



Augusta Health Express Education Self-Study Guide

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Welcome to Augusta Health!

We're thrilled you're joining us! This Express Education guide is your first stop in our onboarding journey. It covers essential info to set you up for success on Day 1. After your hire date, you'll attend New Team Member Orientation (NTMO). This mandatory session introduces you to Augusta Health's mission, culture, and role expectations. You'll also complete a Departmental Orientation led by your supervisor, giving you a deeper dive into department-specific policies and team dynamics.

Note: While we're here to support you, understanding policies and procedures relevant to your role is ultimately your responsibility.

COMPLETING EXPRESS EDUCATION

- Review this document – Familiarize yourself with what you need for a smooth start.
- Print & Complete the “Verification Checklist” – Bring it on Day 1 or send it in advance. Either you or your supervisor can forward this to Organizational and Talent Development.
- Questions? Contact your supervisor or call Organizational and Talent Development at 540.332.4720.

Learning is key at Augusta Health. Continuing education supports patient care, regulatory standards, and your professional growth.

- HealthStream (Learning Management System; LMS): Our learning system tracks your training and helps you stay current. You'll get familiar with HealthStream during orientation.
- Pulse (Intranet): Access policies, job postings, benefits, and more on Pulse. It's your go-to for staying informed.
- Investing in Us (Website): Discover a dynamic space designed to support your professional and personal journey. Explore career-boosting resources, stay ahead with a calendar of upcoming learning opportunities, dive into comprehensive details about Augusta Health benefits, and celebrate your achievements through our recognition programs. Empower your path to success—all in one place!
- Communication & Meetings: Check your Augusta Health email (Microsoft Outlook) regularly for updates. Your departmental orientation will also cover daily huddles, department meetings, and town halls to keep you aligned with your team and the organization.

Our Mission, Vision and Values



OUR MISSION

To strengthen the health and well-being of all people in our communities.

At Augusta Health, we're here to elevate the health and well-being of everyone across all of our communities. As an independent, non-profit health system, we're rooted in the local area. Our Community Board of Directors, composed of your neighbors, ensures we stay true to community-focused values. Every dollar we earn goes back into our communities, reinforcing our dedication to quality care and proactive health solutions.

How do we achieve this?

- Dedicated Team: 350+ active full-time physicians and 275 employed physicians.
- People Power: 2,000+ staff members and 500+ volunteers committed to compassionate care.
- Facilities: 255 beds for patient-centered healing.
- Access: 50+ practice sites, bringing care closer to you.



OUR VISION

To be a national model for community-based healthcare.

We're not just any healthcare system; we're an independent, community-centered partner for your health. Our vision is to be the go-to choice for patients, physicians, and staff alike by focusing on:

- Exceptional Patient Experiences: Your satisfaction drives us.
- Collaborative Health Teams: We work together to support you.
- Clinical Excellence: Raising the bar to deliver top-tier healthcare.



OUR VALUES

Our Core Values

Patient & Community-Centeredness, Professionalism, Excellence, and Teamwork (P-P-E-T): these guide every decision we make and every action we take. These values empower us to create meaningful, lasting impressions on everyone we serve.

Living Our Values

Here's how you can make a difference each day by bringing P-P-E-T to life in every interaction.



Five Key Ways to Show Patient & Community Centeredness

- Welcome & Introduce: Start with a genuine introduction. For example, “Welcome to Augusta Health, Mrs. Smith. We’re glad to have you with us today.”
- Engage & Involve: Respect each patient’s choices and actively include them in their care.
- Personalize Experience: Treat every individual with dignity and attention, as if they were family. Confirm their preferred name or title.
- Ensure Privacy: Maintain absolute confidentiality with all patient information.
- Support & Serve: Always ask, “Is there anything more I can do for you, [Patient’s Name]?” before ending an interaction.



Five Key Ways to Show Professionalism

- Wear Your Badge, Wear a Smile: Be easily recognizable, approachable, and ready to help.
- Handle with Care: Respond to complaints courteously, knowing your empathy is often more impactful than the resolution itself.
- Show Respect: Body language matters—make eye contact, speak clearly, and always with kindness.
- Be Prompt on the Phone: Answer within three rings, say, “Thank you for calling Augusta Health, [Your Department], this is [Your Name].”
- Be an Augusta Health Ambassador: Speak positively about Augusta Health’s services in the community.





