



**POLICY**

POLICY NUMBER 160.100

**TITLE: MEDIA ACCESS AT STATE VETERANS HOMES**

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EFFECTIVE DATE:	January 30, 2004
AUTHORITY:	General authority of the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs, hereinafter referred to as Department, to manage and direct the Department, RCW 43.60A.040, .050, and .060.
PURPOSE:	To safeguard and protect the privacy of State Veterans Home residents and comply with federal privacy regulations, including HIPAA rules.
APPLICABILITY:	This policy applies to all Department employees, volunteers, contractors and work studies.
DEFINITIONS:	<p><u>Residential Area</u> - Includes resident rooms, dining areas within nursing care buildings, therapy and recreation rooms within nursing care buildings, any other area where residents of the State Veterans Homes could reasonably expect privacy.</p> <p><u>Administrative Area</u> - Administrative offices, assembly and recreation areas outside of nursing care buildings</p>
POLICY:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. The Department has a legal obligation and an ethical duty to protect the personal privacy of all residents of the State Veterans Homes.</li> <li>II. Under no circumstances are media permitted to enter residential areas of a State Veterans Home without first making arrangements with the Superintendent / Administrator (or designee).</li> <li>III. Media requests to photograph, film, or interview residents must be made through the Superintendent / Administrator (or designee).</li> <li>IV. Due to federal privacy regulations, including HIPAA requirements, the Department is prohibited from disclosing any information regarding any resident, including whether the individual is resident of a State Veterans Home, without the</li> </ol>

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written permission of the resident. (In the case of law enforcement investigations, the Department will adhere to legal requirements which may require the release of resident information.)

V. The Public Relations Manager will work with the Superintendent / Administrator (or designee) of the facility and the media to determine how to satisfy a media request while safeguarding the privacy rights of all residents.

VI. If a member of a media outlet arrives at a State Veterans Home without making prior arrangements:

A. The Superintendent / Administrator (or designee) will be notified and the media will be directed to the Superintendent's Office.

B. If the media arrive outside the Superintendent's regular office hours, they will be escorted to an "administrative area" of the facility such as an administrative office or waiting area. The Superintendent / Administrator (or designee) will be notified and will determine how to proceed.

C. If the media are found after they've already started filming or interviewing residents, the Superintendent / Administrator (or designee) will be notified immediately and the media will be asked to discontinue until further direction can be provided.

D. If the Superintendent / Administrator (or designee) cannot be located, staff should contact the Public Relations Manager.

REVIEW: This policy will be reviewed every five years and updated as needed.

REFERENCES: DVA HIPAA Policy 170.000 - 170.500

SUPERSESSON None

ATTACHMENTS: None

John King, Director

Date

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