

# OREGON STATE HOSPITAL

PORTLAND – SALEM

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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SECTION 4: Fiscal

POLICY: 4.009

SUBJECT: **Handling Personal Property and  
Valuables**

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APPROVED: **ROY J. ORR**  
SUPERINTENDENT

DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 2009

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### I. POLICY

It is the policy of Oregon State Hospital to protect the rights of each patient, safeguard property entrusted for its safekeeping, maintain a safe living and working environment, and to establish responsibilities in the care of patients' property.

- A. All persons receiving treatment at Oregon State Hospital shall have the right to wear his/her own clothing; keep a reasonable amount of his/her personal possessions, including toilet articles; and have a private storage area with free access thereto. Exception: patients on behavior precautions or who have a property restriction covered by their treatment care plan.
- B. A reasonable amount of property may be stored at the Communications Center storage area (Salem) or the Portland storage area and should not exceed four standard hospital boxes (20 x 18 x 8) or the equivalent.

Patients with excess property and who have funds shall have 30 days to find alternative storage. The Director of Security shall issue the 30-day notice to the patient with a copy to the Unit Director. If the Unit Director can show that the patient has no means to secure alternative storage, the Director of Security shall be notified in writing and the notice will be considered null and void. Storage for more than four boxes will be arranged through the Communications Center, OSH - Salem on an individual basis. Property is handled by nursing staff in Portland.

- C. Personal possessions must be able to be neatly stored in the patient's locker, nightstand, or storage container. Programs may limit the amount of personal property retained in a patient's living area. Excess property negatively impacts the health and safety of living units and may be disposed of under Section III of this policy in accordance with OAR 309-108-0015.

- D. All patients shall have the right to retain and use on each ward a reasonable amount of personal property other than:
1. Prohibited items (see Section II C of this policy).
  2. Funds in excess of \$25.00 or amounts set forth by program.
  3. Driver's license and vehicle keys
  4. Identification such as DMV non-driving identification, passport, etc.
  5. Paper products such as documents, newspapers, and magazines in excess of one (1) cubic foot per patient (OSH Safety Manual #2.30).
  6. Credit cards.
- E. Patients will be discouraged from having valuables on the unit. Items valued at more than \$250.00 each will not be allowed. Exception: Computers or other items approved by the treatment team. The hospital will provide a secure storage for driver's license and other valuables not retained by the patient. Each program will designate what items of personal identification cannot be retained on the unit. All other items will be retained by the patient unless the Interdisciplinary Treatment Team determines the patient is not capable of being responsible for valuables. In that event the items will be inventoried and stored until it is determined that the patient can be responsible for them.
- F. Preplanned admissions to the Oregon State Hospital may be advised, prior to admission by program staff, of hospital policy on valuables, funds, and reasonable amount of property kept on the unit and in storage.
- G. If an unplanned admission is accompanied by a relative or guardian, unneeded valuables and excess personal property shall be sent home. In the event the patient is not accompanied by relatives or guardian, valuables shall be taken to the Communications Center at Oregon State Hospital - Salem or the Reception Desk at Oregon State Hospital - Portland. Funds shall be taken to the Business Office at Oregon State Hospital - Salem or the Reception Desk at Oregon State Hospital - Portland. If the Business Office is closed, funds will be left at the Communications Center in Salem and at the Reception Desk in Portland
- H. All personal property that a patient brings into the hospital at time of admission shall be itemized in writing on hospital forms, regardless of where the items are stored.