Five Key Ways to Show Excellence

- Prioritize Safety: Keep an eye out for safety concerns, and report issues immediately to maintain a secure environment.
- Engage with Patient Feedback: Review satisfaction scores and work with your team to improve experiences.
- Stay Knowledgeable: Keep up with policies, procedures, and tech updates to continuously improve quality.
- Meet Education Requirements: Complete all mandatory trainings to keep your skills sharp.
- Preserve Our Community's Hospital: Take pride in our spaces—clean up and report any maintenance needs promptly.



Five Key Ways to Show Teamwork

- Respect Your Teammates: Treat every coworker with professionalism, and avoid gossip.
- Take Ownership: Contribute to team and department goals.
- Collaborate & Solve Together: Work side-by-side to overcome challenges and enhance Augusta Health's offerings.
- Welcome New Faces: Introduce yourself and help new team members feel at home.
- Embrace Differences: Respect diverse views, and if conflicts arise, reach out to a manager for guidance.

We are a values-driven organization and work to intentionally bring more cultural emphasis through living our values. Read more about the Augusta Health values in the “Augusta Health Service Standards” publication. This booklet outlines how we put our values into practice every day. A copy also can be found on Pulse. It is required reading for new Augusta Health team members.



Our Obligations

AUGUSTA HEALTH'S COMMITMENT TO QUALITY AND SAFETY

At Augusta Health, quality and safety aren't just priorities—they're part of who we are. To meet Medicare and Medicaid requirements, we partner with DNV, a CMS-approved hospital accreditor since 2008 and a trusted leader in healthcare standards.

Why Accreditation Matters

Accreditation shows our dedication to consistently improving patient care and operations. With DNV's unique model, we align with CMS's Conditions of Participation (COPs) while building a culture of quality across every team.

How DNV Stands Out

Through NIAHO® and ISO 9001 standards, DNV emphasizes collaboration and continuous improvement. This approach ensures everyone—leaders, clinicians, and support staff—has a voice in enhancing care, safety, and efficiency.

Annual Surveys: Always Ready

No more waiting years for evaluations. DNV conducts annual surveys to keep quality top of mind year-round. This helps us stay prepared and focused, minimizing disruption while fostering a culture of readiness.

Your Role in Accreditation

Every team member matters in the accreditation process. Be ready for surveyor questions about your role, processes, and quality improvement work. Stay current on training to confidently showcase how you contribute to Augusta Health's mission of safe and effective care.

RISK MANAGEMENT: KEEPING US SAFE

Our Risk Management (RM) team works to prevent safety issues before they happen. If something goes off track, report it through Meditech's Event Reporting system. By documenting incidents, we identify trends and make improvements that protect our patients, team, and organization.

Remember, if you see it, report it—it's how we maintain a safe, supportive environment for everyone.



Our Organizational Structure

At Augusta Health, we're more than just a hospital—we're a community-driven organization dedicated to serving the Shenandoah Valley and beyond. As one of only five community-owned, freestanding hospitals in the Commonwealth, we are uniquely positioned to make a lasting impact through local care, innovative services, and community-focused leadership.

GOVERNED BY OUR COMMUNITY, FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Our governance structure reflects our commitment to those we serve. A volunteer Board of Trustees, made up of community members from diverse walks of life—including parents, educators, a pastor, local physicians, and business leaders—guides us with a shared vision: to improve the health and well-being of the region. This approach ensures that decisions impacting Augusta Health are made locally, with your needs in mind.

A VITAL DRIVER FOR REGIONAL PROSPERITY

As the largest private employer in the area, Augusta Health plays a critical role in the local economy. Through job creation, hospital spending, and community support, we are more than a healthcare provider—we're a partner in regional growth.

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our organizational leadership reflects our commitment to fostering expertise, collaboration, and a culture of care. At the helm is Mary N. Mannix, our President and Chief Executive Officer, who is supported by a diverse and experienced executive team:

Our Core Senior Leaders	Our Vice Presidents
Senior Chief Human Resources Officer	Chief of Staff and Business Development
Senior Chief Operating Officer	VP of Legal Services and General Counsel
Senior Chief Nursing Officer	VP of Philanthropy
Senior Chief Financial Officer	Executive Director of the Augusta Health Foundation
Senior Chief Physician Executive	VP Professional Services
	Chief Compliance Officer
	VP Chief Information Officer
	President of Augusta Medical Group

These leaders work alongside our Directors, Managers, Supervisors, and Front-Line Team Members, creating a cohesive structure that supports excellence across all levels of care and operations.

