Voluntary Services Volunteer Handbook

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Brockton
Jamaica Plain
West Roxbury

Voluntary Service
Department of Veteran Affairs
VA Boston Healthcare System

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VA BOSTON HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

"Putting Veterans First"

VA Boston Healthcare System, the largest consolidated facility in VISN 1, encompasses 3 main campuses and 5 outpatient clinics within a 40-mile radius of the greater Boston area. The consolidated facility consists of the Jamaica Plain Campus, located in the heart of Boston's Longwood Medical Community; the West Roxbury Campus, located on the West Roxbury/Dedham line; and the Brockton Campus, located 20 miles south of Boston in the City of Brockton. In addition to the 3 main medical centers, the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) that make up the VA Boston Healthcare System (VA BHS) are located in Framingham, Lowell, Quincy, Plymouth and Causeway Street (Boston).

The VA Boston Healthcare System is dedicated to serving the needs of America's veterans by providing the highest quality health care, expanding the boundaries of medicine through research, and to training the next generation of health care professionals.

Vision

Our vision is that the VA Boston Healthcare System will be known for the outstanding services we provide, our compassion for our veterans, our collaborations with the communities that we serve, and our education and research initiatives.

Values

All of the efforts within the VA Boston Healthcare System will be based on the core values of:

Trust
Continuous Improvement
Mutual Respect
Diversity
Teamwork
Integrity
Innovation
Customer Service

INTRODUCTION

VA Volunteers bring to our Veterans a part of the outside world; a sense of community and caring as they heal. These personal contacts are important for the patients' wellbeing. Your presence and your service are key factors in maintaining a positive atmosphere of hope and healing.

The patients and staff of VA Boston Healthcare System thank you for your friendly interest and faithful service.

LTC Matthew P. Edwards, MPH, FACHE
Chief, Center for Development and Civic Engagement
(Formerly Voluntary Service)
VA Boston Healthcare System Service

VAVS

What is VAVS?

"VAVS" stands for the US Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service, or VA Voluntary Service. VAVS is a plan for community participation in the VA's program for providing health care and treatment to our nation's veterans. Through this plan, community volunteer efforts are brought together and made a meaningful part of the program for patients in VA health care facilities. The Chief of Voluntary Service plans with management and staff for the appropriate placement of individuals, groups, gifts, and resources so as to meet hospital-wide patient needs.
Five basic aspects of VA Voluntary Service need to be clearly understood if volunteer participation is to be successful:

VAVS is VA Directed

The VA coordinates and integrates community volunteer participation in its medical care programs. VA Voluntary Service is an official, authorized part of the medical center program; it is responsible for the volunteer participation of individuals from the community in any and all aspects of the program.

VAVS is Jointly Planned

The VAVS plan has been developed in collaboration with the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee. Representatives of our county's outstanding voluntary groups continually advise and counsel with the VA so as to plan and develop our program of community volunteer assistance.

VAVS Provides Supplemental Assistance

Volunteer workers supplement and extend the service of paid staff; VA volunteers do not replace paid staff. Emphasis in VAVS is on service; gifts and donations, while important, are incidental to service.

VAVS Allows Volunteers to Serve in Many Areas

Volunteers play vital roles in most services within the Medical Center such as Medical Administration, Rehabilitative Medicine, Recreation, Nursing, Pharmacy, Chaplain and other services. Again, assignments range from direct patient care to a variety of clerical support functions.

VAVS Provides a Two-Fold Service

Volunteers provide a direct service to this Medical Center by participating in programs designed for patient welfare under VA supervision. They provide an equally important indirect service to the Medical Center by acting as public relations ambassadors to our community. They inform their friends and neighbors about the Medical Center's medical care and treatment programs and the role of the community in assisting these programs.

VAVS Organization

VA Management Team for Voluntary Service

Director HealthCare System

Associate Director HealthCare System

Chief of Staff

Chief, Voluntary Service

The management team has the responsibility for developing and maintaining the proper climate for a volunteer program w within the Medical Center that is purposeful and worthwhile for patients, staff, volunteer organizations and volunteers.

VAVS Staff Advisory Committee

This committee will advise and actively assist the Chief, Voluntary Service, in the planning and operation of the station's VAVS program.

VAVS Advisory Committee

A VA Voluntary Service Advisory Committee has been established with the following membership:

1. Associate Director Health Care System, Chairman
2. Chief, Voluntary Service, Deputy Chairman
3. Officially certified representatives of national organizations which are identified with the VAVS program on the national and Medical Center level.
4. Appointed representatives of other organizations as deemed advisable by the chairman of the local committee.

The VAVS Advisory Committee will assist the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman in an advisory capacity in the planning and execution of a variety of Voluntary Service activities.

Qualifications of a Volunteer

Qualifications

1. Sincere interest in rendering service.
2. Businesslike approach to work.
3. Willingness to accept hospital standards.
4. Sense of humor.
5. Sense of responsibility and dependability in accomplishment of purpose.
6. Ability to work with groups, as well as with individuals.
7. Tact, congeniality, patience, warmth, and kindness.
8. Physical ability to perform hospital work.
9. Sense of pride in the work.

Special Qualifications
Include the necessary tact, talent, previous experience, training, interests and hobbies adequate to meet the needs of a specific assignment.

Age Requirements

The minimum age for volunteers is 14.

Volunteer Classifications

Regularly Scheduled (RS) volunteers participate in established, scheduled assignments with suppression. Occasional volunteers come in for special events. They also help with regularly sponsored programs of VAVS organizations on an occasional basis. All volunteers, both RS and Occasional, must complete a volunteer registration with the Voluntary Service Office.

You and the Medical Center Staff

This relationship will be based on mutual respect for the job each is trying to accomplish. You will find that the Medical Center staff will:

1. Give you the respect due a fellow member and worker on the Medical Center team.
2. Assign you to a needed task.
3. Give you helpful on-the job instruction,
4. Discuss with you any matters concerning your volunteer assignment.

YOU AS A MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL CENTER TEAM

You will gain the respect of your fellow team members by:

1. Knowing and observing the hospital rules and regulations.
2. Being dependable and faithful in your assignments.
3. Reporting on time and staying until assignment is completed.
4. Following the instructions of the staff member to whom you are assigned.
5. Being kind and friendly to all patients.
6. Avoiding involvement, emotionally or personally, in patient's problems.
7. Remembering that all personal information, which you learn from or about a patent, is confidential.
8. Conducting yourself with the dignity and assurance of a qualified member of the team performing a needed service in a pleasant and efficient manner.

