

STATE OF OHIO



DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION
AND CORRECTION

SUBJECT: Institution Working Alone and Employee Safety Policy	PAGE <u> 1 </u> OF <u> 3 </u>
	NUMBER: 51-STF-04
RULE/CODE REFERENCE:	SUPERSEDES: 51-STF-04 dated 08/28/14
RELATED ACA STANDARDS:	EFFECTIVE DATE: November 23, 2015
	APPROVED: 

I. AUTHORITY

This policy is issued in compliance with Ohio Revised Code 5120.01 which delegates to the Director of the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction the authority to manage and direct the total operations of the Department and to establish such rules and regulations as the Director prescribes.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to enhance the safety of all staff that work with or provide program services to the inmate population; and ensure adequate employee safety and accountability throughout the agency.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all persons employed by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, independent contractors, and volunteers who provide services to the department.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Program Services Staff – Institution based employees of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction whose principal job emphasis is the delivery of health care or rehabilitative services. Such employees would include all medical and mental health care providers, as well as non-uniformed staff working in unit management, education, religious, or other program service areas.

Working Alone – An employee may be considered working alone when he/she is working with an inmate or group of inmates in an area where he/she cannot be observed or heard by another employee without the aid of mechanical devices.

V. POLICY

It is the policy of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to implement standardized procedures to increase the safety of all staff and eliminate those situations where institution program services staff will involuntarily be working alone with inmates.

VI. PROCEDURES

A. Working Alone

1. No program services employee represented by District 1199/SEIU or SCOPE/OEA shall be required, against their wishes, to work alone as defined in Section IV. As such, program services employees represented by 1199/SEIU or SCOPE/OEA who are asked, against their wishes, to work alone in such a situation shall have the right to refuse such work without fear of retribution.
2. To enhance the safety and accountability of staff, each facility's Safety and Health Committee, in conjunction with the Department, 1199/SEIU or SCOPE/OEA representation, shall identify and establish appropriately secure staff work areas where staff may effectively interview inmates, deliver education, provide programming or conduct other job related activities with inmates at all times.

B. Employee Safety

1. Each facility shall develop and maintain a written Employee Safety Plan that shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:
 - a. A list of safety equipment and priority list identified by the facility's Safety and Health Committee that is available and issued to identified staff;
 - b. Accountability procedures for non-custody staff working after 6:00 pm;
 - c. Documentation requirements for employee accountability;
 - d. Facility specific inmate movement policy;
 - e. The designation of alternative staff work area(s).
2. Safety Equipment and Priority List
 - a. The Safety and Health Committee at each institution shall develop a safety equipment list that will identify additional equipment i.e. radios, Spider alarms, off hook alarms, etc. and prioritizes staff to be allocated the equipment.
 - b. Facilities shall ensure there is a sufficient amount of safety equipment available as designated on the list.
 - c. All staff identified on the priority list shall have the issued safety equipment in their possession at all times while on duty and/or on institution rounds.
3. Personal Alarm Systems
 - a. Each facility shall provide for a system of notification to the control center in cases of employee emergencies and/or duress alarms.
 - b. Where Spider alarm systems are in place, all staff shall have in their possession the required spider alert mechanism.

- c. Where a Spider alarm system is not in place, telephone systems shall be equipped with an “off hook” alarm feature as a means of notification.
 - d. In all cases of employee emergency notifications, staff must respond to all alarms and alarms must be visually cleared by a custody supervisor or unit manager.
 - 4. Staff Accountability

Each facility shall develop written procedures dictating that non-custody staff working between 6:00 pm and 6:00 am shall have contact at least once per hour and the contact must be documented. The written procedures developed by each facility shall include how the contact is made and how the contact is documented.
 - 5. Inmate Movement
 - a. Each facility shall develop a policy and written procedure for the notification requirements when inmates do not appear at their assigned job or scheduled program.
 - b. Inmates shall not be permitted in office areas or other restricted areas without staff supervision and/or observation.
 - c. Inmates shall wear their identification badges, appropriately displayed, at all times they are out of their assigned cells.
 - d. All staff office windows shall remain visible and the view unobstructed at all times.
 - e. Inmate cell windows shall remain uncovered and unobstructed at all times. This requirement shall be reflected in the inmate handbook or other applicable post orders.
 - 6. Employee Safety Program Review
 - a. The Managing Officer of each facility shall ensure there is a review of the Employee Safety Plan conducted at least annually and any necessary revisions for compliance with this policy are completed.
 - b. The Bureau of Agency Policy and Operational Compliance shall review the elements of the Employee Safety Plans utilizing the Employee Safety Chapter of the Ohio Standards during the annual internal management audit of each facility.

C. Non-Institutional Sites

In offices or areas not within an institution where inmates are assigned to work the Health and Safety Committee providing coverage for that worksite shall evaluate the workplace and ensure the applicable elements of this policy are included in the office’s Employee Safety Plan.