

CONNECTICUT VALLEY HOSPITAL
Nursing Policy and Procedure Manual

SECTION C: PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION
CHAPTER 9: LEVELS OF OBSERVATION

POLICY & PROCEDURE 9.2: ROUTINE OBSERVATION

Standard of Practice:

The RN will assign a member of the nursing staff to observe patients at specified time periods during a shift to assure patient safety.

Standard of Care:

The patient can expect to be observed at regularly scheduled time intervals to ensure safety.

Policy:

Each patient will be observed and evaluated within 5 minutes of the designated observation time identified for each division.

Addiction Services Division will perform census checks twice each hour.

General Psychiatric Division will perform census checks twice each hour.

Whiting Forensic Division will perform census checks twice each hour. In addition to the hourly checks between the hours of 7am - 3pm, one random check will be performed between 20 minutes after and/or 20 minutes before the hour. In addition to the scheduled hourly checks from 3pm - 7pm, two random checks will be performed between each hour. In addition to the hourly checks from 7pm - 7am, three random checks will be performed between each hour.

Dutcher Service will perform census checks twice each hour. In addition to the hourly checks one random check will be performed between 20 minutes after and/or 20 minutes before the hour.

A routine observation schedule will be followed in each division based on Commissioner's Policy Statement #56.

Procedure:

1. A Nursing staff member will be assigned to carry out routine observations. Staff assignments must be identified on the daily assignment sheet.
2. The night shift will initiate the routine observation form for the next 24-hour period. Names are to be listed alphabetically and new admissions added as they are admitted. Completed forms are to be retained for three months in a location identified by division.

3. Staff members conducting observations must be able to verify that they are observing the correct patient through physical recognition and ensure that respirations are present.
4. Staff will verify by telephone or confirmation from another staff member the location of the patient when direct observation is not possible.
5. Staff members must enter information on the routine observation form using the code key identified on the form. Special observation status is to be noted in red ink. Staff members entering information on the form are to record their initials with their full name.
6. The observation checks are to be conducted safely with consideration made for gender and unpredictable patient behavior. When there are safety concerns about entering a patient occupied area, two staff members will perform these checks together.
7. When checking patients' whereabouts, consideration is also given to noting the physical environment, any new or possible safety hazards and risk considerations.
8. A staff member is designated from each shift to ensure all patients are accounted for. Both employees will sign the census sheet.
9. At the change of shift, employees from the off-going and on-coming shift complete census checks together.