HIPAA / PRIVACY

In 1996, Congress passed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). On December 28, 2000, the Department of Health and Human Services published the final rule for Standards for the Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information-known as the HIPAA Privacy Rule. This new ruling required that every member of the Veterans Health Administration workforce receive training on the new VHA privacy policies by the implementation date of April 13, 2003. This includes volunteers, students, medical residents, contractors and all other employees whether or not that staff member has direct patient contact. The Privacy Policies include information on patients and employees.

VA Boston Healthcare System has outstanding professional and caring staff. Our staff works hard to always treat our patients with respect.

VHA Employees must use or access information only as legally permissible under applicable confidentiality and privacy laws, regulations and policies.

All VHA employees can use information contained in VHA records in the official performance of their duties for treatment, payment and healthcare operational purposes.

Common violations of HIPAA are:

- Staff discussing patients in elevators and hallways, whether or not names are used
- Patients being discussed during rounds where other patients or visitors may hear.
- Staff discussing the patients' status with the patient and family in hallways or waiting rooms
- Medical record left unattended in hallways, on counter tops or in unlocked rooms
- Computer screens with patient information visible to patients or visitors or left unattended
- Privacy curtains or doors not fully closed in exam rooms or on a ward
- Patient information on "status boards" which is visible to other patients or visitors
- Office doors open during the discussion with or about patients

Remember: Respecting and providing for patients' privacy is EVERYONES responsibility.

For more information on the Health Insurance Portability and Privacy Act as related to the Veterans Health Administration please visit http:\\vaww.va.gov\hippa

General Information

Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of a staff member. You will be introduced to your supervisor when you begin your assignment. If you have any questions concerning the performance of your assignment, discuss them with your supervisor.

Assignment Guide

There is a printed guide for every volunteer assignment. Know your permitted duties and adhere to them.

Change of Assignment

Assignments are based on the volunteer's interests and the Medical Center's needs. If you are not satisfied with your assignment or would like an additional assignment you may discuss it with the Chief of Voluntary Service.

Attendance/Vacation/Termination

Dependability is important for all volunteers. However, if you cannot report for your assignment, please call your supervisor directly. YOUR ASSIGNED SUPERVISOR will then be aware of your situation and reschedule your volunteer hours as needed. The Voluntary Service office at each campus can be contacted if we can be of assistance. We would like to know in advance if you plan to be away or on vacation. At the termination of your volunteer assignment please clear through the Voluntary Service office to ensure continuity of service to our veterans.

Recording of Time

Volunteers are required to record the hours they are working each day on the volunteer computer in the medical center and outpatient clinic. PLEASE SIGN IN EVERY DAY YOU ARE WORKING!
If you are unable to log in your hours, please contact the volunteer service office immediately. Some sites may require calling in or e-mailing hours to the voluntary service office.

Meals

Lunches are furnished without charge to regularly scheduled volunteers through the VCS Cafeteria provided that the scheduled assignment extends over a meal period and is at least four hours in length. Meal tickets must be obtained through the volunteer computerized time keeping system. Volunteer ID BADGES ARE REQUIRED TO USE MEAL TICKETS. In Brockton meals are provided through the Canteen and Nutrition and Food Service kitchen, this is also true in the case of off hours meals at West Roxbury. A sign in sheet is provided in the kitchen for you to sign for your meal. Again, your volunteer assignment must extend through a meal period and be a minimum of four hours in order to qualify for it.

Parking

Daytime parking at the medical centers and the outpatient clinic in Boston is limited. Volunteers are encouraged to use public transportation. Volunteers may use the lots in West Roxbury and Brockton but must obey local postings for lot regulations. Volunteers who must drive need to register their vehicle with the VA Police Service. Volunteers will be issued a parking decal and can park in the patient or employee parking areas.

Library

Regularly scheduled volunteers have the same privileges as employees in using the services of the Reading Room. The Reading Room is located on the third floor and has a wide selection of popular fiction, non-fiction and periodicals in JP and the AG dayroom building 2 in WR.

Identification and Uniform

You will be informed if a uniform is required for your position; all volunteers in accordance with hospital policy must wear an ID badge which will be provided by the VA. Affiliated volunteers are governed by the uniform of their organization. It is recommended that volunteers, especially those having patient contact, wear some type of attire with pockets to carry money and personal items. Good grooming, conservative dress and comfortable walking shoes are essential for duty in a hospital.

Confidential Information

As a member of the Medical Center team, you may learn confidential information. The patients may confide in you, their families may share information and you may overhear staff conversations. Remember that this is not to be repeated to unauthorized individuals. If you believe the information will help the patient in his/her treatment, discuss the matter with your supervisor.

Medical Treatment

Volunteers must report all accidents, injuries or incidents to their work supervisor. If you incur an injury while on duty, report it to your immediate supervisor at once. Employee Health Services will provide emergency medical treatment to the volunteer. Volunteers are treated as employees for purposes of accidents and injury occurring during official, regularly scheduled volunteer duties. After you receive first aid, your immediate supervisor is responsible for completing the proper accident and/or injury reports with you.

Visiting

If you wish to visit a friend who is a patient, do so after you have completed your assignment. Visiting hours are from 1:00 PM to 8:00 PM daily.

Proper Conduct

The Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to providing a proper work environment for its patients, employees and volunteers. Sexual harassment, patient abuse (verbal and physical) and discriminatory remarks and actions will not be tolerated. If as a volunteer, you feel you have been the object of such behavior or have witnessed such events contact the Chief of Voluntary Service immediately.

Donations

We welcome donations for the comfort and well being of patients and the Chief of Voluntary Service is the point of contact for all such donations. We encourage all potential donors to contact our Voluntary Service office prior to making any donation.

Vaccinations

As the majority of volunteer activities take place around patients, some of whom are immunosuppressed, vaccinations against Influenza and COVID-19 are required.

RISK

What is "Risk"?
Risk is anything that creates a hazard to yourself or others.

What are some common risks found in a hospital setting?

