



Home Visit Safety Program and Procedures Manual

For SSM HEALTH AT HOME

Overview

The purpose of the Home Visit Safety Program and Procedures Manual is to provide information to managers, supervisors and field associates about preventing and responding to issues that threaten field associates safety. Field associates include: employees, volunteers, temp agency workers, students and independent contractors who travel for business purposes (home visits, deliveries etc...).

The goals of the program are:

To reduce exposure to issues which threaten field associate safety while performing home visits.

1. To ensure that any safety issue is taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Home Visit Safety Procedures and Programs

Roles and Responsibilities

Field Associates are responsible for:

- Maintaining awareness for their personal safety at all times. If you feel you are in an unsafe situation leave immediately. Call 911 if you are in imminent danger. When you are safe, contact your immediate supervisor.
- Promptly reporting actual and/or potential safety threats or acts of violence to their immediate supervisor and completing an incident report.
- Following all safety programs including the pet, infection control, safe patient handling, needle stick and safe driving program (authorized drivers).

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- Informing field associates of the Company's Home Visit Safety Procedure and Program.
- Taking all reported safety concerns seriously.
- Investigating all reported safety concerns.
- Providing feedback to field associates regarding the outcome of investigations.
- Documenting and informing all affected field associates of any safety concerns and interventions for a specific patient (E.g. patient lives in an unsafe neighborhood).
- Elevating safety concerns as appropriate.
- If stalking is suspected, consider varying start and end times for affected associates and plan different travel routes for those associates.
- Establish a system to identify patients and clients with a history of violent or assaultive behaviors. Implement specific procedures for all clients with a history of violence to ensure field associates and client safety.
- Focus on specific triggers and the best response and means of de-escalation. Ensure field associates know and follow these procedures.

Prevention

Prevention is the responsibility of every field associate. This section focuses on measures to reduce the risk to personal safety. Supervisors and managers as well as field associates should be familiar with and follow these strategies to reduce home visit safety risks.

Field Associate Contact

- Field associates are to keep in regular contact with their supervisor, or his/her designee, during the day.
- Field associates should update their supervisor, or his/her designee, when they are done for the day.
- Supervisors, or their designees, should follow up with staff who have not checked in.
- Field associates must keep their company issued cell phone charged and on during the workday.
- Field associates are to answer phone calls from the supervisor or co-workers and respond to voice messages in a timely manner. Missed calls are to be returned within the same workday, or if non-urgent, the next day.
- Field associates working afterhours should contact the afterhours operator when they are done with their visit(s).

Preparing for a visit

- Follow the dress code while dressing conservatively and avoiding jewelry.
- Avoid necklaces and lanyards.
- Always wear your name tag.
- Do not carry a purse and only carry minimal cash.
- Prior to arriving at the residence hide your valuables out of sight of others.
- If possible park on the street not in the driveway. Park in a well-lighted area away from shrubs, large trees and any large vehicles like vans or RV's. If you must park in the driveway leave your vehicle facing the street in a spot that cannot be boxed in.
- Check your surroundings before getting out of your vehicle. Do not get out if the area seems unsafe for any reason. Contact your immediate supervisor regarding your concerns and/or leave immediately if deemed necessary.
- Keep your vehicle in good working order and filled with gas.
- Make sure no one is near when getting your gear out of the trunk.
- Lock your doors and keep the windows up.
- Schedule visits in known problem neighborhoods in the morning.
- Work with the patient and/or their caregiver to ensure lighting is adequate in both the indoor and outdoor areas.

During a visit

- Never enter a home that has sounds of violence coming from within. Contact your immediate supervisor or call 911 as the situation warrants.

- Always choose the safest and most visible entrance.
- Keep your vehicle keys and charged cell phone on your person.
- Always know where your exit is and keep your back to the door. Do not let someone get between you and the exit.
- If the patient or a family member is clearly impaired due to drugs or alcohol re-schedule the visit and notify your immediate supervisor. Leave the home if you notice illicit drug activity.
- All guns must be unloaded, secure and not present in the room that the visit is taking place in.
- Call 911 if you observe a crime.
- Do not enter the home if someone is inappropriately dressed or exit if already present.
- Never accept food or drink at a visit.
- Do not reveal personal information about yourself or your family.
- If you cannot drive or walk safely to the patient's home due to snow and/or ice, re-schedule the visit.
- Leave if a patient, or anyone else, insists on smoking around oxygen tanks.
- Ask patients and caregivers to fix fire or environmental hazards, such as a broken step. Document all noted hazards.

