

# Police Service



FY06

**SECURITY MANAGEMENT –**

**MANAGING VIOLENT SITUATIONS AND BEHAVIOR**

## Objectives of Course

- After completion of this computer Assisted Instruction program, the participant should understand the following:
  - How and what criminal or suspicious activity is to be reported to the VA Police at ALMD, KD, CCOPC, FTOPC or MCOPC or to the contract Security guards at LOPC, HOPC, Villa Serena or VOPC, and to the local police at South Bexar County OPC or Billing Concepts.
  - Whom to report criminal or suspicious activity to where VA Police or Security guards are assigned.
  - The reporting requirements outlined in Policy Memorandum 07-03-01 "Police Notification Procedures".
  - Information on how office furniture should be arranged to allow for you to make a quick safe exit.
  - Who can initiate a Code Green and Code Green procedures.
  - Bomb Threat Procedures.
  - What to do if confronted with an individual that has a weapon.
  - How and the importance of protecting the crime scene.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

- The following situations could happen to you while you are here at work:
  - While providing service to a customer, they become irate and attack you.
  - You are in your office and you receive a threatening phone call from someone.
  - Your wallet or purse has been stolen from your work area.
  - You see a non-law enforcement person with a firearm, knife or other weapon walking on STVHCS property.
  - You are taking a smoke break at one of the designated smoking areas and observe a person throw a suspicious package behind some hedges.
  - You receive a telephone call from an unknown person who is telling you there is a bomb.
- These are some examples of what might happen while you are at work. Do you need to report this to anyone and if so to whom? This training course will help answer these questions for you.
- During the past few months there have been several incidents that have occurred at various facilities within the STVHCS that have necessitated responses, and in some cases emergency response by the VA Police or local police where Security guards are assigned. Probably the incident that quickly comes to mind is the situation that happened on 2A, ALMD. Two of our staff was wounded when a beneficiary fired on them with a flare gun. The beneficiary was forced into a room where he remained. After the VA police and San Antonio Police responded the beneficiary surrendered and was taken into custody.
- The outcome of this incident could have been a lot worse but fortunately it wasn't. There really wasn't anything that anyone could have done at the time to prevent it. Everyone involved including the victims and personnel

who responded could not have handled that situation any better than they did.

- That incident and perhaps others like it, illustrates the purpose of this training. This training is to inform you of what actions you should take if you are the **victim** of or the **witness** to some form of criminal or suspicious activity, or emergency situation that happens on STVHCS property. These type of situations include:
  - Physical Assaults
  - Verbal Threats
  - Disturbances
  - Code Green Situations
  - Fire/smoke
  - Theft of government or personal property
  - Non uniformed law enforcement persons seen possessing firearms, knives or other weapons
  - The use or possession of alcohol or illegal narcotics
  - Vandalism/Fraud
- Who do you report these incidents to?
- What phone numbers do you call?
- When should you report these incidents?

### **PRESENTATION:**

- General Reporting Procedures - Like any good citizen of a city, town or member of a neighborhood it is expected that VA Employees' will report criminal or suspected criminal acts to the proper authorities. For many years, and **especially** in this day and age of terrorism, and high profile criminal acts that are dominate in the news media, law enforcement officers rely heavily on citizens (employees) to bring to their attention the knowledge that a person may be involved in a crime or a situation that may need to be investigated.

- STVHCS Policy Memo 07-03-01, entitled "Police Notification Procedures", states that **"An employee or anyone affiliated with the STVHCS is authorized, urged and expected to notify the VA Police, as soon as possible when they are aware that a crime or other reportable incident has occurred, is occurring or appears imminent."** The staff located at the Laredo, Harlingen, Victoria OPC's or Villa Serena are to contact the contract security guard assigned who will respond and assess the situation. If the situation is beyond the security guards capabilities, (i.e. a subject has a dangerous weapon such as a firearm or a knife), the local police will be contacted by anyone, dialing 911. After the situation is under control the contract security guard will notify the VA Police at ALMD at (210) 617-5168.
- The kinds of crimes or incidents we are talking about are:
  - Theft of or missing government or personal property
  - Assaults or threats to employees or the general public
  - Disturbances
  - Suspicious persons, groups or activities
  - Disorderly Conduct
  - Suicides or attempts
  - Unlawful introduction or possession of marijuana, drugs/narcotics or alcohol
  - Drunkenness
  - Possession of firearms or other weapons
  - Bomb Threats
  - Threatening telephone calls
  - Loitering
  - Gambling
  - Soliciting
  - Sexual Misconduct
  - Fire
  - Any other suspicious activity not mentioned above.