Risk of Infection:

Poor hand hygiene (not cleaning your hands properly with either soap and water or an alcohol based hand rub) can spread germs.
Poor Respiratory Etiquette (not covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, not disposing of used tissues properly) can lead to the spread of respiratory infections.

Risk of Injury to self and others:

Not disposing of trash/sharps in the appropriate containers can contribute to injuries.
Not keeping your work area clean and free of leftover food and dirty eating utensils can invite insects and rodents.
Not cleaning up spills can lead to falls.
Not reporting a potential hazard can lead to injuries.

How can we prevent Risks?

Be aware of safety goals and infection control policies that pertain to you as a student, volunteer, contract, WOC, temporary or permanent employee:

- Improve the accuracy of patient identification
- Improve the effectiveness of communication with veterans, families, co-workers and others
- Reduce the risk of healthcare acquired infections by using good hand hygiene, good respiratory etiquette, proper trash disposal, and keeping your work area clean
- Reduce the risk of influenza and pneumococcal disease in older adults by staying home if you are running a fever or have uncontrolled coughing, by using tissues to cover your mouth and nose if you are coughing or sneezing and then disposing of the tissues properly and by frequent hand washing.
- Reduce the risk of injury by using Personal Protective Equipment appropriately
- Reduce the risk of theft by securing personal belongings at all times
- Reduce the risk of patient harm from falls by keeping corridors and walkways clear
- Learn to recognize warning signs of violent behavior to prevent risk to yourself and others
- Know the location of all fire equipment and how to use it
- Utilize verification process to prevent wrong site surgery/invasive procedures
- Prevent errors from medications that look alike/sound alike
- Insure use of free-flow protection on IV infusion pumps
- Use only approved abbreviations in the medical record
- Get vaccinated

Life Safety – Fire Safety

Fire Code – "Code Red" Emergency number:	**Boston/West Roxbury/Brockton**	**dial "33333"**
	Boston OPC (Causeway)	**dial "1333"**
	Lowell OPC	**dial "51"**

Wait for chimes to end and then dial 00

POLICE EMERGENCY NUMBER – "55911"

Fire Alarm Boxes- located at Stairwells, Exits and Nurses' stations
To activate a fire alarm – pull down and release the lever at firebox.
Fire pull station alerts entire complex and local fire department.
Some pull stations are activated with a standard key – have this on your person (if applicable)
Fire Alarm: Bells, Horns, Chimes –announce a fire code
Fire Strobe Lights - visually indicate a fire code
Overhead Page –announces fire location

R.A.C.E. stands for **R**escue – **A**larm – **C**onfine –**E**xtinguish (If small and manageable)
(Evacuate upon order of Fire Department)
Defend in Place - Close all doors, clear corridors, evacuate area, await Fire Department.

P.A.S.S. stands for **Pull – Aim – Squeeze - Sweep**
Smoke barrier doors – close to contain smoke in one area – do not breech.
Location of fire extinguishers: Wall closets with doors marked fire equipment.

Fully sprinklered buildings in patient care areas – smoke damage will be most likely to occur and cause need for evacuation of immediate area.
Same building, non-fire area – closes all doors, clear corridors, await instructions.

Fire Alarm, False Alarm, Fire Drill — treated as a real "Fire Scenario"
Keep all patients behind closed doors.
Keep all individuals/visitors from entering alarmed area until "**ALL CLEAR**" is announced. This applies to the entire building.
Elements of a Fire: Fuel – Oxygen – Heat, take away any element and you disrupt the chain reaction.

Evacuation: Horizontally and vertically – per instructions of Fire Department
Elevators shall not be used
Medical Gas shut offs – within 25 feet of nurses' station
Fire Drills – Quarterly - each shift in a patient care area
Annually - in non- patient care buildings
Fire Safety Plans - located in the Environment of Care Manual

Safety is everyone's business – practice it daily

OSHA created in 1970 to protect individuals in the workplace.
Common prohibited items – toaster ovens, extension cords, door stops/wedges. Doors with closures are installed to keep door closed at all times.
Common problematic practices:

- Obstructed fire extinguishers
- Obstructed pull stations
- Toasters-microwaves left unattended
- Obstructed smoke doors
- Obstructed exits

VA Boston Emergency Management Program

Emergency Management **is defined as the science of managing complex systems and multidisciplinary personnel to address emergencies and disasters, across all hazards, and through the phases of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. This involves organized analysis, planning, decision making, and assignment of available resources to mitigate (lessen the effect of or prevent) prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of all hazards.**

An Emergency Management Program **implements the organization's mission, vision, management framework and strategic goals and objectives related to emergencies and disasters. The "program" applies to all departments and organizational units within the organization that have roles in responding to an emergency.**

The goal of emergency management is to save lives, prevent injuries, and protect property and the environment if an emergency occurs. The goals of the VA Boston Emergency Management Program are to:

- **Take care of people (patients & staff)**
- **Take care of operations (sustain functions and resources)**
- **Take care of the community (provide regional assistance to the public)**

- **For more information on VA Boston Emergency Management please contact: VABHS Emergency Manager at 774-826-4032**

Emergency Management Staff

- Emergency Management Supervisor 6-4032
- Emergency Management Specialist-Brockton 6-1150
- Emergency Management Specialist-West Roxbury 3-6902

- **For information from the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) see your supervisor or use the link below: http://VA Boston HCS - EOP**
- **Additional information may be found at the following websites: Federal Emergency Management Agency @ www.fema.gov**
  - **Are You Ready? Free course from FEMA IS-22 Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness**
  - **U.S Department of Homeland Security @ www.ready.gov**

Responsibilities:
The following persons have specific responsibilities, which are defined in the plan.