- I. The patient shall participate as much as possible in the property inventory process, confirming the inventory findings, and receiving a written copy of the inventory which he/she has signed.
- J. If the patient is unable or unwilling to participate in the property inventory, two Oregon State Hospital staff will inventory and sign the property forms, noting that the patient was unable or unwilling to be involved with the inventory.
- K. Each program shall designate a secure area(s) to safely store and inventory property to assure that all patient property is returned to the patient at time of discharge.
- L. Staff are prohibited from borrowing, selling or purchasing personal property from patients.
- M. Patients are discouraged from exchanging their personal property with other patients. Should two patients transfer property, the transaction must be approved by each patient's case monitor and/or treatment team and documented on the patient's property records and signed by both patients.
- N. Ward policies on patient property including any listing of prohibited items must be available to all patients and families.
- O. Patient living areas are subject to inspection for excessive property or prohibited items. Excessive property or prohibited items must be disposed of in accordance with Section III D. of this policy.
- P. In order to monitor packages coming onto forensic units, each forensic unit will maintain a Property Receipt Book containing the "Package Request" form or the "Request for Delivery of Electrical Appliance/Device" form.
- Q. There shall be an audit of patient property stored at the Communications Center in Salem and the Reception Desk in Portland performed by an employee (other than Communications Center staff) assigned by the Director of Security. The audit will be performed on an unannounced periodic basis at least annually. A random sampling of patient property box contents shall be audited. A written audit report will be given to the Superintendent within 30 days of the audit.
- R. If a patient has excessive property in large storage and needs to go through their items to determine disposition, arrangements can be made through the Communications Center. Review of property will be conducted inside the secure perimeter.

- S. Certain items cannot be kept in large property storage, (i.e., food and other perishable items), tobacco, combustibles (i.e., alcohol, perfume, matches, lighters, etc.) and excessive paper. These items must be disposed of.

## II. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Valuables" means negotiable and non-negotiable items (other than cash and endorsed checks); valuable papers and cards; personal effects such as bonds, jewelry, watches, rings, "keepsake" coins, foreign coins and currency; cameras; and binoculars.
- B. "Funds" means all domestic currency and coins (except keepsake coins and endorsed checks), cashiers checks, money orders, traveler's checks, checks drawn on the Treasurer of the United States, personal checks, or other negotiable instruments. (See OSH Policy and Procedure 4.010.)
- C. "Prohibited Item" means:
1. Alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, prescription and non-prescription drugs or medications.
  2. Any item that reasonably can be used as a weapon or instrument of escape, including but not limited to: matches, lighters, knives, firearms, electronic paging devices, and police scanners (reference FPS Policy 4.009, "Contraband").
  3. Any item which is detrimental to the treatment, training, health or safety of the patients on a particular unit and which is prohibited in writing and posted on the affected unit.
  4. Any item which is detrimental to the treatment and training of an individual patient and is recorded in order section of the medical record by the treatment physician; and
  5. Any electrical item that does not meet the screening criteria, listed in OSH Policy and Procedure 8.001, and poses a shock or fire hazard.
  6. Internet capable electronic equipment not approved through procedures in OSH Policy and Procedure 6.030.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. At admission, the personal property brought by the patient is reviewed to determine which items cannot remain with the patient on the unit. Of these items, valuable and small storage items will be stored at Communications Center, OSH - Salem, and at the Reception Desk, OSH - Portland. Clothing or larger items may be stored in the hospital's large storage room. The inventory of this property shall be confirmed by the patient, who also receives a written copy of the inventory. Unit staff in Portland are responsible for inventory and storage of large property items.
- B. Any items sent through the mail or given by visitors to a patient shall become the property of the patient and shall be handled in accordance with procedures set forth in these rules. Property that exceeds the property guidelines will be put in long-term storage or returned to sender.
- C. When a patient is on Unauthorized Leave, property shall be inventoried immediately, signed by two staff members, and arrangements made to place in large storage at the Communications Center, OSH - Salem or in property storage at OSH - Portland.
- D. Prohibited items, including items that exceed maximum allowable property limitations, must be disposed of as follows in accordance with the options listed in OAR 309-108-015(6).
1. Given to the patient's parent, guardian, spouse, friend, attorney, or other person designated by the patient. A property release form must be completed.
  2. In the case of gifts, returned to the sender.
  3. Stored in accordance with Sections I.A. and I.B. of this policy.
  4. In the case of prohibited items, destroyed in the presence of at least two employees of OSH. An OSH incident report must be completed that details the date, time, a description of the item destroyed, its approximate value, and manner in which it was destroyed.
  5. If an agreement cannot be reached over the disposition of items, patients may appeal any proposed disposition of items pursuant to the OSH grievance procedure. Items will be retained in a secure location until a decision is made.
- E. Medications, including nutritional supplements, shall be sent to Pharmacy and handled in accordance with OAR 309-108-015(3).

