

WHITING FORENSIC 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. That nursing staff member also will monitor the environment for any potential safety hazards or risks in order to ensure a safe environment for patients. All nursing staff (including those assigned to carry out routine observations) will be available to tend to patient needs when not performing some other assigned duty.

Standard of Care:

The patient can expect to be observed at regularly scheduled time intervals to ensure safety and to reside in a safe environment. The patient can expect all nursing staff to be available to tend to patient needs when not performing some other assigned duty.

Policy:

For the **Whiting Service**: Between the hours of 7am and 7pm, nursing staff will perform census checks randomly twice each hour. Between the hours of 7pm and 7am, nursing staff will perform census checks randomly four times each hour.

For the **Dutcher Service**: Nursing staff will perform census checks randomly twice each hour.

In both services, nursing staff will perform Environmental Safety Checks every 15 minutes.

A routine observation schedule will be followed in the Hospital based on Commissioner's Policy Statement #56: Observation of Patients.

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 service.
3. Staff members must be able to verify that they are observing the correct patient through physical recognition and ensure that respirations are present.
4. Staff members 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. Staff members will circulate the unit (including common areas and bathrooms) every 15 minutes to perform their scheduled Environmental Safety Checks (insert hyperlink to Environmental Safety Checks form) and to note any new or possible safety hazards and risk considerations.
8. Where cameras are available, staff members may view the camera monitors as part of their duties while not conducting census or environmental checks on the unit.
9. Staff members assigned to census and environmental checks may respond to emergency codes on the unit as needed, but not elsewhere in the building, returning to their census duties as quickly as it is safe to do so.
10. At the change of shift, employees from the off-going and on-coming shift complete census and environmental checks together. Both staff members will sign the census sheet after completing their checks.