

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS SERVICE

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive establishes VHA policy for the Environmental Programs Service (EPS).
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** None.
- 3. RELATED ISSUES:** VHA Handbooks 1850.02, 1850.03, 1850.04, and VHA Directive 2009-065.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Director of Environmental Programs Service is responsible for the content of this directive. Questions concerning this directive may be directed to the Director of Environmental Programs Service (10NA7) at 202-632-7781.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Directive 1850, dated November 4, 2011, and VHA Manual M-1, Part VII, Chapter 4, dated May 24, 1982, are rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of March 2022. This VHA directive will continue to serve as national VHA policy until it is recertified or rescinded.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS SERVICE

1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive identifies the Environmental Programs Service (EPS) as an organizational element within VHA and establishes the policy and responsibilities for providing oversight and operational guidance to the Environmental Management Service (EMS) and associated health care environmental program functions at VHA medical facilities. **AUTHORITY:** Title 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) 4321 and 4332; and 38 U.S.C. 7301(b).

2. BACKGROUND

EPS provides oversight, establishes objectives, plans and develops management systems/procedures to ensure program functions associated with EMS are effectively implemented and maintained at each VA medical facility. The effectiveness of EMS operations directly impacts the image of VA medical facilities, as patients, visitors, employees and the public often base their impression of the adequacy of patient medical care upon the appearance and cleanliness of the medical facility itself.

3. POLICY

It is VHA policy that EPS provide oversight of policies and operational guidance for EMS and associated health care environmental program functions to maintain each VA medical facility, domiciliary, clinic, and Community Living Center (CLC) in a state of physical and biological cleanliness which fully meets all requirements for a VA medical facility environment.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. **Director, Environmental Programs Service.** The Director of Environmental Programs Service is responsible for directing and overseeing all program functions associated with EPS.
- b. **VA Medical Facility Director.** The VA medical facility Director is responsible for ensuring that all health care environmental program functions associated with EPS are fully implemented to ensure a safe, sanitary and healing environment.
- c. **Chief, Environmental Management Service.** The Chief of Environmental Management Service is responsible to the VA medical facility Director for the operation of EMS, adapting the program to fit special circumstances, advising and assisting facility leadership on all matters pertaining to health care environmental program functions and management.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS SERVICE

EPS fulfills its oversight and policy responsibilities through the following health care environmental program functions:

- a. **Textile Care Management Program.** EPS oversees the Textile Care Management (TCM) Program, which outlines the procedures, reporting requirements, and operating guidelines for TCM and Textile Care Facility Operations within VA medical facilities.
- b. **Waste Management and Recycling Program.** EPS oversees the Waste Management and Recycling (WMR) Program, which outlines the procedures, reporting requirements, and operating guidelines for WMR within VA medical facilities.
- c. **Integrated Pest Management Program.** EPS oversees the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program, which provides the requirements for establishing and maintaining an effective IPM Program within VA medical facilities.
- d. **Interior Design Program.** EPS oversees the Interior Design (ID) Program , which provides the requirements for establishing and maintaining an ID Program within VA medical facilities that includes, but is not limited to: planning/standardization; programming; project development; budget; customer service; and training/affiliations.
- e. **Healthcare Environmental Services Program.** EPS oversees the Healthcare Environmental Services (HES) Program, which outlines the procedures, reporting requirements, and operating guidelines pertaining to sanitation within VA medical facilities. This includes, but is not limited to: cleaning and protective-surface maintenance, waste handling, glazing maintenance, grounds maintenance, bed services, safety, infection control, security, equipment and supplies, staffing, testing and evaluation, training and contractual services.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE

EMS is responsible at the VA medical facility level for ensuring a state of physical and biological cleanliness, which fully meets all requirements for a VA medical facility environment that includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Orderly appearances consistent with activities of the facility while keeping the inanimate environment clean and protected from undue (or unnecessary) wear.
- b. An ID program to promote an aesthetic and therapeutic environment in keeping with the functions of the area, architecture of the building, and geographic and climatic factors.
- c. An efficient textile care processing operation and textile management system with a sufficient supply of sanitary textiles, patient wearing apparel, and employee uniforms meeting facility needs.
- d. The use of integrated pest management treatment options that do not impact patients, visitors, employees, facilities or the environment.
- e. Information essential to the continued development and growth of EMS through research and testing of products, procedures and equipment.

f. Safe conditions for patients, visitors, and employees through proper handling of waste materials, soiled textiles, and equipment.