Why It Matters

At Augusta Health, every role—from our Board of Trustees to our front-line staff—embodies our mission to serve our community. Together, we’re building a healthier, stronger future for the Shenandoah Valley, one patient, one family, and one team at a time.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Human Resources

✉ HumanResources@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 332-4700

Nursing Supervisor Team

☎ (540) 932-4100

☎ (540) 448-0162

Infection Control

✉ DWMikolay@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 932-5963

Information Technology Help Desk

✉ ITHelp@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 332-5555

Organizational Talent and Development

✉ OrgDevelopment@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 332-4720

Compliance

✉ ComplianceHotline@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 245-7455

Emergency Management and Safety

✉ EmergencyManagementandSafety@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 245-7337

Employee Health

✉ EmployeeHealthServices@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 332-4725



Augusta Health Performance Pillars

Guided by our Mission, Vision, and Values, we've laid out a clear roadmap for achieving meaningful impact—our “Augusta Health Performance Pillars.” These four pillars focus our efforts on fulfilling our mission and living out our values every day. Here's how each pillar supports our journey to excellence:

1 | QUALITY

Elevating Care, Every Time

Quality healthcare is more than just a benchmark—it's a commitment to excellence in every patient interaction. At Augusta Health, we continuously refine our practices to enhance patient safety, improve outcomes, and provide consistent, value-driven care. By reducing clinical variation and adhering to evidence-based core measures, we ensure that every patient receives the highest standard of treatment. Our focus on minimizing hospital readmissions, optimizing care processes, and prioritizing patient satisfaction allows us to create a healthcare experience that is safe, effective, and reliable.

2 | TEAM

Investing in OUR People

Our team members are the heart of Augusta Health, and their well-being is essential to our success. We are dedicated to fostering an environment where individuals feel valued, supported, and inspired to grow—both personally and professionally. Through employee engagement initiatives, wellness programs, and leadership development opportunities, we create a culture that encourages collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning. When we invest in our people, we cultivate a workforce that is motivated, resilient, and empowered to provide exceptional care.

3 | COMMUNITY

Strengthening Our Impact Beyond Our Walls

Our responsibility extends far beyond our hospital doors. As a trusted healthcare provider, Augusta Health is committed to proactively addressing the health needs of our region. Through community health assessments, outreach initiatives, and strategic partnerships, we work to bridge gaps in care and improve health equity. By focusing on fund development and governance, we ensure that resources are available to support vital programs and services. Our deep-rooted connection to the community strengthens our ability to deliver accessible, compassionate, and impactful healthcare where it's needed most.

4 | FINANCE

Building a Sustainable Future

Financial strength is the foundation that allows us to invest in innovation, expand services, and continuously enhance patient care. At Augusta Health, we practice thoughtful stewardship by carefully managing costs, optimizing productivity, and leveraging LEAN principles to improve efficiency. Every decision we make is driven by a commitment to sustainability—ensuring that we can grow, adapt, and provide the best possible care for generations to come. By maintaining a strong financial foundation, we can continue to fulfill our mission and serve our community with excellence.



Patient Rights and Responsibilities

At Augusta Health, patient's rights is a CMS Condition of participation and is also outlined in the DNV standards. Our patients must be fully informed of their rights and responsibilities. Our commitment to transparency starts by providing every patient or their designated decision-maker with a copy of our "Patient Rights and Responsibilities" document.

You can also find this important information posted in various areas throughout our facilities, including our outpatient clinics and Augusta Health physician practices, making it easy for you to access whenever needed.

WHAT WE PROVIDE:

- Clear Information About Your Rights: We ensure that all patients are well-informed about their rights, how to exercise them, and where to turn if concerns arise.
- Advance Directives: We offer written information on advance directives, helping you make informed decisions about your healthcare.
- Non-Coverage Notices: If there's a potential for a service to be terminated or not covered, we'll make sure you know about it in advance, so there are no surprises.

YOU PLAY A KEY ROLE IN PATIENT RIGHTS

As a part of the Augusta Health team, you play a vital role in ensuring patients understand their rights and responsibilities. Make it a priority to be aware of these rights, which are available for review on the Augusta Health website under the "Patients and Visitors" tab.

When a patient or their decision-maker has questions, you'll be able to direct them to the right resources. By communicating effectively, you help empower patients to make informed decisions about their care.