- **Director, Boston Healthcare System**
- **Chief of Staff**
- **Safety Officer**
- **Emergency Management Committee**
- **All Service Chiefs**
- **All Employees**

Emergency Codes

AT ALL DIVISIONS/CAMPUSES AND OUTPATIENT CLINICS:

Code Gray----- Disaster
Code Blue----- Medical
Code Red----- Fire
Code Green ----- Psychiatric
Code Yellow----- Missing Person

- **Emergency Management Resources Staff**
- Safety Office BR x61161
- Safety Office JP x45851
- Safety Office WR x36690

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS FACT SHEET

WORK SAFE – KNOW THE CHEMICAL HAZARDS

- **Know and understand the chemical hazards in your work area**
- **Read the hazard warnings on container's label**
- **Refer to the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for additional information**
- **Utilize the Chemical Inventories of your service to know what chemicals are being used**
- **Properly store your chemicals (by chemical compatibility and in a manner to avoid spillage)**
- **DO NOT dispose of chemicals in sink drains or in trash barrels**
- **Contact the Safety Office for chemical disposal (extension 61158)**
- **Recognize and report any unsafe conditions or malfunctioning equipment to your supervisor**

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

FOR CHEMICAL SPILLS AND/OR LEAKS:
DIAL EXTENTION 33333

PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- **IDENTIFY THE LOCATION**
- **DESCRIBE THE TYPE OF INCIDENT**

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

FACT SHEET

Occupational Injury: Employees who become injured while performing their assigned duties are covered under the Federal Employees Compensation Act. Employees sustaining work related injuries are to report to the Occupational Health Clinic as soon as possible.

Occupational Illness: Defined as the acquisition of a disease through exposure in the work environment.

Duty Status Determinations: Employees on restricted duty or who have been unable to report to duty due to a non-occupational injury or serious illness of greater than 3 days duration will report to Occupational Health with appropriate medical documentation before resuming regular duties.

Non-Occupational Injury: Employees who sustain non-work related injuries are not authorized to receive care through Occupational Health. Employees should seek care from their primary care provider or local emergency department as appropriate.

Non-Occupational Illness: Employees who have an illness of three days or less and wish to remain at work may be evaluated by Occupational Health. Employees who have been ill for more than three days will not be evaluated for their illness in Occupational Health. They should contact their primary care provider for evaluation and treatment.

Work Safety: A supervisor may escort an employee to Occupational Health for evaluation if the supervisor feels the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or is otherwise physically or mentally impaired.

Fitness for Duty Evaluations: Fitness for Duty Evaluations are specific medical evaluations authorized by OPM regulations. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if an employee is physically or mentally capable of performing the essential functions of their job. These evaluations must be requested by the Service Care Line Chief through the Chief of Human Resource Management.

Immunization and Well Visits: Visits for blood pressure check, record reviews, health form completion, etc, must be previously scheduled and will be screened to determine appropriateness.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Director, C&P and Occupational Health Services
857-364-5003

Occupational Health BR
774-826-2305 (62305)

Occupational Health WX
857-203-6127 (36127)

Occupational Health JP
857-364-5353 (45353)

Top 10 Things You Can Do To Avoid the Risks of Compromising Information Security

No matter what job you do to serve veterans, the security of their information depends on you. These days, the ability to get the job done depends upon our computers and the networks that connect them. Without them and the data they manage for us, we're simply out of business. Staying in business is the hard-edged practical side of security. There's another, more human side. If you think about it, our veterans did their part to preserve our right to privacy. It's only right that we do our part to preserve theirs.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Log-Off the computer when you walk away from it.

Avoid the risk of another individual using your password. You should log off the computer when you are finished. If you don't, it is the same as sharing your password. .

2. Know your Information Security Officer (ISO).

(ISO) Brockton Campus	**Ph: 774 826 3639**
(ISO) Jamaica Plain Campus	**Ph: 857 364 5639**
(ISO) West Roxbury Campus	**Ph: 857 203 6225**

Be careful with the information you use to do your job.

As a VA Boston Healthcare System employee, you are responsible for the security of the information and computers you work with. For example, you must make sure that your actions don't make information available to people who are not entitled to have it or read it, including information on a computer screen and paper copies you print. Be careful talking about patients and other sensitive matters in public places. These responsibilities do not end when you leave.

4. Be sure all software is "legal" and approved for your system.

Don't risk infecting the VA computer system; if in doubt contact your ISO.

5. Talk to your ISO to determine what must be done to secure the information you send through electronic mail.

Make sure that the information you send in e-mail is sent securely. Without considering the risks involved, we sometimes e-mail medical records, financial data, or other sensitive information that needs protection.

6. Understand that you are responsible for your work when using VA computers and information.

Remember that in a computerized workplace, what you do may have an effect across the VA Boston Healthcare System, VISN 1, or even across the entire VA.

7. Don't open e-mail messages or their attachments that came from people you don't know.

Be careful with e-mail messages from people you don't know, especially if they're not work-related. These sometimes contain computer viruses and worms, and opening

them can cause the virus to spread in the VA and slow down our work. Don't forward chain letters. They take time away from our jobs and clog our network. Also, be careful when responding to messages; you may be responding to more people than you think. These unintended messages bog down our computers.

8.Choose a good password.

A good password is hard to guess. That means it does not contain a word that others know is important to you, like your spouse's name. That means it contains at least eight characters. That means it contains upper case letters, lower case letters, numbers, and "special characters", like #, &, and %. (Note: you only need three of those four types of characters).

9.Change your password when you think it has been compromised.

Minimize the risk that somebody might guess your password. Some computers will tell you when your password was last used. Be suspicious! If the last sign-on was not really yours, inform your ISO and change your password. It means somebody is doing something on the computer and making you responsible!

10. **Don't share your password.**

Quite simply, if you share your password you become responsible for other's actions! Think of the mischief someone can do with veterans' information, your e-mail, or with your leave requests. Keeping your password in a public place is just like sharing it. If you must write it down, keep it in a safe place.

You and Your password

Your passwords are very important security controls. This information tells you why and helps you to manage your password. It's all part of keeping our veterans' information secure and our computers safe. It's also about protecting your personal reputation.

Why are passwords important?

Passwords identify you to a computer system. They inform the computer that you are trusted to work with VA information. They specify the information you should see. Different jobs have different access requirements. Your password ensures that you don't see what you don't need. That way, you are protected from accusations of privacy violations or entering inaccurate data. Your password ensures that you and only you are accountable for your work. When used properly, your password ensures you cannot be blamed for the actions of others on the computer.

What if I have questions about my password?

Assignment of passwords is often the responsibility of computer system managers. However, your ISO is responsible for managing your facility information security program and can advise you about secure password selection and use.

This information has given you some things you should do…and not do…to help maintain the security of the VA Boston Healthcare System information and computers. Your ISO is there to answer your questions and help you do your part.

