



EASTERN MISSOURI PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL SYSTEM

METROPOLITAN ST. LOUIS PSYCHIATRIC CENTER
5351 Delmar Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63112

**POLICY
NUMBER
MPC.001**

FUNCTION CLINICAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	SUBJECT VISITORS	
APPROVED BY Michael B. Anderson, Chief Operating Officer	EFFECTIVE February 3, 1997	REVISED/REVIEWED August 17, 2017
This policy is scheduled for routine review in 2020		

POLICY

MPC encourages visitation with clients, consistent with client rights and safety.

PURPOSE

To allow for and encourage family members and friends to visit clients, to provide for professional visitations, and to enforce certain guidelines designed to assure safety and minimize risk.

GENERAL INFORMATION

General hours for client visiting are 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday & Thursday and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and Holidays.

All visitors, guests, attorneys, clergy, Protection and Advocacy staff, etc., must be escorted from the lobby area to the Treatment Unit or the Forensic Evaluation Unit.

Other visitors whose destination is not the Treatment Unit or the Forensic Evaluation Unit will also require an escort. That escort must be provided by the department with which the visitor is doing business. Reception area staff will notify the department of the visitor's presence. The department must escort the visitor to and from their destination. Any bags, purses, etc., which the visitor may be carrying, can be allowed into a non-treatment area at the discretion of the escort, after these items have been searched.

Visitors other than uniformed law enforcement officers must show their photo I.D. to the receptionist so the receptionist can sign them in, and submit to metal detector screening conducted by lobby security.

Clients may have up to two (2) visitors at one time. Exceptions for more than two visitors at a time may be made by the Attending Physician, Nurse Manager, Charge Nurse or House Supervisor.

Lobby security and escort staff are on duty during client visiting hours. Unit based staff from any discipline may be called upon to provide escort services for other guests who need to access the Treatment Unit. Each department manager should establish a system for providing this service.

Case managers and salespersons should arrange visits in advance through their respective departments within the hospital (e.g., Social Work and Purchasing, etc.).

Discharged clients are restricted from visiting for three (3) months after their discharge date unless special arrangements are approved through the unit treatment team.

Visits at unscheduled hours are to be discouraged. For such visits, the Nurse Manager or Designee will arrange the time and place.

No children under 16 years of age may visit on the units.

Special arrangements can be made for children from the age of 3 years old to the age of 15 years, 11 months with permission of the physician, and notification of appropriate nursing personnel, to visit in non-client areas. This type of visit must be arranged at least 48 hours prior to the visit and approved by the attending physician and the Nurse Manager. These visits will be scheduled during regular visiting hours. A staff member will be assigned to supervise the visit; the staff member will sit outside the visiting room.

In order to provide professional services, the following persons may visit, at reasonable times: outpatient providers, lawyers, physicians, psychologists and clergymen. Required work papers and materials including computers are permitted. Note: For visits outside of normal visiting hours, the visitor must show proof of their professional organization (e.g., clergy I.D., business card, organization I.D., etc.).

Other than when escorting clients for evaluations or admissions, ALL law enforcement officers should be referred to the Chief Operating Officer/Designee.

Process servers bringing subpoenas to MPC staff shall be directed to Human Resources, where the staff person will be served.

In all instances, members of the media shall be referred to the Regional Executive Officer/Chief Operating Officer. After business hours or on weekends/holidays, notify the Nursing Supervisor on call who will contact the Administrator on Call.

Servers of court notices and welfare notices have permission to contact the client for these duties, but they shall be screened and escorted as with all visitors.

PROCEDURE

- A. If for therapeutic reasons a particular individual may not visit a particular client, an order must be written by the physician. A physician's note must also be recorded in the progress notes section of the client's chart indicating the client's behavior and the reason for change in visiting status. To ensure that this order is followed, unit staff will notify the Communication Desk.
- B. All visitors to clients will check in at the lobby reception desk and present a photo I.D. The receptionist will then complete the visitor log on behalf of the visitor. The only exception is uniformed law enforcement officers and those persons in their custody.
- C. All visitors except law enforcement and persons in law enforcement custody shall be given a visitor's badge.
- D. Packages, purses, bags, backpacks, etc., are not allowed on the treatment unit (required work papers and materials, including computers in possession by professionals, are exempt from this rule as detailed in "General Information"). A limited number of lockers are available in the lobby area. Lobby Security staff (during visiting hours) and reception area staff (at all other

times) will assign a locker to the visitor and record the locker number on the visitor's log. **The key will not be given to the visitor.** When security is on duty, he/she will assist the visitor by unlocking/locking the locker. At other times the visitor will be assisted by the reception area staff. If all the lockers are being used, the remaining visitors will be instructed to secure their items in their vehicle.

- E. If a visitor has items which are to be brought to the client (e.g., clean clothing, personal items, etc.); the lobby security staff will inspect all items and then place them in a bag provided by MPC. The escort staff will determine if the items can be brought to the unit and then escort the visitor to the unit and inform the unit staff that visitor has items for the client. VISITORS ARE PROHIBITED FROM BRINGING IN FOOD ITEMS AND/OR DRINKS AND ANY ITEMS IDENTIFIED ON THE CONTRABAND LIST.
- F. Unit staff must inspect all such items immediately after visitor arrives on the unit and record content on the Inventory of Personal Effects (form MPC #50-1) and maintained in the client's medical record and before these are given to the client.
- G. Nursing staff should be aware of clients who have visitors and observe visitation during unit rounds. All visitations are restricted to the common areas on the unit (e.g., alcove and lounges). Visitation in the client's room is strictly PROHIBITED.
- H. Any visitor refusing to abide by these procedures will be denied visitation.
- I. Visitors wearing short shorts or a short skirt, halter tops, strapless tops, tube tops, sheer (see-thru) tops, cropped tops, off-the-shoulder tops, overly tight or obscene clothing items, clothing items with inappropriate sayings, graphic images or obscenity or having images of illegal substances or alcohol will not be allowed to visit the units. If the on duty receptionist is undecided regarding a potential visitor's attire, please call the House Supervisor for assistance.
- J. If a visitor appears to be under the influence of alcohol/drugs as determined by reception, security, and/or clinical staff, he/she will be denied visitation.
- K. If any visitor becomes disruptive, security is to be notified, the client visit terminated, and security will escort visitor off the unit. Staff shall complete and submit an incident report.
- L. All firearms, knives or other weapons are prohibited beyond the lobby of MPC. Law enforcement officers may secure their weapons in vehicles or lockers. All other visitors must secure weapons in their vehicles.