If you're unsure how to best communicate with a patient, Pulse has valuable interpretation resources, or you can reach out to the nurse assigned to the patient to discuss options. Always ask questions if you feel that patient needs are not being fully met, and don't hesitate to think of ways to improve the process. Your suggestions are crucial—share them with your supervisor to help us continuously enhance the patient experience.



Patient Care

RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED PATIENT ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Your Role in Patient Safety

At Augusta Health, everyone—whether a team member, student, contract worker, or volunteer—plays an essential part in safeguarding our patients. You are responsible for recognizing signs of potential abuse or neglect and taking action by promptly reporting any suspicions to your supervisor or designated authorities. Your vigilance and commitment directly impact patient well-being.

DEFINING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

What is Abuse?

Abuse occurs when someone intentionally harms a patient. This could involve physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual mistreatment, or even financial exploitation. Abuse can happen across all age groups, and signs are not always visible or clear-cut. Often, individuals who commit abuse may have experienced it themselves or may use harmful behaviors to exert control.

Examples of Abuse: Physical harm, emotional manipulation, psychological control, sexual assault, or financial exploitation.

What is Neglect?

Neglect is the failure to provide necessary care, nutrition, or hygiene. This may be due to oversight or inadequate caregiving, resulting in harm to the patient's health and quality of life.

Examples of Neglect: Withholding medical care, insufficient nutrition, inadequate personal hygiene, or unsanitary living conditions.

Your Reporting Obligations

Virginia law mandates that all healthcare workers report any suspected abuse or neglect. Augusta Health supports you in this responsibility by ensuring immunity from civil and criminal liability when reports are made in good faith. This protection also extends to any necessary documentation, including photos or x-rays, that may be included with a report.

Trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, it's essential to speak up.





STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Report Immediately

- Notify your supervisor or reach out to the Department of Social Services.
- A hospital social worker is available for guidance if you're uncertain about next steps, or if mediation between the hospital and family is necessary.

Contacting Authorities

- For additional support, contact the state abuse hotline at 800.522.7096 or the local sheriff's department.

INFORMATION TO INCLUDE IN YOUR REPORT

When reporting, gather and document key details to support investigation:

- Patient's name, age, address, and guardian information (if known)
- Identity of the suspected abuser (if known)
- Additional relevant information that could help clarify the cause of injury or neglect
- Your name and title (You may request to keep your identity confidential under Virginia law.)

Documenting Your Report

- Record the report in the patient's medical record, including the name and position of the individual who received the report (for licensed professionals).

Police Notification

- Contact the police if there is evidence of physical assault, risk of harm if the patient returns home, or if a weapon was involved in the assault.

Notify Key Contacts

- Alert your department director, the on-call social worker, and the attending physician about the report.

YOUR dedication to patient safety and proactive reporting helps Augusta Health maintain a secure, supportive environment where every patient receives the care they deserve.



FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM

Falls are a major safety concern for our patients, and every team member plays a role in keeping our patients secure. Preventing falls is a team effort, and every staff member and volunteer at Augusta Health plays a critical part in keeping patients secure. By proactively identifying risks, educating patients and families, and using safety interventions, we ensure exceptional care and safety.

Stay Informed

Know the essentials of fall prevention:

- Recognizing fall risk signage
- Understanding intervention tools and resources
- Learning how to educate families and patients about fall prevention

Assessing Fall Risk

Nursing staff assesses every patient's risk for falls, but safety awareness extends to all of us. If you notice any safety risks, concerns, or incidents, please report them immediately. This applies to falls involving patients, visitors, family members, or staff members.

Indicators of High-Risk Patients

We use specific visual cues and tools to identify patients at high risk for falls. If you see these, take extra care and attention:

Hospitalized Adults:

- Yellow wrist armband
- Yellow non-skid socks
- Bed or chair alarms in use
- Risk or recent fall flagged during shift reports
- Bedside commodes available unless contraindicated

Pediatric Patients:

- Humpty Dumpty magnet on the room door
- Continuous staff or family attendance
- Bed or chair alarms in use for additional safety

Outpatient Safety

Outpatient areas have their own fall prevention protocols tailored to their specific needs. Check with your department for area-specific guidelines to ensure fall safety is covered across all Augusta Health facilities.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A HIGH-RISK PATIENT STANDING OR WALKING UNASSISTED

If you're not directly providing care but hear a bed or chair alarm or see a high-risk patient up unassisted, take action by:

- Introducing Yourself – Let the patient know you're there to help.
- Asking Them to Sit Down – Encourage the patient to remain seated.
- Contacting Patient Care Staff – Notify the team that the patient needs assistance.
- Staying with the Patient – Remain with them until patient care staff arrives.