F. Intra-Hospital Transfers:

1. Patients transferred intra-hospital shall have properties in their possession transferred with them. Transferred property must be within the guidelines of property allowed by the receiving unit. A complete inventory of all properties shall be performed and a receipt shall be prepared by the sending unit and signed by the patient. When the patient is transferred, the receiving unit shall also perform a complete inventory of all properties and a receipt shall be prepared by the receiving unit and signed by the patient or by two (2) staff if the patient is unavailable, unable, or unwilling to sign.
2. Patients within the forensic program needing emergency reverse transfer will have essential items accompany them. Other property (within the guidelines of the receiving unit) will follow within 72 hours. Until transferred, property will be immediately placed in a secure location by the sending unit.
3. Property not taken to the receiving unit shall be itemized separately by staff from both units, signed by the patient, and delivered to Communications Center, OSH - Salem or to the Reception Desk, OSH - Portland for storage within five (5) days.
4. Any unit temporarily transferring a patient to the Medical unit shall determine with the Medical unit what property needs to be transferred. The referring unit shall itemize property sent with the patient and the Medical unit shall receipt and return the property when the temporary transfer is ended. Items not sent will be kept on the patient's home unit.
5. OSH patients may request their personal property be released to a third party, (i.e. a parent, friend, lawyer, etc). The Release of Personal Property form must be completed and forwarded to the Communication Center. The release must contain authorizing signatures from designated members of the treatment team as well as the patient. At the time the property is released, the receiving person must sign the form along with the individual releasing the property. A copy of the completed form must be maintained in the patient's chart.

G. Release of Property:

1. Patients may have items released from safekeeping by using the Property Release form. Exception: Driver's license and car keys may be released only upon written permission of the Superintendent or designee during patient's stay at hospital.

2. Patients receiving full discharge will have all properties stored at Communications Center, OSH – Salem and Reception Desk, OSH – Portland, and unencumbered funds held in the Business Office released to them at time of release. Funds held in the Business Office will be forwarded to the discharged patient on the next working day if the patient is discharged after regular working hours, or handled in accordance with written instructions from the discharged patient.
3. Property of deceased patients shall be handled in accordance with OSH Policy and Procedure 6.005.
4. Patients transferred to another facility shall have their properties transferred with them. A complete inventory of all properties shall be prepared and will be receipted and signed by the patient upon delivery to the transferring authorities or other facility.

H. Missing or Stolen Property:

1. When it is determined that a patient's personal property and/or funds are missing or stolen, unit staff shall:
  - a. Investigate the circumstances of the loss, getting as much information from the patient as possible. In the case of suspected theft, notify the Communications Center who will contact the Superintendent or his designee to make a determination on notifying the State Police.
  - b. Complete the Application for Patient Reimbursement of Property Lost or Stolen While in Oregon State Hospital Custody form. Forward the completed form to the Program Director, along with applicable property sheets and, if available, purchase receipts and witness statements.
  - c. If original purchase receipts are not available, the Director of Security may request that the ward obtain two estimates to determine replacement costs before forwarding the claim to the Department of Administrative Services.
  - d. The Director of Security will review the report, recommend reimbursement or denial, then forward the claim to the Department of Administrative Services.

I. Unclaimed Property:

1. A list of all personal property left by patients at the Oregon State Hospital and not claimed for a period of one (1) year or more after being discharged, going on unauthorized leave, or death shall be forwarded to the Division of State Lands who will determine the disposition of each item; i.e., the property will be escheated to the State, be donated to the Oregon State Hospital Volunteer Services for patient use, destroyed, or other disposition.
2. A notice of any property that exceeds the sum of \$50.00 will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county of such institution and the county from which the patient is committed by the Division of State Lands. The expense of such publication will be paid out of the proceeds of the escheated property.
3. Personal property which has been forfeited to the State (ORS 179.540) may be reclaimed by the owner, heirs, or personal representative for a period of up to ten (10) years.

IV. REFERENCES

ORS 426.380 through 426.395  
ORS 430.041, 179.040, 179.540.  
OAR 309-108-000 through 309-108-020, Mental Health Division.  
OSH Policies and Procedures 1.006 and 4.010.

Replaces Oregon State Hospital Policy and Procedures 4.009, *Handling Personal Property and Valuables*, dated 3/21/2006.