REMEMBER: *YOU* ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF INFORMATION SECURITY AT THE VA BOSTON HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

VA Boston Healthcare System
Infection Prevention

Each year approximately 1.7 million Americans get an infection due to being in the hospital. Hospital associated infections result in ~ 99,000 deaths /year. Many, if not most of these infections are preventable. The VA Boston Healthcare System is committed to reducing the number of health-care associated infections and has a team of healthcare professionals working with staff on ways we can prevent these infections and "break the chain of infection".

Targeting Zero is the philosophy that every healthcare institution should be working toward a goal of zero healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).

Contact Information

Nurse Manager	**Ext 36618**
Program Support Assistant	**Ext 36940**
Hospital Epidemiologist	**Ext 36881**

HAND HYGIENE

Hand hygiene is a general term that refers to a method of removing microorganisms from the hands so the germs cannot be transmitted to anyone else. The two most common types of hand hygiene are *hand washing with soap and water* and using an *alcohol-based hand rub*.

Proper hand hygiene is critical to the prevention of hospital-acquired infections!

- **Soap and water**
  - Use when hands are visibly dirty, contaminated, or soiled, after using the restroom, and before eating or preparing food.
  - Wash hands with soap and water to prevent the spread of certain organisms in which alcohol-based hand rub is not effective (*Clostridium difficile* and Norovirus).

- **Alcohol-based hand rubs**

  - Use for routine hand hygiene before & after patient contacts and with items in patient's environment.
  - Cannot be used if hands are visibly soiled.
  - Not to be used for patients on "Special Contact Precautions"

Clean hands are the <u>most important</u> factor in preventing the spread of disease and antibiotic resistance.

HAND HYGIENE (CONT)

Hand Hygiene Fast Facts:

- It is estimated that washing hands with soap and water could reduce diarrheal disease-associated deaths by up to 50%.
- A large percentage of foodborne disease outbreaks are spread by contaminated hands. Appropriate hand washing practices can reduce the risk of foodborne illness and other infections.
- Handwashing can reduce the risk of respiratory infections by 16%.

GLOVE USE

GLOVES are to be worn when:

- Soiling of hands is likely
- In contact with open wounds, non-intact skin, or mucous membranes
- As warranted by certain isolation categories
- Gloves must be changed between patient contact & when heavily soiled.
- Wash hands before and after glove use.

★★★★★★★★★★

The most common mode of transmission of harmful germs is via hands!

★★★★★★★★★★

HAND HYGIENE (CONT)

For personnel who have direct contact with patients:

- NO Artificial nails/extenders/wraps are to be worn by any employees who have or may have contact with patients.
- Fingernail polish if worn, must not be chipped or cracked
- Natural fingernails kept at <1/4 inch in length

ALL STAFF ARE EXPECTED TO KEEP FINGERNAILS CLEAN AND NEAT

EMPLOYEES WITH DAMAGED FINGERNAILS OR WHO HAVE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES MUST SEE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Basic Guidelines to Follow during Transport

∗ If no contact with blood or body fluids, mucous membranes, non-intact skin or open wounds or items contaminated with blood/body fluids is suspected when transporting a patient then

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is not to be worn outside of the patient room.

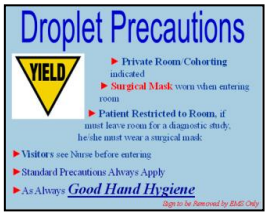
Patient transport:

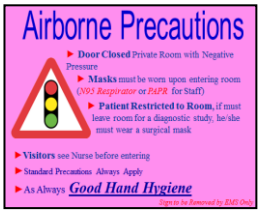
∗ If contact with blood or body fluids, mucous membranes, non-intact skin or open wounds or items contaminated with blood/body fluids is suspected when transporting a patient, then the appropriate PPE is to be worn outside of the patient room. The healthcare provider must perform hand hygiene and don clean PPE prior to transport in the hallway.

Specimen transport:

∗ During transport of specimens the individual will use a single glove technique. The hand used to carry the biohazard bag requires a glove. The other hand will remain glove free and be used to open and close doors, push elevator buttons, etc.

West Roxbury Isolation Precaution Signs
What do they mean?





For Visitors

- Anyone who visits a hospital patient who has an isolation sign outside their door should stop at the nurses' station before entering the patient's room.

- Isolation precautions create barriers that help prevent the spread of germs in the hospital. They may be needed to protect you or the patient you are visiting.

- Depending on the type of isolation precaution, you may need to put on a gown, gloves and/or a mask prior to entering the patient's room. The signs tell you what you will need to do.

- Clean your hands before and after touching the patient and the patient's environment.

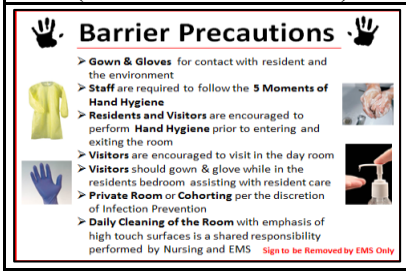
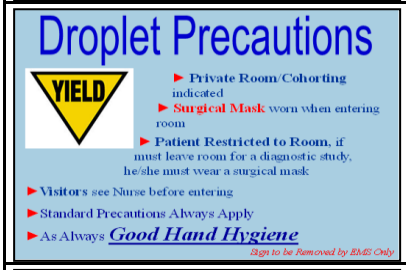
- Alcohol-based hand rub is usually better for cleaning your hands than soap and water, unless your hands are visibly soiled.

- Cover your cough, clean your hands and do not visit a sick person if you are not feeling well.

Clean Hands, Protective Clothing, and Proper Cleaning Will Help Control the Spread of Drug-Resistant Germs

Brockton Infection Prevention Guidelines for Volunteers

*Perform hand hygiene prior to entering a room and upon exiting

ISOLATION CATEGORY	ENTERING RESIDENT ROOM	EXITING RESIDENT ROOM
STANDARD PRECAUTIONS (NO SIGN POSTED)	**Gown and gloves** not needed unless anticipated contact with blood/bodily fluids or contaminated items	Wash hands using **Alcohol-based hand rub** or **soap and water** OR
	**Gown and gloves** needed for contact with the patient or the patient's environment AND	Remove gown and gloves and perform hand hygiene OR
	Gown and gloves prior to entering room AND	Remove gown and gloves and perform hand hygiene with **Soap & Water**
	Gown and gloves prior to entering room AND	Remove gown and gloves and perform hand hygiene with **Alcohol-based hand rub**
	Standard facial **mask** needed upon entering room 	Remove mask and perform hand hygiene OR
	Patients do not have a disease that can be spread to you but they can very easily get an infection from you. **If you feel ill, do not enter the room**	Perform hand hygiene **before and after** entering room.