Simple Actions That Prevent Falls

A few proactive habits can make all the difference in preventing falls:

- Keep rooms and hallways clutter-free to ensure easy access to handrails.
- Lock the wheels on beds and stretchers when stationary.
- Maintain beds in a low position when not actively assisting the patient.
- Clean up spills immediately to avoid slips.
- Place personal items within reach for patients, such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, or walkers.



UNDERSTANDING STROKE AND STEMI: QUICK ACTIONS CAN SAVE LIVES

What is a Stroke?

A stroke happens when blood flow to part of the brain is suddenly interrupted. This can occur due to a clot blocking a blood vessel or a rupture in the vessel itself. Without a steady supply of oxygen and nutrients, brain cells start to die, often within minutes. Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death, taking over 140,000 lives annually. Every second counts when responding to stroke symptoms.

Recognize FAST with BEFAST The faster we respond, the better the outcome. BEFAST is a quick way to remember stroke signs and symptoms:



Balance

Sudden loss of balance or coordination



Eyes

Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes



Face

Drooping on one side of the face or uneven smile



Arm

Arm weakness and/or numbness



Speech

Difficulty speaking or slurred speech



Time

Time to call for help, call 911 right away

If you see these signs, act immediately. Within Augusta Health, call a STROKE ALERT by dialing 2222. Outside the hospital, call 9-1-1 to get help fast.

What is a STEMI?

STEMI (ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction) is a type of severe heart attack that occurs when a coronary artery is completely blocked, stopping blood flow to a part of the heart. This causes significant damage to the heart muscle if not treated promptly.

Recognizing the Signs of a STEMI:



Chest Pain

Intense, persistent discomfort or pressure in the chest, often described as a “squeezing” sensation.



Radiating Pain

Pain that spreads to the arms, neck, jaw, back, or stomach.



Shortness of Breath

Difficulty breathing, even while at rest.



Nausea or Vomiting

Often accompanied by cold sweats.



Fatigue

Sudden, unexplained exhaustion.

STEMI is a medical emergency.

Rapid diagnosis and treatment, such as opening the blocked artery with medication or procedures like angioplasty, are essential to saving heart muscle and preventing further complications.

If you see these signs, act immediately. Within Augusta Health, call a STEMI ALERT by dialing 2222. Outside the hospital, call 9-1-1 to get help fast.

Augusta Health's Commitment to Stroke and STEMI Care

At Augusta Health, we are committed to delivering exceptional cardiovascular and stroke care. As a DNV-certified Primary Stroke Center and an accredited Chest Pain Center with Primary PCI by the American College of Cardiology, we ensure rapid, evidence-based treatment for stroke and STEMI patients. Our highly skilled professionals, advanced technology, and rigorous protocols drive outstanding patient outcomes. Additionally, our Heart Failure Program holds accreditation from the American College of Cardiology, earning us the distinguished Heart Care Center of Excellence award.



RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Questions About Stroke or STEMI Care?

We're here to help. For more information:

- Contact your department director.
- Reach out to our Stroke Coordinator at extension 5937.
- For STEMI-related inquiries, consult our Cardiology Team through your department lead or the on-call cardiologist.

Emergency Support for Team Member Safety

Safety is our priority. If you need assistance or have questions about emergency procedures:

Nursing Supervisor Team: Available 24/7

☎ (540) 932-4100 (office)

☎ (540) 448-0162 (mobile)

INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL AT AUGUSTA HEALTH

Your role in protecting patients, coworkers, and our community.

Understanding Infection Types

- Community Acquired Infections (CAI): Present upon admission; examples include tuberculosis, chickenpox, and non-communicable infections like UTIs and pneumonia.
- Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI): Develop after admission, such as ventilator-associated pneumonia and surgical site infections.

