

NURSING SERVICES GUIDELINE 6CD INPATIENT DETOX UNIT

Guideline: Search for contraband/
patient belongings



Policy Number Superseded:

Responsibility: Department Directors/Lead
Nurses/Detox Floor Nurses/Designees

Effective Date:
May 2026

Purpose of Guideline: To provide a safe and
therapeutic environment that remains free of
contraband.

Initial Effective Date:
August 2017

Procedure:

- (A) All patients and their belongings will be searched upon admission to the detox unit*.
- (B) If any hazardous or illegal materials/substances are found during search, staff will notify security/campus police immediately (ex: weapons/guns, street drugs).
- (C) Staff will fill out patient belongings sheet and have patient sign.
- (D) Patients will be able to keep in their possession: clothing, shoes, and reading materials only. Patients are responsible for all items in their possession.
- (E) All other belongings will be secured in a storage bin and locked in a cabinet in a storage room until discharge.
- (F) All personal hygiene items will be provided for the patient.

*Search Process

- (1) Two RNs must be present for the duration of the search process. Staff should search the intake room prior to beginning the patient's intake process to ensure no contraband or prohibited items are present.

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- (2) Before initiating patient search, explain to the patient the purpose and intent of the search.
- (3) Patient will change into a hospital gown or scrubs upon arrival, while in the presence of unit RNs completing the intake. Staff will then search all the clothing and belongings removed from the patient.
- (4) Staff will use a metal detector and wand over the patient. The patient will extend arms out, spread legs apart and staff will move wand approximately 1 inch from patient's body. Patient may be asked to squat and/or demonstrate other methods to show no contraband is present.
- (5) During search, RN should visualize all aspects of the patient's skin and skin folds for potential contraband.
- (6) Staff will only pat down a patient if there is evidence of a foreign body present. A witness will be present at all times. Staff will not ever touch/pat any private areas of the patient for any reason.
- (7) After staff determines no contraband is present, the patient can redress in their clothing if they choose.
- (8) After all other allowed items are searched, they can be returned to the patient. All items that are not allowed on the unit will be locked up as stated in item E. Staff will then search the intake room again to ensure no contraband or prohibited items are present.

Approved by:

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Chief Nursing Officer*

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Review/Revision Completed by:

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Next review date:

May 2029