- When incidents such as these occur, notify the VA Police first. When such incidents occur at VOPC, LOPC or Villa Serena contact the contract security guard first and then your supervisor. When such incidents occur at South Bexar County OPC or Billing Concepts contact the local police by dialing 911 and then notify your supervisor.
- In most cases, persons involved will be asked to provide a written statement of their knowledge of the incident. The VA Police will provide a form for the witness to record their statement on.
- When you receive these forms from the VA Police, it is important that they be promptly completed. This will enhance your recall of the facts and will also assist the VA Police in speeding up their investigation. The content of these Witness Statements should include the nature of the incident (what happened), where did the incident take place (exact location), describe who was involved (were they employees, patients, male/female and a physical description) and any other pertinent information that would assist the VA Police in their investigation.
- When notifications are made to the VA Police, it can usually be done by telephone or in person at the police desks located at ALMD or KD, or the Police Offices at FTOPC, CCOPC and MCOPC. For Laredo, Harlingen, Victoria OPC's or Villa Serena the security guard will be notified, respond and when the situation is under control will contact the VA Police at ALMD. The phone numbers available to contact the VA Police are as follows:
  - ALMD – located in room Q116.1 and Ext. 15911 or (210) 617-5168
  - KD – located in room 123 and Ext. 2911
  - CCOPC – located in room 101 and Ext. 62-225/226
  - FTOPC – located on the second floor in room B100 or telephone 617-5168
  - MCOPC – located in room 158 and Ext. 7102/7104
  - The STVHCS employees that work at South Bexar OPC or Billing Concepts would contact their local police department by calling

911, and as soon as possible the VA Police at ALMD at (210) 617-5168.

- It is important to emphasize to all of our employees within STVHCS that have VA Police assigned to notify the VA Police first and foremost. Policy memorandum 07-03-01 states, "***When other federal or local law enforcement officers are needed, such requests will be routed to the VA Police, who will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.***" The only exception is when a VA Police Officer is not assigned to that facility, such as at the Laredo, Harlingen, Victoria Satellite Outpatient clinic or Villa Serena, where we have contract security guards assigned. The Security Guard will be notified and the local police by dialing 911 if it is a life and death situation (i.e. man with gun/knife or other weapon).
- The evidence that is located at a crime scene is very important to the solving of that crime or for collecting evidence that can be used in a court of law. Any employee or other persons affiliated with STVHCS that acquires or becomes aware of evidence that should be preserved should promptly notify the VA Police or local police at those sites that do not have VA Police assigned. The VA Police or the local Police will take custody of those items that are evidence and maintain them in what is known as a "Chain of Custody."
- It is important that you realize that this evidence should not be handled or disturbed except when it is absolutely necessary to provide treatment for the victim. We understand that in a hospital environment it is instinctive to want to clean up bodily fluids and to spruce things up; however, when a crime has taken place that is not appropriate and can actually harm the criminal investigation. If items are touched, moved, sanitized, etc., key evidence can be destroyed or compromised. A good rule of thumb is not to tamper with anything related to a crime or anything you think may be related to a crime. One of the first things the VA Police will do is to secure the crime scene so that this evidence will be protected.

- **Example:** Code Blue Team was unsuccessful in reviving a suicide victim. All of the tubes the medical team inserted into the victim should remain until the Medical Examiner arrives. Any bodily fluids or weapons will not be moved.