Sexual Harassment

SSM Health at Home has a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment. All sexual harassment must be taken seriously and reported. The definition of sexual harassment is: any unwelcome sexual advance or conduct that creates an offensive, intimidating or hostile work environment. During home visits any sexual harassment of a field associate by the patient/customer, a family member or anyone in the patient/customer's home, must be reported by the field associate to their immediate supervisor and Human Resources. All incidents of harassment must be entered into the Customer Incident and Concern System as soon as possible. The "Harassment" category should be indicated. If the field associate feels uncomfortable, or in danger, they should leave the residence immediately. They should call 911 if needed.

Types of sexual harassment that are unacceptable include:

- Verbal sexual advances or propositions.
- Sexually explicit language and/or jokes.
- Leering, making sexual gestures.
- Displaying of suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons or posters.
- Unwanted touching, assault, impeding or blocking movements.
- Verbal commentaries about an employee's body.
- Inappropriate name calling.
- Inappropriately, or inadequately, dressed person in the residence.

Field associates should never consider any level of these sexual harassments "harmless" or "innocent". Often, if the harassment is left unchecked, it will escalate. Any level of sexual harassment should not be tolerated and should be reported to the field associate's immediate supervisor and to Human Resources.

Violence Prevention

All threats of violence must be taken seriously and reported. Follow training and procedures outlined in the Workplace Violence Prevention Program and Procedure Manual.

- Remain calm, speak slowly and softly. Avoid sustained eye contact.
- Acknowledge the persons feelings and do not get defensive.
- Do not contradict an angry patient or family member.
- Do not let an angry person get close to you.
- Do not interfere with two people confronting each other.
- Avoid aggressive body language and keep your hands in sight.
- If you are being verbally abused, politely ask the abuser to stop. If they do not, leave and notify your immediate supervisor.

Combative patient

Occasionally patients become combative, either verbally or physically. This may be caused by fear, dementia, medications or a combination of factors. As with all safety risks the first step is avoiding or removing yourself from immediate danger. If when you arrive for a visit the patient is clearly agitated you must use clinical judgment as to what, if any, patient cares can safely be performed. Call your immediate supervisor to discuss the situation. If during cares the patient becomes increasingly agitated, lashes out or bites, remove yourself from their reach and contact your immediate supervisor. All accidents/injuries to the field associate must be reported to the supervisor and Human Resources. An Accident/Injury Report Form must be completed and submitted to Human Resources as soon as possible.

Managers and supervisors must take action when necessary. All field associates must know that all combative patient safety concerns will be treated seriously and that appropriate action will be taken. All incidents of patient violence must be documented in the Customer Incident and Concerns System in a timely manner. Each incident must be investigated and a decision must be reached in how, or if, the patient can safely be treated. This plan must then be communicated to all staff using the non-clinical note and other means deemed appropriate by the clinical manager.

Incident Reporting and Investigation

All home visit safety issues must be reported immediately or as soon as feasible. The Customer Incident and Concern System shall be utilized as appropriate.

Each incident report will be evaluated by the field associate's immediate supervisor. The supervisor must investigate, implement interventions and document these. The supervisor will consult with their manager, Human Resources or other experts (Ergonomic Program Coordinator, Safety Officer) as needed.

Recordkeeping

The Company will maintain an accurate record of all home visit safety incident reports. Managers and supervisors will keep records of their investigations and interventions. All incident and injury report forms will be kept in accordance with worker's compensation law.

Records of home visit safety training program contents and the sign-in sheets of all attendees shall be maintained.

Training

Training and education will be provided to ensure that all field associates are aware of potential safety issues and how to protect themselves and their co-workers through established policies and procedures. Field associate home visit safety training will be completed at new employee orientation.

Training for all field associates will include:

- A review of all policies and procedures pertaining to visit safety.
- Methods for recognizing and responding to safety concerns.
- Instructions on how to report incidents.

Training for Managers/Supervisors will include:

- Learning how to reduce safety hazards and ensure that field associates receive appropriate training.
- Recognizing high-risk situations, so they can ensure field associates are not put in situations which compromise their safety.
- The importance of encouraging field associates to report incidents and to seek the appropriate care after experiencing an incident.
- Procedures for receiving incidents reports and working with management and Human Resources to resolve the issue.
- The importance of communicating to all affected staff all safety concerns and interventions required to safely work with individual customers.