

ELOPEMENT

Policy & Procedure

Policy:

It is the policy of this facility that every effort will be initiated to provide a comfortable environment for our residents while preventing elopements from occurring. If a suspected elopement does occur, a search for the missing resident shall be conducted in a systematic manner using all available staff. For the purposes of this policy, elopement is defined as leaving the facility premises or failing to return within the designated time/failing to follow the facility's policies and procedures for leave of absence.

Procedure:

When an elopement is suspected the following steps will be initiated:

1. Notify the nursing supervisor and staff via overhead page (using facility selected code, i.e., Dr. Wander to room _____).
2. The charge nurse shall immediately check sign out books to determine if the resident has been taken out of the building by the responsible party.
3. The charge nurse shall assign one employee to physically check each alarmed exit to determine if all alarms are in working order (this may identify the exit the resident used to elope).
4. The charge nurse shall initiate a search of the facility and grounds by assigning staff to specific areas of the facility.
5. If department heads are on duty, they shall be responsible for the search in their respective areas. If department heads are not on duty, the charge nurse shall oversee the search of all areas of the facility and grounds.
6. Once the resident is located, the charge nurse shall page facility all clear code overhead three times (i.e., "Dr. Wander all clear").
7. If a thorough search of the facility and grounds does not locate the resident, the charge nurse shall **immediately notify the Administrator and Director of Nursing Services**.

When a resident cannot be located after a thorough search of the facility and grounds, the following steps shall be taken:

1. A written description of the resident and a recent photograph of the resident shall be obtained by the charge nurse.
2. Notify law enforcement officials
3. Notify the resident's legal representative and/or family.
4. Notify the resident's attending physician.
5. Document in the medical record as the situation progresses. Such documentation shall include the date and time resident was last seen, steps taken to locate the resident and the parties notified of situation. **NO BLOCK CHARTING!**
6. If a resident cannot be located for greater than two (2) hours or other conditions exist that place the resident in harms way (inclement weather, etc.), the state licensing and regulatory agency shall be notified using the designated 800 hot line telephone number. **(Please refer to regulations specific to your state).**

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This policy and procedure is not intended to replace the informed judgment of individual physicians, nurses or other clinicians nor is it intended as a statement of prevailing community standards or minimum standards of practice. It is a suggested method and technique for achieving optimal health care, not a minimum standard below which residents necessarily would be placed at risk.

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I have read, understand and agree to adhere to the requirements outlined in this policy and procedure.

Administrator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Medical Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Review Dates: _____

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