

SAFETY AND HEALTH DURING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

1. SCOPE/EFFECT: This Medical Center Policy (MCP) affects all employees, patients and visitors.

2. PURPOSE:

a. To establish policy and procedures to ensure that construction projects will be planned, coordinated and regularly inspected to ensure compliance with applicable fire, infection control, environmental, security, safety and occupational health regulations and policies.

b. Construction activities shall be defined to include delegated minor, non-recurring maintenance projects and major projects, performed by contractors or purchase and hire personnel, as well as station-level projects performed by contractors, purchase and hire personnel or station Maintenance and Operations (M&O) personnel.

3. POLICY:

a. In order to protect patients, staff, visitors and contractors from safety and health hazards associated with construction activities, this policy is established for the VAMC, Wilkes-Barre and for all property where construction is undertaken. This policy requires that strategies be established to control the hazards inherent in conducting construction or maintenance operations in areas that are occupied by patients, visitors or healthcare staff. These strategies include the assignment of appropriate responsibility at all levels of the organization, establishing and maintaining the necessary expertise to manage an effective construction health and safety program, applying technical guidance and best practices to assist in managing the program and providing a construction safety multi-disciplinary team to oversee and enforce the application of this policy.

b. In addition, it is the intention of this construction safety program to reduce the potential for injury and illness to VA patients, employees and visitors that might result from unsafe construction activities; to increase the level of construction safety expertise of VA employees; to decrease the potential for serious Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) violations; to provide a guideline for addressing safety-related construction issues; and to reduce the potential for property and liability exposures due to construction-related activities.

c. Proper application of this program will reduce the potential for liability, which could result from construction accidents, life safety deficiencies or infection control failures.

4. PROCEDURE:

a. The medical center has established a multi-disciplinary Construction Safety Committee with representatives from the following areas:

- ☐ Infection Prevention & Control
- ☐ Patient Safety
- ☐ Occupational Safety and Health
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Local Union Safety Representatives (from affected bargaining units)
- ☐ Contracting
- ☐ Green Environmental Management Systems (GEMS)

b. This multi-disciplinary committee performs the following functions:

(1) Protect patients, visitors, and employees from traumatic injury, as well as occupational and facility-associated infections.

(2) Oversee compliance with OSHA and State construction safety regulations.

(3) Oversee compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state environmental regulations.

(4) Respond to, investigate and report violations of these policies to upper management.

(5) Meets monthly and files reports to the VAMC Safety/Environment of Care Committee quarterly.

(6) Determines the scope and depth of safety, infection control, environmental and security procedures appropriate for all construction work.

(7) Develops threshold criteria for each level of intervention. For example, after review, some projects may require only VA Competent Person surveillance to ensure employee safety and OSHA compliance, while other projects will require all disciplines to be involved.

(8) Ensures submittals for contract construction or renovation work include the names, qualifications, and training dates for the contractors' Competent Person designated to administer the site-specific safety program, as well as the Competent Person for other activities as required by OSHA regulations (such as scaffolds, cranes, excavations, etc.).

(9) Conducts Infection Control Risk Assessments (ICRA). Using the current American Institute for Architects Guidelines, the staff must conduct and document ICRA for all construction projects during the design or planning stage of the work. ICRAs must be documented in writing and focus on eliminating, or minimizing, the risk of infection during construction and renovation activities. The complexity of the ICRA report is determined by the complexity of the threats posed by the construction project.

Assigned VA staff, including resident engineers or project managers for major construction, must maintain compliance during the construction phase of the work.

(10) Identifies Interim Life Safety Measures (ILSMs). Facility Safety and Engineering staff must ensure that ILSMs are implemented on all construction work in accordance with The Joint Commission Environment of Care standards. ILSMs are required when construction activities pose significant temporary Life Safety Code deficiencies or hazards. Each medical facility must have a local policy addressing ILSMs in accordance with The Joint Commission requirements. Implementing ILSMs is the responsibility of the local medical facility and construction contractors in accordance with VA Master Specification 01010, General Requirements.

(11) Participates in all phases of construction work from planning through completion. This includes review and approval the construction plans, contract specifications, and contract submittals related to construction safety and health and any other documents that may assist in the implementation of an effective construction safety program. The Construction Safety Committee must be involved early in the process and continue oversight on a regular basis to avoid costly and disruptive delays.

(12) Ensures the construction safety program includes periodic construction site hazard surveillance activities with appropriate membership, scope, and frequency for each project as determined by the Competent Person, the ILSMs and ICRA reports, Hazard Surveillance deficiencies, type of corrective action, and time and date of correction. Ensures corrective actions are tracked to completion.

(13) Implements procedures to ensure general contractors exercise their responsibility for ensuring subcontractors comply with this safety and health policy, and all other related contract requirements.

(14) Ensures all contractors entering VA property comply with the security management program. At a minimum, contractors must notify and obtain permission of the VA Police, be identified by project and employer, and be restricted from unauthorized access.

