

CONNECTICUT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Nursing Policy and Procedure Manual

SECTION E INFECTION CONTROL

CHAPTER 22: INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES

Policy and Procedure: 22.8 WHEELCHAIR CLEANING PROCEDURES

Standard of Practice:

The Registered Nurse ensures that all wheelchairs on the unit are cleaned and inspected on a nightly basis for the comfort and safety of patients.

Standard of Care:

The patient can expect to use a clean and appropriately maintained wheelchair for his/her comfort and safety.

Policy:

Wheelchairs shall be cleaned and inspected on a regular basis. It is the staff's responsibility to assist in the cleaning of spills or messes anytime during the day. The wheelchair shall be viewed as an extension of the patient.

The standard and customized wheelchairs assigned to specific patients shall be cleaned with *PDI Wipes* by assigned nursing staff nightly on the third shift. All problems related to the wheelchair's safety and comfort shall be reported to Physical Therapy (PT) at extension 6013.

The transport wheelchairs on each unit shall also be wiped down by assigned night shift nursing staff once weekly, and after each use. Obvious problems related to the wheelchair's safety or comfort shall be reported to PT who shall ensure timely repair or replacement.

If any wheelchair becomes soiled between regularly scheduled cleanings, it shall also be cleaned at that time.

Procedure:

- 1) If possible, move the patient to a dining room chair, for meals rather than having the patient remain in his/her wheelchair. This will eliminate unnecessary soiling of the chair from spilled food or drink.
- 2) If it is not possible to move the patient out of the wheelchair for meals, use a protective drape to prevent soiling of the patient and the chair from spilled food or drink.
- 3) The Registered Nurse assigns a third shift nursing staff member to clean the custom wheelchairs each night and the transport wheelchairs each week.

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- 4) The staff member cleaning the wheelchair
 - a) Dons protective gloves;
 - b) Removes cloth cushion covers, alarms, seat and back cushions if present;
 - c) Machine washes cloth cushion covers with mild soap on gentle cycle in cold water, and dries in the dryer on low heat at least once a week or more often if needed;
 - d) Wipes down seat and back cushions if they are made of solid waterproof material;
 - e) Wipes down chairs with a damp cloth using hospital approved disinfectant;
 - f) Allows chair to air dry;
 - g) Reapplies cloth cushion cover to the wheelchair prior to using the wheelchair;
 - h) Reports any obvious problems related to wheelchair comfort or safety to PT by calling extension 6013 to make a repair request;
 - i) Documents, either nightly or weekly on the attached form, that the wheelchair was cleaned and inspected;
 - j) Notifies the nurse of any wheelchair problems discovered.
 - k) On the final day of the month, the *Wheelchair Cleaning Log* will be sent to the Chief of Patient Care Services so as to ensure process integrity.

- 5) The Third Shift Nurse reports any problems discovered by the Mental Health Assistant/Forensic Treatment Specialist to the First Shift Nurse during shift to shift report.