

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH TEXAS VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
7400 Merton Minter Boulevard
San Antonio, Texas 78284

RESEARCH SERVICE
MEMORANDUM NO. 05-2

April 14, 2005

RESEARCH SERVICE SAFETY PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE: To outline Research Service program to manage safety issues.
2. POLICY: The Research Service will maintain a service level program to insure compliance with all safety guidelines.
3. RESPONSIBILITY:
 - A. Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development: The ACOS for Research and Development is the responsible official for providing safe working conditions in the Research Service area. This includes the responsibility for planning service safety and occupational health activities, select and provide on the job safety training, develop safety techniques and procedures for specific job operations, supervise and develop safety performance standards, stimulate employee interest in and actively participate in hospital safety program, eliminate unsafe acts and conditions, investigate and promptly report all accidents and injuries, establish safety subcommittee, and ensure hospital safety policy memos are available in Research Service.
 - B. Safety Officer: The Administrative Officer for Research and Development is designated as the Research Service Safety Officer. The Safety Officer is responsible for coordinating the safety program within the Research Service. This will include maintaining the service Subcommittee, providing the administrative support required by the safety program and the responsibilities of the ACOS for Research and Development, and providing coordination between the hospital Safety Office and the service Subcommittee.
 - C. Safety Subcommittee: The overall responsibility of the Safety Subcommittee is to implement all safety, occupational health, and fire protection directives, to conduct the monthly safety inspection, to identify hazards, and to provide recommendations to eliminate or reduce occupational accidents and injuries.
 - D. Supervisors: Responsibilities outlined for the ACOS for Research and Development apply to all supervisors. Supervisors will also ensure an MSDS is on file for each hazardous chemical used in the work area he supervises, ensure employees attend all appropriate training, provide positive supervision over the manner in which employee performs assigned duties, take positive action in eliminating attitude of carelessness toward safety and occupational health precautions, ensure training and indoctrination of all employees in safety practices and proper procedures to be employed to eliminate safety, health, and fire hazards inherent in the work area, ensure all employees are cognizant of their responsibility pertinent to VA safety policy, provide documentation of employee training, and ensure accident reporting within established timelines.
 - E. Employees: Employees have the responsibilities to know the job and apply safe work practices with a positive attitude toward safety and occupational health, recognize the hazards of the job and take precautions to assure safety of themselves and others, inform supervisor of on-the-job hazards and recommend methods to eliminate them and improve safety performance, ensure MSDS is on file for each hazardous chemical used in the work area, actively participate and cooperate in overall hospital safety and occupational health program, and report occupational illness and traumatic injuries to supervisor promptly.

4. PROCEDURES:

A. Safety Subcommittee. The Research Service will maintain a Safety Subcommittee to implement applicable safety directives. The Subcommittee will have a variety of members representing all research activities. The Subcommittee will meet on a monthly basis, with no quorum required to hold a meeting. Each investigator/lab will send a representative to each meeting. This subcommittee functions as a subcommittee of the hospital Safety Committee and the Research and Development Committee. A chair and vice-chair will be appointed. The vice-chair will assist the chair and assume responsibilities as the next chair appointed. Currently, the chair serves as the Research Service Chemical Hygiene Officer.

(1) Subcommittee Minutes. Minutes will be prepared to document the meeting, including absent/present members, old and new business, inspection reports, accidents/incidents review, fire drill responses, disaster preparation, and training. The minutes will indicate actions taken on all recognized or suspected safety or occupational health hazards. A copy of the minutes will be submitted to the Safety Office (138E) monthly.

(2) Monthly Inspections. The Subcommittee will be responsible for the monthly safety inspections. An unannounced inspection of the Research area will be conducted monthly by two members using a standardized checklist. The inspection findings and corrective actions taken will be reviewed by the Subcommittee and documented in the meeting minutes.

(3) Safety Policies. The Subcommittee will initiate and update service safety policies as needed to insure all employees have access to all current guidelines. Employees will be provided copies.

B. Training. All employees will be required to meet hospital safety training requirements. Training will include current hospital guidelines for safety issues as well as Research specific issues. Research Service will maintain a record of each employee's safety training compliance.

(1) Supervisor Orientation. After the hospital's new employee orientation is completed, supervisors must provide a Research safety orientation on specific job related hazards. New Without Compensation (WOC) employees must also be provided a work site safety orientation prior to starting work.

(2) Annual. All employees will be required to complete all mandatory hospital-wide safety training (VA intranet or hard copies) and the supervisor's site-specific safety training. Training will be documented with a training outline and sign-in sheets.

C. Subcommittee for Research Safety Subcommittee - Protocol Review. A separate subcommittee will review all research proposals involving safety hazards. The subcommittee may recommend or require changes prior to approval of research proposal. Subcommittee approval is required before the Research and Development Committee approval of the research proposal.

5. RESCISSION: Research Service Memorandum 04-2, Research Service Safety Program.



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