

ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL—PERSONAL SAFETY

Policy No. 1-018

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for personnel to ensure their own personal safety and security while providing care/service in the community setting.

POLICY

Self-protection to enhance personal safety is the responsibility of all personnel. Safety review and training will be provided during orientation, and as part of ongoing inservice programs.

PROCEDURE

1. The Executive Director/Administrator is responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of security and safety training activities.
2. Access to and egress from security-sensitive areas will be identified by senior management and managed by monitoring areas directly and locking access when appropriate personnel are not present.
3. For patient care staff: There will be established daily plans to keep a designated contact person informed about staff whereabouts throughout the day. A contact person will follow up if an employee does not report as expected.
4. All employees will wear Ohioans Home Healthcare approved identification badges at all times when working.

GENERAL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

1. Know exactly where you are going before you leave the office.
2. Know the community where visits are being made.
3. Do not take personal safety for granted.
4. Keep alert to avoid becoming a victim of an attack or robbery. Personnel should look for the unexpected and avoid taking unnecessary chances.
5. Review concerns with the Program Supervisor prior to the visit, if the environment does not feel safe.
6. Leave the home as quickly as possible, and contact the office when safe, if an unsafe situation should arise during a visit.

7. Carry identification, including the phone number of Ohioans Home Healthcare, police and fire departments of the municipalities in your territory. (Use 911 when appropriate.)
8. Be sure that your vehicle is in good working order and that you have sufficient fuel. Always keep all doors locked.
9. Consider having a spare set of keys in the home care bag or briefcase or keep keys in a magnetic holder hidden on the outside of the car. Locking keys in the car can happen unexpectedly.
10. Do not carry excessive amounts of cash. Do carry enough money for emergency transportation and phone calls.
11. If possible, avoid carrying a purse. If you do carry a purse and are driving, lock it in your trunk before leaving the office and leave it there while visiting patients. Keep money and identification in an inside pocket.
12. Never leave laptop/device in plain sight in vehicle. Place laptop/device in trunk of car if unable to take into home due to filth, infection control or other reasons.
13. Dress appropriately. If you do not wear uniforms, wear conservative street clothes. Do not wear suggestive clothing. Wear shoes that fit comfortably and well so that you can move quickly and safely, if necessary. Wear a nametag and carry some form of identification so patients can be assured you are a valid representative of Ohioans Home Healthcare.
14. Never knock on unmarked doors or on the doors of homes other than those of patients and family/caregivers whom you are visiting. Never enter a vacant home.
15. Do not enter if there are any doubts about the safety of entering a home or an apartment building. Call the Program Supervisor, or return to the office.
16. If a night visit is being made in a questionably safe area, plan ahead by contacting the local police to assist, if there are no other personnel to function as escort.
17. If anyone in the house appears to be drunk or under the effects of drugs, do what is essential for the patient and leave or refuse to provide services in a clearly hazardous situation.
18. If any weapons are present, leave and report this to the Program Supervisor.
19. If a pet is hostile, ask that it be contained, or leave.
20. Report to the Program Supervisor at the completion of the visit if any situation occurs.

PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHILE WALKING

1. Avoid groups of people lingering on corners or in doorways. Cross the street to avoid them.
2. Stay near people who are moving about. Walking in lonely, isolated areas may invite attack. Do not take short cuts down alleys, through buildings, or across private property. Avoid narrow or confined spaces.
3. Carry keys in your hand. This will enable you to get into your car immediately and you can use them as a method of self-defense. Hold the key ring in the palm of your hand and put one (1) key between each of your four (4) fingers with the sharp ends sticking out. You may want to attach a whistle on your key ring, which can be used to summon help.
4. Think about your appearance. The nametag and lab coat will indicate your purpose to the public.
5. Walk confidently. Know where you are going. If you don't, go to a store and ask or call for directions.

SELF-DEFENSE MEASURES

1. If you think you are being followed by someone on foot—cross the street, vary your pace, change directions. If the person persists, go to a lighted store and call the police.
2. If you think you are being followed by someone in a car—turn around and proceed in the opposite direction. If the person persists, jot down the car's license number and proceed to the nearest police station.
3. If you are being robbed:
 - A. Size up the situation—think quickly about the wisest response.
 - B. Stay alert—take note of the assailant's characteristics so you can give a full description to the police.
 - C. Stall for time by talking or fumbling for money—someone may come to your rescue.
 - D. Try to get away, if there are people around or open stores nearby—you may be able to run toward them.
 - E. Don't be heroic by taking foolish chances—your assailant may become violent. It's better to lose your money, medications, or equipment than your life.
4. If you are attacked:
 - A. Use your natural defenses
 - B. Make a scene—take your assailant by surprise
 - C. Jab with your elbow

- D. Twist to break free
- E. Bite hard
- F. Scratch with your fingernails
- G. Yell to alert passersby or scare off assailant
- H. Swing briefcase/home care bag at the head of the assailant
- I. Bend assailant's fingers back
- J. Turn over any medications the assailant wants—don't be a hero!