OSHA BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS STANDARD

The OSHA Blood Borne Pathogens Standard is a law designed for employees and employers with the sole intention of reducing or eliminating the risk of transmission of blood borne pathogens in the workplace.

YOU CANNONT TELL IF SOMEONE IS CARRYING A BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN BY LOOKING AT THEM!

Blood borne pathogens are infectious agents that can be transmitted by exposure to blood & body fluids.

The blood borne pathogens of most concern in the medical setting include:

- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

An exposure in the healthcare setting would be

* An injury with a used sharp (scalpel, sharp object, etc.)
* Splash to Eyes/ Nose/ Mouth with Blood or Other potentially Infectious Material.
* Needle Stick Injuries
* Contact of blood or other potentially infectious material with non-intact skin

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

The first line of defense against blood borne pathogens is standard precautions and personal protective equipment (PPE).

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS (CONT)

Standard Precautions requires you to use personal protective equipment (PPE) to place a barrier between yourself and all blood and body fluids, mucous membrane, non-intact skin and contaminated items.

Always assume body fluids are infectious!

- Gloves are to be worn when contact with blood/body fluids, mucous membranes, non-intact skin is expected and they also to be worn when handling items contaminated with blood/body fluids.
- A gown is to be worn if soiling of clothing is likely.
- Goggles and Masks or a face shield is to be worn if splattering of blood/body fluids is anticipated.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES:

- Frequent hand washing
- Wear PPE when indicated
- Call housekeeping to clean up blood and/or body fluids
- Never push down trash with hands
- Never pick up broken glass with hands

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET AN EXPOSURE

- Report to your supervisor immediately
- **Cuts, Punctures:** Wash area with soap and water
- **Eye splashes**: rinse eyes immediately

GO IMMEDIATELY TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH OR THE EMERGENCY ROOM FOR EVALUATION

MINIMIZING THE POTENTIAL FOR ATTRACTION OF PESTS THROUGH PROPER STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF FOOD ITEMS

Some basic practices can help prevent attraction of pests…

Don't give pests a reason to be here!

Do not collect empty soda cans in the Medical Center

Keep food & fruits in closed containers!

Discard food immediately after finished!

Don't leave food out for extended periods of time. Eat & Clean!

Wash Dishes after use & keep work area clean!

Proper Disposal of Trash

INFECTIOUS WASTE

* Blood
* Items heavily soiled with blood
* Blood transfusion bags
* IV tubing with blood
* Dressings soaked with blood

REGULAR WASTE

* Paper
* Food Debris
* Wrappers
* Chux
* Items soiled with urine, feces, or
* sputum (unless heavily soiled with blood)

SHARPS

* Needles
* Syringes
* Slide covers
* Broken glass
* Lancets
* Scalpels
* Suture Needles
* Used or unused sharps

ALL SHARP ITEMS MUST BE DISPOSED OF IN DESIGNATED SHARPS DISPOSAL BOXES

FOOD SAFETY

PROVIDING SAFE FOOD PREVENTS:

- Foodborne illness
- Contamination of foods
- Choking or aspiration

Good Personal Hygiene Contributes to Food Safety. Do not prepare or serve food if you have:

- Open skin lesions
- Symptoms such as fever, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat or jaundice
- Been recently diagnosed with a foodborne illness

Food Handling:

- While distributing the food, avoid handling foods with hands; use tongs and other deli tissue to handle food. No bare hand contact with food.
- Gloves are not needed unless you have contact with the resident or contact with the resident's immediate environment.
- Minimize touching residents and the environment. If contact with the resident or resident' environment occurs, perform hand hygiene.
- If a resident/patient needs assistance in feeding, gloves are indicated.
- Wash your hands between tasks.

FOOD SAFETY (CONT)

Food Storage:

- Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours--1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F (32.2 ºC).
- Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 °F (4.4 ºC) or below and the freezer at 0 °F (-17.7 ºC) or below.
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork, within 3 to 5 days.
- Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food.
- To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original package, wrap the package again with foil or plastic wrap that is recommended for the freezer.
- Canned foods are safe indefinitely as long as they are not exposed to freezing temperatures, or temperatures above 90 °F. (32.2 ºC) If the cans look ok, they are safe to use. Discard cans that are dented, rusted, or swollen.

GOOD FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES:

* Closely inspect food for damage and expiration dates
* Clearly mark date/time to use by, serve or discard.
* Hold glasses, utensils, plates by stems, handles or sides.
* Always check with the nurse or dietitian for Veterans with allergies and other food restrictions.

FOOD SAFETY (CONT)

* **The biggest factor in foodborne illness outbreaks is time & temperature abuse**

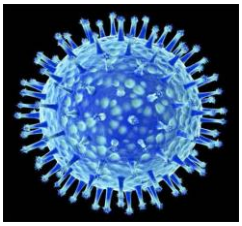
- Cook or reheat food to temperatures (above 165° F)
- Disease-causing microorganisms grow and multiply between 41°F to 135°F
- Discard any food that is held 2 hours or longer without adequate time and temperature control.
- Keep hot food hot (above 135° F) and cold food cold (below 41° F)

Do not serve food or beverages to a Veteran who is "NPO" (Nothing by Mouth). Look for these **NPO** signs by the Veteran's door, above the bed or at the bedside

GENERALLY ACCEPTED SNACK FOODS FOR THE CLC:

- Fresh fruit. Fruit should be washed
- Cheese and crackers, crackers with peanut butter.
- Baked Goods –Preferred COMMERCIALLY PREPARED- i.e., plain, iced, glazed, or jelly filled (cream or custard filled not recommended , have Sugar Free option for diabetic patients).
- Ice cream --COMMERCIALLY PREPARED- (no ice cream with peanuts, fruit, candy pieces, raisins, etc.)
- Breads

INFLUENZA (FLU)



Why should I get a flu shot?

