



Patient Vehicle Access Procedure

1. Purpose

The Great Southern Mental Health Service (GSMHS) promotes the rights of patients admitted to the Acute Psychiatric Unit (APU) to be treated in a way that balances the responsibility to impose the least restriction on patient's rights and freedoms with the need to protect patient safety and that of other in the community.

Clinical incidents have determined there are risks to a mental health patient accessing or driving a vehicle during inpatient treatment.

Following admission to the APU, patient access to their personal motor vehicle is to be managed for the duration of the admission. Every effort must be made to prevent such access. If there is a need for a patient to conduct business outside the hospital, or to proceed on leave by vehicle, either staff or family members are to facilitate the process.

In the situation where a patient's vehicle is parked on the hospital campus and the patient has been admitted to the APU, this procedure is to be followed and a plan documented in the medical record to prevent patient access to their vehicle.

2. Procedure Statement

Upon admission to the inpatient unit, nursing staff are to identify if a patient is in possession of keys or has access to a private vehicle, even if it is parked off site.

Keys to the vehicle are to be removed from the patient's personal effects, registered as a patient belonging, labelled with a patient sticker and kept in the patient's locker until discharge.

If a patient has arrived at the hospital in a private vehicle which has been parked in the hospital car park, action must be taken to either have the vehicle removed or secured. It is preferred the patient nominate a family member or friend to remove the vehicle from the hospital grounds and park it appropriately. If there is no such person or a delay to moving the vehicle, hospital security is to be advised.

The service is to take reasonable steps to keep the vehicle safe and contain patient access to the vehicle.

In the event that a voluntary patient refuses to surrender keys, the treating team is to be informed and this is to be documented in the medical record and handed over to the shift coordinator.

In the above circumstance, if a voluntary patient wishes to have leave from the ward and continues to insist on retaining keys to an accessible vehicle, the treating psychiatrist is to be informed and are to review the patient and the situation.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

APU Nursing Staff are responsible for identifying on admission if a patient has access to a private vehicle, removing keys, storing keys securely and ensuring they are returned to the patient on discharge.

The **Clinical Nurse Manager** is responsible for ensuring that nursing staff identify patients who have access to a private vehicle and have keys in their possession.

All Staff are required to work within policies and guidelines to make sure that WACHS is a safe, equitable and positive place to be.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

4.1 Monitoring

Monitoring of this procedure is to be undertaken by the APU Shift Coordinator through compliance of patient leave regulations and correct property storage.

4.2 Evaluation

Evaluation of this document is to be carried out by the Clinical Nurse Manager through ongoing auditing of available tools and monitoring patient care and clinical incidents.

5. Compliance

This policy is a mandatory requirement under the Mental Health Act 2014

Failure to comply with this procedure may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to Section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies and procedures is mandatory.

6. References

Chief Psychiatrist of Western Australia. 2015. [Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care.](#)

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Vehicle	Motorised transport a person from one place to another, including electric vehicles.

8. Document summary

Coverage	Great Southern
Audience	GSMHS APU Clinical Staff
Records Management	Health Record Management Policy
Related Legislation	Mental Health Act 2014 (WA)
Related Mandatory Policies / Frameworks	Clinical Care of People with Mental Health Problems Who May Be at Risk of Becoming Violent or Aggressive Policy – MP0101/18 Clinical Care of People Who May Be Suicidal Policy Mental Health Policy Framework – MP 0074/17
Related WACHS Policy Documents	Mental Health Search and Seizure Procedure
Other Related Documents	Nil
Related Forms	Statewide Standardised Clinical Documentation (SSCD) Suite Mental Health Act 2014 Forms
Related Training Packages	Nil
Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Declaration (ISD)	ISD Record ID: 1738
National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards	1.25, 1.19, 1.23, 1.26, 4.1, 6.1, 6.2, 6.8, 5.1, 8.1, 5.2
Aged Care Quality Agency Accreditation Standards	Nil
National Standards for Mental Health	1.1, 1.2, 1.9, 6.1, 10.1.1, 10.4.1, 10.5.6

9. Document Control

Version	Published date	Current from	Summary of changes (developer to complete)
3.00	24 November 2016	24 November 2016	
4.00	<Policy Unit Only>	16 December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content transferred to new policy template Updated to reflect change in practice of storage of patient keys in patient lockers
4.01	14 October 2024	14 October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor amendment due to rescindment of other policy

10. Approval

Policy Owner	Regional Director, Great Southern
Co-approver	Executive Director, Mental Health
Contact	Matthew Wells, Regional Manager Mental Health
Business Unit	Mental Health
EDRMS #	ED-CO-13-69332
<p><i>Copyright to this material is vested in the State of Western Australia unless otherwise indicated. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced or re-used for any purposes whatsoever without written permission of the State of Western Australia.</i></p>	

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.