(15) Requires the contractors' Competent Person to implement and maintain effective safety programs that identify and control hazards that may cause injury or illness to VA patients, staff, visitors, and contractor employees.

(16) Evaluates the effectiveness of the construction safety program in an annual report to the facility Safety and Environment of Care Committee, or equivalent committee.

c. General and Subcontractors Training Requirements: All on-site general and subcontracting construction workers are required to complete the OSHA 10-hour construction worker course and/or the 30-hour construction course. The determination for training is based on the project hazards and complexity, State and Federal regulations and VA requirements.

d. VA staff training requirements

(1) All appointed Competent Persons, Contracting Officer Representative (COR) and facility Safety Program Managers are required to complete OSHA's 30-hour construction safety training and maintain 10-hours of construction safety-related training every two years.

(2) Engineering Supervisors and foreman who oversee construction work complete OSHA 10-hour and 30-hours construction safety course and maintain 10-hours of construction safety-related training every two years.

(3) The construction safety training has to be documented in each person's training record.

5. RESPONSIBILITY:

a. Director, Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center

(1) Establish and monitor an effective facility construction safety program.

(2) Insure funding is available for appropriate staff to receive training in construction safety.

(3) Develop a written facility policy addressing the responsibilities of the Construction Safety Committee.

b. Associate Director, Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center receives delegated responsibility from the Director, Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center, as appropriate, for oversight of these policies.

c. Chief, Facilities Management Service

(1) Receives delegated responsibility from the Associate Director, Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center, as appropriate, for oversight of these policies.

(2) Insures policies are addressed by all sections of engineering having oversight of construction.

(3) Participates in VHA or OSHA's 30-hour Construction Safety Training and refresher courses.

(4) Nominates individual to be appointed as Construction Safety Officer (CSO) for each project.

d. Supervisory Project Engineer

(1) Chairs the Construction Safety Committee, which will meet monthly.

(2) Works through safety and health staff, CORs, maintenance staff, contractors and the Construction Safety Committee to plan, coordinate and monitor the construction safety program for all projects at the facility.

(3) Participates in VHA or OSHA's 30-hour construction safety training and refresher courses.

(4) Supports the competent person, Safety Officer, Infection Control Practitioner, Contracting Officer and engineering staff in implementation of the construction safety program.

(5) Works with contracting staff to insure competent staff are assigned as CORs to oversee work.

(6) Participates in periodic inspections of construction sites to ensure compliance with safety elements of the construction contract and performance of the program.

(7) Works with competent person, Safety Officer, Infection Control Practitioner to identify and complete the attached Pre-Construction Risk Assessment (PCRA) for each project. (Attachment B)

e. Maintenance and Operations Foreman

(1) Participates in VHA or OSHA's 30-hour construction safety training and refresher courses.

(2) Participates in periodic inspections of in-house construction sites to ensure compliance with safety elements of the construction contract and performance of the program.

(3) Insures in-house work forces have necessary training and competency for tasks being performed.

f. Supervisory Biomedical Engineer

(1) Insures all construction accomplished in support of major equipment installations (as a part of the equipment purchase) are in compliance with this policy and these procedures.

(2) Participates in VHA or OSHA's 30-hour construction safety training program and refresher courses.

g. Contracting Officer

(1) Participates in OSHA's 30-hour construction safety training and refresher courses.

(2) Ensures safety elements of this policy are included in each construction contract.

(3) Evaluates past safety records of prospective contractors and considers this information in the contract award process.

(a) At a minimum, ensures that all solicitation and contracts specify that contractors must not have more than three serious, one repeat, or one willful OSHA violations(s) in the past (3) years.

(b) Ensures that all Solicitations and contracts specify that Contractors have an Experienced Modifications Rate (EMR) of equal to or less than 1.0.

(4) Serves on the facility Construction Safety Committee/subcommittee to ensure contracts meet the committee's requirements.

(5) Supports the competent person, Safety Officer, Resident Engineer, and appropriate staff in implementing the construction safety program.

(6) Works with the Supervisory Project Engineer to assign necessary competent COR.

(7) Ensure that construction contracts awarded after July 31, 2005, specify that on-site general and sub-contractor's construction workers have completed the OSHA 10-hour construction worker course, the 30-hour construction course, or other relevant competency training, as determined by the VA CP with input from the Construction Safety Committee. The determination for training is based on the project hazards and complexity, State and Federal regulations and VA requirements.

(8) Appoints individual to be appointed as Construction Safety Officer (CSO) for each project.

h. Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)

(1) Participates in VHA or OSHA's 30-hour construction safety training program and refresher courses.

(2) Is trained and designated as a competent person for the purposes of this policy.

(3) As the team member most familiar with the technical aspects of his/her designated project, inspects his/her projects on a daily basis to identify and document deficiencies in the work including safety and infection control. Acts to correct deficiencies on-the-spot whenever possible.