### **CODE GREEN SITUATIONS:**

- Code Greens are responded to by members of the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team and are common within STVHCS. This team is comprised of specially trained hospital staff members that include VA Police.
- What is a code green?
  - A code green is any situation involving an individual (beneficiary) who exhibits violent or disturbed behavior. If this situation escalates to the point where the hospital staffs' safety is in jeopardy, or if the individual has a weapon or other dangerous object the VA POLICE will handle this situation because it has changed from a code green to a law enforcement matter.
  - A Code Green situation typically arises when you as an employee are rendering some kind of service to a beneficiary, another employee etc., and you now feel threatened by that person's behavior. It is important to remember that you should not wait until the situation is out of control before calling a code green.
- No one will criticize you for calling a Code Green response.
- Who can initiate a Code Green Response?
  - Policy Memorandum 116A-03-06, covers the implementation of the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (Code Green Team). This Policy Memorandum states, "***The decision to initiate a Code Green may be made by any hospital staff member in the event of an emergency.***"

- To initiate a Code Green response at the **ALMD Division**, simply dial 15555. Make sure that you provide the hospital telephone operator the location of the incident. The Hospital telephone operator will contact the code green team via pager.
- At the KD division you simply dial **2911** to reach the Hospital telephone operator. The telephone operator will contact the Code Green team members on a paging system and will make an announcement over the hospital public address system.
- For Code Green responses at the clinics with STVHCS the following procedures have been developed:
  - MCOPC uses the clinic paging/intercom system and will say, "Code Green in Room # \_\_\_\_"
  - CCOPC uses the clinic paging/intercom system and will say, "Code Green in Room # \_\_\_\_"
  - FTOPC telephones extension 2664 or push a duress button located in designated areas.
  - VOPC uses the intercom and will say, "Dr. Green is wanted in Rm. \_\_\_\_"
  - LOPC contacts the administrative officer via the paging system or intercom "Code Green in Room # \_\_\_\_"
  - South Bexar County will notify the MAS Clerk of Code Green location, Clerk will activate the *"Duress Button"* and make announcement over P.A. System.
  - Villa Serena contacts San Antonio Police.

### **HOW TO DE-ESCALATE VIOLENT SITUATIONS:**

- There are some things you can do to lessen the likely hood of being a victim of violence:
  - Get away – from the situation as soon as possible
  - If available use duress alarms

- Let the VA Police, a supervisor or co-worker know that you will be dealing with someone you know to be prone to violent behavior so that your interaction with this person can be monitored.
- Arrange the office furniture so you have fast easy access to exit the room
- Do not be argumentative or "talk down" to the individual
- If attacked, physically resist unless there is a clear danger to your life. (Scream, bite, kick, scratch, make a scene, etc.)
- Act fast, use your natural defenses, run, call for help and notify the VA Police
- If a weapon is involved cooperate. DO NOT resist and try not to agitate your assailant. DO NOT attempt to disarm the subject.

### **BOMB THREATS:**

- Bomb threats are another form of violent behavior we need to know how to respond to. Policy Memorandum 07-03-04, "Bomb Threat Procedures", outlines the actions you should take in the event you receive a bomb threat.
- If you receive a bomb threat, it will probably be received by telephone. Bomb threats can also be received by mail or even in person. No matter how these threats are received, quick action must be taken to eliminate the threat. Actions that you should take if you receive a bomb threat by telephone are:
  - Keep the caller talking as long as possible. Ask questions such as:
    - When is the bomb set to go off?
    - Where is it located?
    - What kind of bomb is it?
    - Why are you doing this?
    - Who are you?
    - What is your name?

- Make notes on what the caller says and on such things as:
  - accent
  - tone of voice
  - voice mannerisms
  - Background noises
- A good tool to use to help you is VA form 10-43 "Report of Bomb Threat or Threatening Phone call check sheet." Every telephone in every work area should have one of these forms close to the telephone.
- Have another person immediately notify the VA Police. **If you are at a site where there are no VA Police then contact the local police by dialing 911.** If someone else is close by, have that person make the notifications to the VA Police and your supervisor while you are still talking to the caller.
- Once the VA Police receive notification of a bomb threat, the specific information received is critical in determining:
  - Who will be notified (services, key personnel, etc.)
  - Will the entire facility or certain portions be evacuated?
  - Where will personnel and/or equipment be evacuated?
  - Is their time for a search?
  - Will outside agencies need to be notified by the VA Police (i.e.-local police bomb squad, K-9 unit, etc.)?