* Getting a flu shot is the best way to slow the spread of flu from person to person.
* A flu shot can protect you and your family or friends against flu.
* Because of flu, thousands die and many more are hospitalized each year in the U.S.
* Anyone can get flu, but some people are at high risk for complications from flu:
    - people age 65 and older
    - people with health problems like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung disease, and other chronic illnesses or conditions
    - pregnant women or people caring for an infant or a family member with health problems

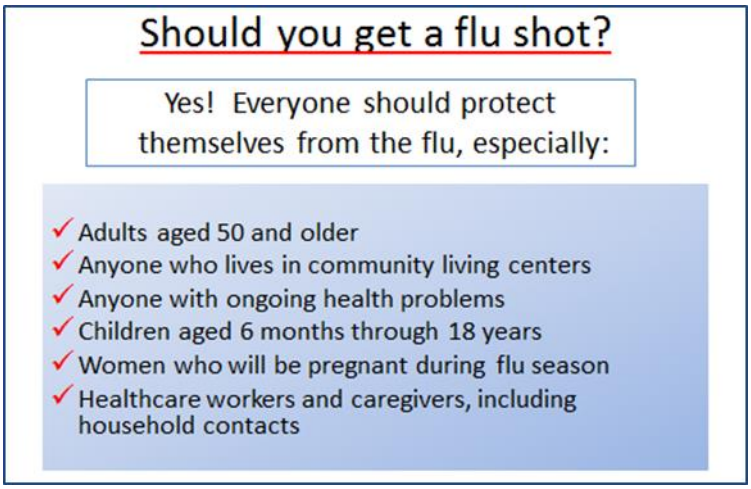
FAST FACTS:

What is flu?

* Flu - short for influenza - is a respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.
* Flu spreads easily. It occurs every year, mainly during fall, winter, and spring.
* Flu is different from a cold. People with flu usually feel achy and have a fever.

When should I get the flu shot?

Get a flu shot In the fall, or as soon as flu shots are available. A flu shot will protect you the entire flu season. Every year, the flu shot vaccine is updated to protect against the flu viruses most likely to spread that year so you will need to get a flu shot every year



Can I get flu from a flu shot?

No! Only inactive (dead) flu virus is used to make flu shot vaccine, so **you cannot get flu from a flu shot.**

Can I still get flu after I get a flu shot?

Maybe if:

* you are exposed to flu **before or right after you get a flu shot**, you could get flu before the shot takes effect
* the flu shot vaccine does not match all the flu viruses that are spreading
* flu viruses change after the flu shot is made (even so, you will still get some protection from the flu shot)
* you have an illness or weak immune system that causes your body to take longer to make antibodies
* your body fails to make antibodies after you get a flu shot

Remember
You cannot get flu from a flu shot!
Flu shots are safe and they work!

Get
your flu shot

Cover
your coughs
& sneezes

Clean
your hands

Is the flu shot safe? Yes.

- Most people who get the flu shot do not have serious side effects or reactions to it.
- Some people may have redness or swelling on their arm where the shot was given.
- A very small number of people get minor body aches, a headache, or a low fever that lasts only a day or two.

CALL THE SHOT TO END THE FLU

What else can I do to slow the spread of flu?

- Stay home when sick.
- Clean your hands often. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs can be spread by touching something that is contaminated with germs an d then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Properly dispose of tissues in trash receptacles.

PET THERAPY PROGRAM: ANIMAL ASSISTED ACTIVITIES (AAA) & ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY (AAT)

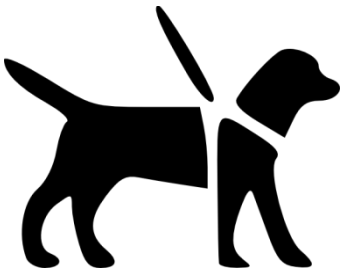
ANIMAL ASSISTED ACTIVITIES (AAA) - Volunteers who take their pets to visit hospitals, nursing homes, day care programs and many other types of facilities for the purpose of being petted and socializing with residents/patients

ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY (AAT) - Health care professionals or certified therapist who use there animal, or work in partnership with a volunteer and a volunteer's pet, using the pet as a treatment modality in a written, individualized treatment plan with specific documented goals

All animals and handlers will be evaluated by the Recreation Therapist (RT) prior to acceptance into the program.

No personal pets or animals are allowed in the Medical Center buildings or grounds except for:

- Service Animals
- Animal assisted interventions (Therapy Animals) for patients, as described above.



CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE (C. DIFF) FACT SHEET

What is *Clostridium difficicle*? *Clostridium difficile* also known as C. diff is a contagious disease that can cause severe diarrhea and, sometimes even death.

How do you get C. diff? It is transmitted by picking up the germ on your hands and then the germ is passed to your mouth when you eat or touch your mouth. Sometimes the germ stays in the gastrointestinal tract without making you sick, but people at high risk often become sick.

Where is the germ found? The germ can found on clothes, bed linens, and objects in a patient's room. The germs can be spread to other people and objects.

People at increased risk for C.diff:

- Prolonged hospitalized patients
- Elderly persons
- Immune-compromised persons
- Persons on antibiotics
- Gastrointestinal surgery

Preventing the Transmission of *C. difficile*

Special Contact Precautions

- Patients with C. diff are put in a private room
- All people must wear gloves and gowns to enter the room (visitors, too)
  - Consider the patient and everything in the room as potentially contagious
  - Dedicate equipment to this patient only (BP cuff, stethoscope, thermometer, etc.)
  - Do not share commode with any other patient
- **Thoroughly wash hands with SOAP & WATER *after* removal of gloves**

***Alcohol gel does not kill this germ. You need to physically remove the germs from your hands with rigorous rubbing of hands with hand washing. The gown protects your clothes. No mask is needed.

Liability, Injury, and Damage Protection for VA Volunteers

Issue

Update of VHA policy on Liability, Injury, and Damage Protection for VA Volunteers

Discussion

The purpose of this document is to ensure that VA volunteers are informed that they have the same protections from personal liability as paid Federal employees.

Federal law provides immunity to all Federal employees (including VA volunteers) from claims or suits for personal injuries or death, or for property damage so long as the employees' actions are part of their Federal duties.

