

Title: Examination of Belongings – High Risk Clients		
Document Path: Regional Documents/Policies & Procedures/General		
Approved By: VP of Nursing		Version: 1.0
Effective Date: 29/02/2016	Status: Current	Page 1 of 3

Policy Name: Examination of Belongings – High Risk Clients

Purpose:

To provide guidelines to clinical staff regarding the examination of belongings for high-risk clients, to prevent clients from having access to potentially harmful objects.

Policy / Standard:

High-risk clients include those who pose a threat to themselves and/or others or the client care environment.

High-risk clients are identified by the physician on admission and/or as an inpatient if the client status changes.

A search will be conducted of:

- A high-risk client upon admission;
- A client whose condition changes while they are admitted;
- A client under constant/close observation;
- A client admitted under the Mental Health Care and Treatment Act (MHCTA) with a first certificate of involuntary admission.

The Primary Care Nurse (PCN) will search for potentially harmful objects which will be removed and stored in a safe place.

Materials Required:

Client's Clinical Chart
 Clinical Safety Reporting System (CSRS)
[Examination of Belongings – High Risk Clients](#)
[Mental Health/Acute Care Policies Audit Tool](#)
 MHCTA

Related Policies:

Constant/Close Observation
 Patient Medication-Personal (Pharmacy)

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Procedure:

The PCN is responsible to:

1. Inform the client (or guardian) of the need to search the belongings and remove any potentially dangerous objects.
2. Have the client or next of kin (NOK) sign the [Examination of Belongings – High Risk Clients](#) form indicating that they have been informed of the need to search their belongings. The PCN is also required to sign the form.
3. Document if the client refuses to sign the [Examination of Belongings – High Risk Clients](#) form along with another staff member.
4. Search all the client's belongings and clothing regardless of whether or not the client has signed the form (in the presence of the client and a staff member). The following steps should be followed:
 - Examine the contents of any luggage, backpacks, parcels, etc. for any items that may pose a danger to the client or others in the client care environment;
 - Ask the client to pull out and/or empty all pockets, and examine and assess items for potential danger;
 - If possible, give the client a hospital gown, and instruct the client to remove their clothing so that it can be further searched.
5. Confiscate all items that have been assessed as a potential safety risk, such as:
 - All medication (prescription and nonprescription);
 - Potentially harmful objects (i.e. knives, belts, razors, scissors, lighters, electronic devices, watches with glass face, shoe laces, ties, etc.);
 - Potentially harmful substances (i.e. aftershave lotion, alcohol, etc.).
6. List all items removed on the [Examination of Belongings – High-Risk Clients](#) form and ask the client (or guardian) to sign the form. The PCN who conducted the search must also sign the form.
7. Provide the guardian or NOK with the client's belongings to safeguard otherwise ensure all belongings are locked in a secure location.

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8. Notify Security at Labrador-Grenfell Health and the local Police immediately if a firearm(s) is found during the search. The PCN will not directly handle a firearm and if safe and possible (i.e. if the firearm is found in a bag), remove the bag containing the firearm from the client's room.
9. Confiscate and lock in a secure area any illegal substance(s) found during the search and notify the local Police. The PCN will not disclose the name of the client unless required by law and there is a subpoena. The PCN will initiate a CSRS occurrence.
10. Have the client (or guardian) sign the [Examination of Belongings – High Risk Clients](#) form on discharge confirming that belongings have been returned.
11. Return all medications to pharmacy (Patient Medication – Personal Pharmacy policy) on discharge.

Documentation:

1. Document information about the search in the clinical chart and on the [Examination of Belongings – High Risk Client](#) form; including why, where, and when the search took place, what items were confiscated, who conducted the search, as well as any additional pertinent information.

Audit:

1. The Mental Health/Addictions Manager will complete four random chart audits monthly using the [Mental Health/Acute Care Policies Audit Tool](#).

Definitions:

High-Risk Clients: Clients who are a threat to themselves and/or others or the client care environment.

References:

Not applicable