(4) Participates in the VHA facility multi-disciplinary team established for construction.

(5) Consults with other members of the team, as appropriate, to assure that all deficiencies are handled properly.

(6) Consults with member of the team, during design or planning to establish the risks to be addressed and the degree of protection appropriate to the situation.

(7) Monitors compliance with relevant safety and health requirements by the contractor in the field. Completes Construction Rounds Log on a daily basis to document contractor compliance for Safety, ILSM, and Infection Control Issues. (Attachment E)

(8) Ensures that the specific safety requirements for construction operations are implemented and continuously observed during the course of all projects subject to this policy.

i. Safety and Occupational Health Manager

(1) Participates in VHA or OSHA's 30-hour construction safety training and refresher courses.

(2) Ensuring that VHA policy for the construction safety program is implemented within the Medical Center.

(3) Ensures necessary and relevant ILSMs (Interim Life Safety Measures) are established and implemented using the attached the Interim Life Safety Measures form. (Attachment C) - Conducts required additional training for compliance with identified ILSMs.

(4) Renders technical advice and assistance as required in connection with life safety and fire protection issues during construction and project design and development.

(5) Oversees compliance with OSHA and other relevant construction safety regulations.

(6) Ensures VAMC staff receives training required by this memorandum.

(7) Conducts weekly inspections of construction sites to ensure compliance with safety elements of the construction contract using the attached Job Safety Check Sheet. (Attachment A)

(8) Stops unsafe work or activities not complying with the contract or OSHA, and notifies the Contracting Officer immediately.

(9) Approves corrective actions.

(10) Ensures the construction safety program includes appropriate periodic construction site hazard surveillance.

j. Infection Prevention Nurse

(1) Advises and/or provides recommendations on exposure mitigation and the prevention of facility associated infections in patients, staff, and visitors.

(2) Coordinates with the manager of each construction project (in-house and contract) to conduct an Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA) during the planning and/or design stage of the work. ICRA's must be documented in writing and focus on eliminating, or minimizing, the risk of infection during construction and renovation activities using the attached Infection Control Risk Assessment form. (Attachment D)

(3) Monitors infection control during construction activities as indicated in ICRA for that project.

(4) Participates in VHA or OSHA 10 Hour Construction Safety Training and refresher courses.

k. GEMS Coordinator

(1) Provides guidance on environmental issues during design stage.

(2) Monitors contractor conformance to contract specifications, including environmental compliance and pollution prevention.

(3) Participates in VHA or OSHA 10 Hour Construction Safety Training and refresher courses.

I. Police and Security

(1) Ensures all contractors entering VAMC property comply with the security management program. At a minimum, contractors must notify and obtain permission of the VAMC Police, be identified by project and employer, and restricted from unauthorized access.

(2) Conducts periodic surveillance of site security and the integrity of barriers for trenches and other hazards.

(3) Participates in VHA or OSHA 10 Hour Construction Safety Training and refresher courses.

6. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: Employee and patient customer satisfaction were considered in the development of this policy.

7. RESCISSION: Medical Center Policy 18S-12-346 dated September 11, 2012, same subject.

8. REFERENCES: VHA Emerging Pathogens Guidebook, 1998, Center for Engineering and Occupational Safety and Health available electronically at: <http://vaww.ceosh.med.va.gov>
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards
APIC Infection Control Tool Kit Series: Construction and Renovation available from the Association of Professional Infection Control Practitioners and Epidemiologists (APIC).
Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospital and Health Care Facilities, American Institute of Architects, Washington DC 2014.
Guidelines on Assessment and Remediation of Fungi in Indoor Environments, New York City Department of Health, Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Disease Epidemiology, at: [http://www.lchd.org/envirohealth/aq/pdfs/NYC DOH Guidelines.pdf](http://www.lchd.org/envirohealth/aq/pdfs/NYC%20DOH%20Guidelines.pdf)
Infection Control during Construction. A Guide to Prevention and JCAHO Compliance, Wayne Hansen, Editor, Opus Communications, 2002.
OSHA Regulations for Construction Safety, 29 CFR 1926, Available at: <http://www.osha.gov>
Current JCAHO Standards from the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.
VHA Directive 7701, Occupational Safety and Health.
VHA Handbook 7701.1, Occupational Safety and Health Program Procedures.
VA Directive 7700, Occupational Safety and Health.
Construction Safety Council, at: <http://www.buildsafe.org>

VHA Directive 2011-036, Safety and Health during Construction Activities.

9. DISTRIBUTION: Electronic Access to All Employees.

10. ATTACHMENTS: A, B, C, D, E

Attachment A - Job Safety Check Sheet

Attachment B - Pre-Construction Risk Assessment

Attachment C - Interim Life Safety Measures

Attachment D - Infection Control Risk Assessment

Attachment E - Construction Daily Rounds Log – Safety/ILSM/Infection Control Issues



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Signed by: Adelman, Michael