If a claim is made or suit is filed against a volunteer or other VA employee, VA does a quick investigation to determine if the employee's actions was part of his or her official Federal duties and not, for example, the personal business of the employee. VA then recommends to the Department of Justice that any suit, if filed in a State court, be removed to a Federal Court and the Federal Government takes the place of the employee in the suit. If the Department of Justice agrees, that is exactly what happens, and the employee is no longer a party to the claim or suit.

The Government does not pay fines imposed on employees for parking of traffic offenses committed while driving for VA. If a claim or suit involves an accident where the volunteer or other employee received a traffic ticket, VA conducts the usual investigation to determine if the employee's actions were part of his or her official duties.

VAVS Requirement

To ensure that volunteers will be considered to be Federal employees and to protect them otherwise, VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) has a number of requirements, including

- VA acceptance of VAVS volunteers as Without Compensation (WOC) employees,
- Job orientation for the VA supervisory staff and volunteer orientation for the Voluntary Service staff,
- Overall supervision of volunteers by paid VA employee(s), and
- Volunteer drivers furnishing proof of a safe driving record and insurance.

Then It's Up To You

Where these requirements are met, volunteers will be found to be Federal employees. It is then up to you, the volunteer, to make sure your actions are taken as part of your Federal duties.

The precautions you should take include:

- Making sure you have been expressly authorized to use a Government vehicle or to conduct Government business using your private vehicle,
- Taking the most direct routes when driving as a volunteer. Side trips to do personal errands for yourself or another, for example, are not part of your Federal duties;
- Not picking up unauthorized passengers;

What if…

What if you are in an accident?

If you are involved in an accident while driving as a volunteer, you should first, of course, summon any medical assistance necessary. Then call the police and follow their instructions. Do not make any statements at the scene of the accident about whose fault the accident was or any other statement except to identify you as a VA volunteer and to furnish any information required by law. As soon as possible, you should fill out a Standard Form 91, "Operator's Report of Motor Vehicle Accident, and give it to the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC) of the Chief of Voluntary Service. If you are contacted later by an insurance investigator, a non-VA attorney, or other interested party you should refer them to the DAV HSC, the Chief of Voluntary Service, or the VA District Counsel.

What if you are sued?

If you are served with suit papers from an accident you were in while driving as a VA volunteer, you should, as soon as possible, furnish the papers to the DAV HSC or Chief of Voluntary Service, and tell them how you received the suit papers. The DAV HISC or Chief of Voluntary Service, will alert the VA District Counsel, who will see that any additional investigation is completed before contacting the United States Attorney so that you may be dismissed from the suit. You may also be contacted by the VA District Counsel during an administrative claims investigation of an accident before any suit is filed. You should give the District Counsel your full cooperation so that your interests ant those of the Government will be protected.

What if you are injured on the job?

If you are injured while rendering services to VA on your volunteer job, you should promptly notify your VA supervisory staff, obtain a form for filling a claim, and notify your Voluntary Service office. VA will forward your claim to the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs at the Department of Labor. That office will determine your benefits which may include medical care and hospitalization, compensation for any loss of wages or disability, and survivor’s benefits and burial expenses in the case of death.

What if your property is lost or damaged on the job?

Under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act, VA employees (including volunteers) may file claims on VA Form 2-760 for damaged or lost personal property with the local personnel office within two years of the damage or loss. VA may pay if your property was lost or damaged "incident to" your service and your possession of the property was reasonable, useful, or proper under the circumstances. VA cannot pay if the loss or damage was intentional or due to your negligence. Also, if you have a right to recover for the loss or damage of your personal property from an insurance company, you must file a claim with your insurance first

Welcome to the Volunteer Auto Log-In System

1 **Login screen:**
Enter your volunteer code & your Date of Birth in the appropriate box. Then Click the Login Button.

Helpful Hint,

Enter your date of birth (month 01-12) (Day 01-31) (Year Full 4 Digit Year)

click each box to enter. If you are not able to log in, please contact your local Voluntary Service Office Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

2 **Time Posting Screen:**

Click Hours and or Minutes Drop Down for how many hours or minutes you plan to volunteer, Select your appropriate Assignment and or Organization

Click the "**Post All**" Button

If you log on in the morning, Monday through Friday, and are working 4 or more hours then you are authorized a meal.

3 **Print Meal Ticket Screen:**
Click "**Print Meal Ticket**" or "**Do Not Print Meal Ticket**" if your selected "**Print Meal Ticket**" then a lunch slip will print out with your name, date and amount of $6.50 which can be used in any Veterans' Canteen Food Station. Tear off and remove the printed ticket. If your ticket fails to print contact **local Voluntary Service Office Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.**

Using the Volunteer Auto Login to update or verify your contact information on record

1 Follow the steps above till you get to **"Step 2: Time Posting Screen"**

2 In the Section **"Volunteer Summary Information"** click on **"View Full Profile"** Button.

3 Update information then click **"Time Posting"** to return to the Above Step 2 and follow the steps from the above instructions to finish posting your time and printing your Meal ticket.

Voluntary Service Offices VA Boston

Brockton Campus
940 Belmont Street
Brockton, MA. 02301
PH: 774 826 3135
Fax: 774 826 2048

West Roxbury Campus
1400 VFW Parkway
West Roxbury, MA. 02132
PH: 857 203 5135
Fax: 857 203 5727

Jamaica Plain Campus
150 S Huntington Ave
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
PH: 857 364 2443
Fax: 857 364 4482

Voluntary Service Staff Contact Information

Chief, Voluntary and Recreation Services
Matthew Edwards 774-826-4444

Supervisory Voluntary Service Specialist
Lana Otis 774 826 1957

Jamaica Plain Campus

Phone: (617) 232-9500 ext 42443
Fax: 857 364 4482

Mary Peak **Voluntary Service Specialist** 857 364 2443

West Roxbury Campus

Phone: (617) 323-7700 ext 35135
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Eben Orcutt	**Voluntary Service Specialist**	857 203 6702
Peter Tribuna	**Voluntary Service Specialist**	857 203 5135

Brockton Campus

Phone: (508) 583-4500 ext 61135
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Don Hazen	**Voluntary Service**	774 826 3135
Rick Belliveau	**Voluntary Service AO**	774 826 2036