking better way to improve the program
- Buying recycled and biodegradable goods through "Green Purchasing"

BOMB THREAT GUIDE

Bomb threats are taken seriously. There are several elements to consider in a bomb threat.

- **Written threats**
  - Do not contaminate the note, handle as little as possible
  - Notify VA Police/Security Department at Ext. 53647

- **Threatening telephone calls**
  - Threats may be received by anyone
  - Use the O**range** Bomb Threat Questionnaire near the phone as a guide and to record your information
    - Have someone call the VA Police to report the threat while the caller is on the line as a trace is possible.
    - Location of the explosive device
    - Time it will explode
    - Identify how the caller has the information
    - Attempt to identify the caller (Accent, gender, age etc…)

When the call is completed, immediately write down the exact wording of the conversation, time it was received and the number the caller is calling from.
Contact the VA Police Immediately. The VA Police will go through their security measures to locate the explosive device. Volunteers *will not* be involved in this process.

- **Finding a Suspected Explosive Device or Package**
  - DO NOT TOUCH IT. If it is in the sun, do not shade it. Any change in temperature may cause it to detonate.
  - Question all employees/volunteers assigned to the area for knowledge of the suspicious device
  - Report any unknown objects to the VA Police (Command Center if one is dispatched).

If Evacuation is ordered:

- If possible, take your personal items with you. You may not have the opportunity depending on the situation.
- Leave doors open.

Evacuation

In the event of an evacuation, follow the directions of VA Police and staff. Patient safety is top priority. It is our job to assist the staff for what is needed. This may also include for you to leave the premises if instructed.