

CONNECTICUT VALLEY HOSPITAL OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION I:	PATIENT FOCUSED FUNCTIONS
CHAPTER 1:	Ethics, Rights and Responsibilities
PROCEDURE 1.10:	Visitation
REVISED:	06/11/09; 08/28/14; 06/17; 02/18
Governing Body Approval:	08/28/2014; 07/27/17; 04/18

PURPOSE: To provide an opportunity for patients to visit with friends, relatives, and conservators while protecting the confidentiality of the patients and the security of the facility.

SCOPE: All staff involved in the patient visitation process.

POLICY:

It is the policy of Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH) that the hospital provides patients with the opportunity to visit family, friends and/or conservators while protecting the confidentiality of all patients and security of the hospital. Visitation may be restricted, suspended, or denied as clinically indicated.

PROCEDURE:

I. Visitors to CVH

- A. Patients are allowed to have visits.
- B. Patients may refuse to see visitors.
- C. Each division has regular visiting hours throughout the week. Patients can arrange visits during this time and can expect to visit for at least two hours during that time as mutually agreed upon. However, reasonable accommodations will be made, if alternative times are necessary if visitors are unable to visit during the regularly scheduled times.
- D. Visitors are informed of visiting policies and rules, including visiting hours, items not permitted, and how to contact staff.
- E. Given the differing treatment needs of patients across two divisions, each division differs slightly in what are regarded as permitted items. In each division, some personal items are allowed per team discretion to be held by the patient; some are held by the staff for specific personal use; and some are prohibited as non-permissible or as contraband. Each visitor is provided a list of permitted and prohibited items prior to or at the time of the first visit.
 1. *Permitted items:* some reading materials, certain personal clothing, some kinds of eyeglasses and contact lenses, dentures and certain jewelry.
 2. *Items allowed with team approval:* pens and pencils, computers without wireless or video capacity, pocket radios, tape and CD players, musical instruments, small televisions, wallets and purses, ID cards and other personal items which are not offensive or present safety concerns (does not pertain to ASD).
 3. *Prohibited items:* cigarettes, matches and lighters, razors and razor blades, nail clippers, glass containers, mirrors and other similar breakable items, chewing tobacco, scissors or other pointed items; keys or electrical appliances, cell phones and

other PDA like products, racially offensive clothing; gang clothing/materials; dental instruments/ miscellaneous sharps or aerosols.

4. Illegal or Non-permissible items: Mace, Explosives, weapons, alcohol, unauthorized or unidentifiable substances or illicit substances.
- F. A patient's clergy, lawyer, advocate, conservator or out-patient physician may visit the patient at any time although visits during daytime and early evening are preferred. Also visits that do not conflict with treatment activities or mealtimes are also preferred. In any case, if the patient wishes to visit with their clergy, lawyer, advocate, conservator or out-patient physician and these times can not be accommodated, such visits will be arranged when they are available. Privacy will be provided for these professional visits as requested. "Phone visits" with attorneys, clergy or conservators are an option for patients which can be arranged. (See [Operational Procedure 1.16 Privileged Conversation for Patients on One-to-One Observation Status](#)).
- G. Children under the age of fourteen (14) are not usually permitted to visit on the units but are permitted to visit in building areas set aside for such visits. Where they do occur, such visits are usually agency initiated (i.e., DCF) and are supervised. Children under 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult at all times on grounds or in the individual hospital buildings. Arrangement for special children's visits outside of regular visiting hours can be arranged through the treatment team.
- H. Special visits outside of visiting hours are usually pre-arranged. When visitors arrive unexpectedly, given the nature of safety and security, clinical staff will need to speak with the patient to determine whether the visitor is someone with whom the patient wishes to visit and special paperwork may need to be completed. Generally, treatment activities are not to be interrupted in order to accommodate an unscheduled visitor unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- I. Visits take place off the unit to protect patients' confidentiality or in designated locations on the units as much as possible. Privacy of visits is afforded to the greatest extent possible. Visits are not permitted beyond patient privilege limits.
- J. Depending on the building, visitors will be expected to sign in and out and to wear visitor badges. They may be expected to have belongings they bring in searched. Visits may also be supervised and/or observed. Each division may have additional restrictions unique to their patient population. Individual patients may have unique restrictions based on his/her particular case.
- K. *Restrictions* of visitors to CVH are implemented in response to a variety of circumstances (as described in greater detail in [Operational Procedure 1.18 Patient Communication and Restriction of Communication](#)) where patient care may be compromised or for security reasons. Whatever the circumstance, the patient is notified of the possible restriction and is provided an opportunity to participate in the decision making process. However the attending psychiatrist makes the final decision after careful deliberations have been made. The patient is advised of their right to an advocate if such restrictions are implemented and such restriction is documented in the medical record as required. Where legally permitted by federal or state statute, the visitor is advised of the restriction of visits and when and if these visits are permitted.