### **SEARCHES FOR BOMBS:**

- If a search has to be conducted of your work areas, you may be enlisted to assist in the search. This is mainly due to your familiarity with the layout of your work area and knowing what looks out of place or unusual.
- There are designated services that would be responsible for searching certain areas. For example:
  - **EMS** is responsible for searching restrooms, hallways, stairwells, unoccupied rooms, etc.

- **Nursing Service** would quietly search-nursing units, prepare for possible evacuations if ordered to do so by the Director or designee.
- **Engineering Service** would search outside of buildings, roof tops, mechanical areas, flammable storage areas, etc.
- Service Chiefs and supervisors, from all services, are responsible for informing their employees to inspect their work areas periodically during their tour of duty and especially at the end of their tour of duty for suspicious objects. Rooms, areas, closets, cabinets, desks, etc., that are infrequently used should be locked when not occupied.
- There is no specific description that applies to what a bomb or explosive device looks like. Bombs can be hidden in ordinary objects such as:
  - Briefcases
  - Paper bags
  - Thermos Bottles
  - Flashlights
  - Toolboxes
  - Soda water cans
- When searching your area for bombs or explosive devices look for what doesn't belong or doesn't fit in your surroundings. A search should be done in teams of two. The team should move through the area to be searched together, individually looking, but remaining within hearing distance.
- If a suspected bomb is found, **DO NOT TOUCH IT**, or use a radio in the immediate area. One of the team members will clear the surrounding area and keep people away while the other member reports the find to the VA Police and your supervisor. The local police would be contacted at those sites that do not have VA Police assigned by calling "911".

- Also keep in mind that when persons are asked to evacuate an area, do not mention the word "bomb". Say something like: "We have an emergency in this area, will you please move to \_\_\_\_\_".
- The following will also be accomplished:
  - Open all doors and windows in the area to minimize blast effect.
  - Stay as far away as practical and keep a wall or substantial furniture item between you and the object.
  - When the search of your area is completed it will be reported to the control center through the chain of command.

### **SUSPICIOUS MAIL HANDLING PROCEDURES:**

- About two years ago we were in the midst of a nation-wide Anthrax scare. During that period a lot of us were probably fearful of suspicious letters, or packages, especially those coming through the Postal System.
- Two years later this particular threat seems to have subsided, but in this day and age we still need to remain alert and take precautions against threats to our safety such as: explosives, biological or chemical agents that could come through the mail. Some telltale signs to be on the lookout for include:
  - Letters or packages with no return address
  - Excessive postage
  - Handwritten/poorly typed addresses
  - Misspelling of common words
  - Letters/packages with restricted markings such as **Confidential** or **Personal**.
  - Letters or packages that are lopsided or have a lumpy appearance
  - The feel of a powdery substance
  - Oily stains/discoloration
- What should you do if you receive a suspicious package?
  - Relax and remain calm

- If it is a letter you have opened set it down gently. Do not move it around as you may expose others.
- Advise a co-worker to phone the VA Police
- Turn-off fans and if possible ventilation systems in the area
- Do not allow others in the area
- What should you not do?
  - Do not pass the letter or package around for others to examine
  - Do not disturb any contents in the letter or note
  - Do not ignore the threat, treat it as real
  - Do not remove the package or letter out of the area (This minimizes cross contamination)

### **GENERAL DO'S AND DON'TS:**

- **Do:**
  - Arrange your office furniture so that you can quickly and safely exit thru your office door. The person you are interviewing or examining should be located at the inner most area of your office. That way if they become hostile you are not trapped and can exit your office quickly.
  - Secure government property when it is unattended
  - Lock your car, even when you are in it
  - Walk only in well-lit areas
  - Walk with someone or request a VA Police Escort when walking to or from the parking lot
  - Wear your photo ID badge at all times in the workplace and challenge anyone unfamiliar to you who is in an area without an ID badge who acts suspiciously and/or notify the VA Police or local police if no VA Police are assigned to your facility.
  - Resist, scream, and attract attention if you are attacked.
  - Report suspicious persons or activity to the VA Police.