Breaking the Chain of Infection

The “chain of infection” has six links that we must interrupt:

1. Infectious Agent: Pathogen (bacteria, virus, fungus). Prevent with proper diagnosis and treatment.
2. Reservoir: Where pathogens live (people, animals, equipment). Clean shared spaces and tools.
3. Portal of Exit: How pathogens leave (wounds, sneezing). Use PPE and cover wounds.
4. Mode of Transmission: Pathogen spread (contact, air, ingestion). Perform hand hygiene and clean areas thoroughly.
5. Portal of Entry: Pathogen entry points (skin breaks, devices). Practice meticulous care with medical devices.
6. Susceptible Host: Vulnerable individuals. Protect by following infection control protocols.

Key Practices to Prevent Infection



HAND HYGIENE

- Use alcohol-based sanitizer frequently. Wash with soap and water if visibly soiled or after certain activities (e.g., bathroom use).
- Practice “5 Moments of Hand Hygiene”: before patient contact, after exposure to fluids, etc.



PPE (PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT)

- Wear gowns, gloves, masks, or goggles based on need.
- Follow donning and doffing procedures carefully.



ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

- Disinfect surfaces, equipment, and high-touch areas.
- Dispose of biohazard waste properly using designated bags.



RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

- Cover your coughs/sneezes, use tissues, and dispose of them in no-touch bins.



SHARPS SAFETY

- Handle needles/scalpels carefully. Dispose of them immediately in sharps containers.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

At Augusta Health, your safety and the safety of our patients are top priorities. Adhering to OSHA regulations and best practices ensures a safe, compliant, and infection-free environment. PPE is a critical tool in infection control, designed to protect you, your colleagues, and our patients. Here's a breakdown of what you need to know about PPE usage and guidelines tailored to our workplace.

What is PPE?

PPE, or Personal Protective Equipment, is essential for minimizing exposure to infectious agents and hazardous materials. It includes a range of items to shield you based on the nature of your tasks. Proper use, disposal, and hygiene practices are vital for PPE to be effective.

Types of PPE and Their Usage



GLOVES

- Purpose: Protect your hands from contact with infectious materials.
- Best Practices: Always perform hand hygiene before putting on (donning) and after removing (doffing) gloves.



GOWN

- Purpose: Prevent contamination of your clothing when exposure to substances like blood, stool, urine, or vomit is possible.
- When to Use: During tasks where splashes or contact with infectious materials are likely.



GOGGLES / EYE SHIELDS

- Purpose: Safeguard your eyes from splashes or sprays.
- When to Use: Anytime there's a potential for splatter.



MASKS

- Purpose: Protect against splashes, sprays, or respiratory particles.
- When to Use: When interacting with patients on respiratory precautions or during procedures with splash risks.



N95 RESPIRATORS

- Purpose: Provide enhanced protection for airborne pathogens.
- Important Note: Only team members who have completed N95 fit testing are permitted to enter rooms where Airborne or Airborne + Contact + Eye Precautions are in place.



FACE SHIELDS

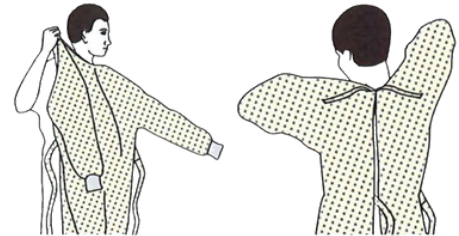
- Purpose: Offer full-face protection, including areas not covered by goggles or glasses.
- Reminder: Personal eyeglasses are not sufficient protection but can be worn underneath face shields.

SEQUENCE FOR PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The type of PPE used will vary based on the level of precautions required, such as standard and contact, droplet or airborne infection isolation precautions. The procedure for putting on and removing PPE should be tailored to the specific type of PPE.

1 Gown

- Fully cover torso from neck to knees, arms to end of wrists, and wrap around the back
- Fasten in back of neck and waist



2 Mask or Respirator

- Secure ties or elastic bands at middle of head and neck
- Fit flexible band to nose bridge
- Fit snug to face and below chin
- Fit-check respirator



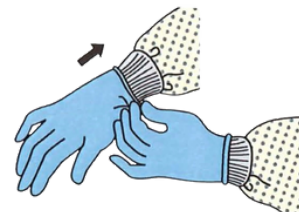
3 Goggles or Face Shield

- Place over face and eyes and adjust to fit



4 Gloves

- Extend to cover wrist of isolation gown



Use safe work practices to protect yourself and limit the spread of contamination.

