

POLICY: PATIENT, EMPLOYEE, AND VISITOR SAFETY IN THE DENTAL CLINIC

PURPOSE: To establish a policy that states measures to be taken by the Dental staff to assure proper patient, employee, and visitor safety in the Dental clinic.

PROCEDURE: A. GENERAL SAFETY RULES

The Dental Department will comply with the TPIHC safety policies specifically including:

1. No smoking policy - there will be no smoking anywhere inside the facility.
2. Injury/Accident Reporting - all injuries shall be reported to the Safety Officer using the HS-516 as described in the Health Center reporting policy

B. DENTAL DEPARTMENT SAFETY GUIDELINES

Specific Dental Department guidelines for avoiding injuries from potentially hazardous material/objects or potentially hazardous activities are:

1. Patient and visitor safety - only patients will be allowed in the treatment areas. An exception may be made if small children can accompany parents in the treatment area and their presence does not interfere with the treatment being rendered. Under most circumstances, no children should be allowed in the treatment area unless they are receiving Dental care. Children can not be left without supervision in the waiting area. It is the responsibility of the parent to arrange for an adult (someone over 15 years old) to watch their child in the Dental waiting area. If there is no one to supervise the child or children, the patient should be reappointed on another day when supervision can be provided.
2. Eating and drinking are prohibited in the technical work areas.

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3. Food and beverages are not to be stored in the technical refrigerators.
4. Exits and aisle shall not be blocked. Wheelchair patients shall not be placed in the aisles or exit areas if they obstruct access or egress.
5. Autoclaves: no one shall operate an autoclave until instructed in the proper procedure. No one shall open an autoclave door until both the temperature and pressure are back to normal.
6. X-ray precautions: Patients shall be draped with a lead apron when exposed to radiation. Operators shall use the remote control buttons and remain behind the appropriate barrier when exposing films. Prior to exposing the x-ray, the operator shall check to see that no one but the patient is in the area of exposure. All Dental staff will wear dosimetry badges when in the treatment areas; these badges will be submitted on a quarterly basis for evaluation.
7. Disposal of sharp objects - all sharps shall be disposed of in the proper receptacle located in each operatory and in the clean-up area. Disposable syringes, used amalgam capsules, and used anesthetic carpules shall also be disposed of in these containers.
8. Injuries from irritating chemicals - always use the disposable surgical gloves when cleaning operations involve disinfectants or other irritating agents. Disposable gloves must be worn during direct patient care and shall always be available for staff. Latex-free gloves will be provided by the Dental department if necessary for any employee that has a latex allergy.

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9. Eye protection - glasses with side shields and/or goggles will be worn during direct patient care, when mixing compounds by hand, when adding chemical solutions to instrument cleaners, and when using grinding/polishing machines.

C. ELECTRICAL SAFETY

1. Always handle electrical equipment with dry hands. Switch equipment to OFF before unplugging. Never unplug equipment by yanking the cord. Pull the plug, not the cord.
2. Defective equipment must be immediately removed from service, labeled as defective, and reported for repairs.
3. Unplug electrical equipment before cleaning or wiping with a damp cloth.
4. Don't store electrical equipment in locations where it is subject to splash.
5. Coffeemakers are only allowed in the Dental Office area, and must have an automatic shutoff.

D. TRAINING

The Chief Dental Officer shall ensure that all employees receive the Health Center Safety Orientation, orientation to the Dental department and any equipment they may operate, orientation to the Dental MSDS manual, and the hazardous materials present in the Dental department. All staff are required to attend annual safety and infection control training that includes Fire Safety, Emergency Preparedness, Electrical Safety, Hazard Communication Program, TB awareness, Bloodborne Pathogens and CPR. All staff should be familiar with all emergency codes and their duties in case of an emergency (Fire, Bomb Threat, Code Blue (CPR), Disaster, and Security).

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E. RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees are responsible for knowing their departmental policies, appropriate health center policies, and identifying and reporting hazards to their supervisor.

The Chief Dental Officer is responsible for assuring employee compliance with all safety policies and training attendance, writing and maintaining departmental policies, and identifying, reporting, and correcting hazards in the Dental department.

Reviewed/Revised:

Chief Dental Officer

Date