- **Don'ts:**
  - Do not leave personal property unsecured and unattended at the worksite
  - Do not leave valuables in plain view inside your vehicle
  - Do not walk between parked cars, especially at night
  - Do not carry large sums of money on your person
  - Do not leave keys, personal or government unsecured

### **CONCLUSION:**

- Knowing what to do and whom to report it to is vital in making your work environment safe and secure for the patients, employees and visitors who frequent the facilities within the STVHCS. The VA Police play an instrumental role in this reporting process. Be a responsible employee by following the policies and procedures that you have read about here today. By doing this, you can help the VA Police to help you when you need it!

## Security Management Training Mastery Exam

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which of the following should be reported to the VA Police or Security Officer that are assigned to a facility within the South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS)?
  - a.  Thefts of or missing government or personal property
  - b.  Assaults or threats to employees or the general public
  - c.  Disturbances
  - d.  Bomb Threats
  - e.  All of the above
  
2. The STVHCS Policy Memorandum that outlines Police Notification procedures is Policy Memorandum 07-03-01?
  - a.  True
  - b.  False
  
3. Who can initiate a code green?
  - a.  Visitors
  - b.  Any Hospital Staff member (employee)
  - c.  Patients
  
4. For criminal incidents that occur at facilities within STVHCS that have VA Police assigned, the VA Police will be notified immediately.
  - a.  True
  - b.  False
  
5. A code green team is designed to assist in controlling patients exhibiting violent or disturbed behavior.
  - a.  True
  - b.  False

6. The Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (Code Green) is comprised of:
- a.  Specially Trained medical staff
  - b.  Specially Trained Police Officers
  - c.  Both A and B
7. If you receive a bomb threat by telephone, a good tool to use to help you get information from the caller is:
- a.  An equipment inventory checklist
  - b.  VA Police Voluntary Witness Statement
  - c.  SF-71
  - d.  VA Form 10-43, "Report of Bomb Threat or Threatening call check sheet"
  - e.  None of the above.
8. If confronted by a violent individual with a weapon do not cooperate and try to agitate the individual as much as possible.
- a.  True
  - b.  False
9. At sites where there are VA Police Officers assigned or at those sites that have contract security officers (VOPC/LOPC/HOPC and Villa Serena) all of the following incidents should be reported to them except for:
- a.  The use and possession of alcohol or drugs on STVHCS property
  - b.  An individual with a gun or knife
  - c.  A subpoena you receive from the County District Attorney
10. Notify the VA Police, a security officer (VOPC/LOPC/HOPC and Villa Serena), a supervisor or co-worker when you will be interviewing in an interview room with an individual that you know to be prone to violent behavior.
- a.  True
  - b.  False

11. Who should you call to initiate a code green?

- a.  Call Psychiatry Service
- b.  Call the Directors office
- c.  Call your service chief or product line manager
- d.  Call the Facility Emergency number or use the satellite outpatient clinic pager/intercom system

12. If items related to a crime scene are touched, moved or cleaned, key evidence could be compromised or destroyed.

- a.  True
- b.  False

13. In the event of a bomb threat, which service is primarily responsible for searching restrooms, hallways, stairwells, unoccupied rooms, etc?

- a.  Engineering
- b.  Social Work
- c.  Environmental Management
- d.  Police
- e.  Nursing

14. Arrange your office furniture so you have a fast and easy escape route should you encounter a hostile or threatening person?

- a.  True
- b.  False

15. Employees are required to wear their photo ID badge with the picture facing forward while on duty at facilities within STVHCS?

- a.  True
- b.  False