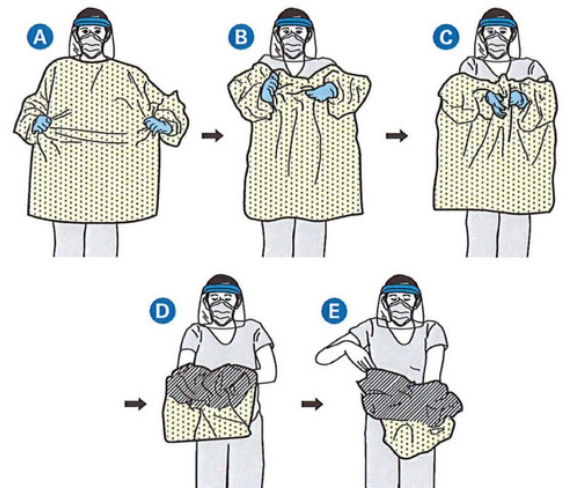
- Keep hands away from face
- Limit surfaces touched
- Change gloves when torn or heavily contaminated
- Perform hand hygiene

HOW TO SAFELY REMOVE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Here is another way to safely remove PPE without contaminating your clothing, skin, or mucous membranes with potentially infectious materials. Remove all PPE before exiting the patient room except a respirator, if worn. Remove the respirator after leaving the patient room and closing the door. Remove PPE in the following sequence:

1 Gowns and Gloves

- Gown front and sleeves and the outside of gloves are contaminated.
- If your hands get contaminated during gown or glove removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Grasp the gown in the front and pull away from your body so that the ties break, touching outside of gown only with gloved hands.
- While removing the gown, fold or roll the gown inside-out into a bundle
- As you are removing the gown, peel off your gloves at the same time, only touching the inside of the gloves and gown with your bare hands. Place the gown and gloves into a waste container.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer once you have disposed of gown and gloves.



2 Goggles or Face Shield

- Outside of goggles or face shield are contaminated.
- Remove goggles or face shield from the back by lifting head band and without touching the front of the goggles or face shield.
- If the item is reusable, place in designated receptacle for reprocessing. Otherwise, discard in a waste container.
- If your hands get contaminated during goggle or face shield removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

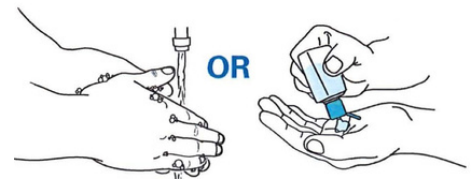


3 Mask or Respirator

- Front of mask/respirator is contaminated- DO NOT TOUCH!
- If your hands get contaminated during mask/respirator removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Grasp bottom ties or elastics of the mask/respirator then the ones at the top, and remove without touching the front
- Discard in a waste container



4 Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately after removing all PPE.



PPE GUIDELINES: ALWAYS FOLLOW THESE STEPS

- Match the PPE to the Task: Choose equipment suitable for the procedure you're performing.
- Proper Removal: Remove all PPE before leaving the patient's room to prevent contamination of common areas.
- Change When Needed: Replace PPE immediately after contact with infectious materials.
- Follow the CDC Protocols: Don (put on) and doff (remove) PPE according to the CDC's standardized sequence to ensure safety and compliance.

The Augusta Health Commitment to Safety

We're here to support you with training and resources to make PPE usage second nature. By following these guidelines, you contribute to a healthier, safer workplace for everyone. Let's stay proactive, protective, and prepared—together.

For questions or additional training on PPE usage, reach out to your department supervisor or Infection Control team.

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE & COUGH ETIQUETTE

At Augusta Health, your safety and well-being are at the heart of everything we do. Preventing the spread of respiratory illnesses—like influenza, COVID-19, RSV, and other viruses—is key to maintaining a healthy environment for patients, families, and our team members. Let’s break it down into actionable steps you can take to protect yourself and others.

Why It Matters

Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette are essential to reducing the transmission of airborne illnesses. By following these practices, we help safeguard the health of everyone in our healthcare community.

Steps to Prevent the Spread

1 | Educate & Inform

- Who? Patients, families, visitors, and team members.
- How? Share information about respiratory infections and how they spread.
- Tools? Clear, visible signage with graphics and simple instructions placed throughout Augusta Health.

2 | Cover Your Cough

- Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, and throw it away immediately.
- If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve—not your hands.

3 | Mask Up

- Provide masks for anyone showing respiratory symptoms (e.g., coughing, sneezing) and encourage their use in common areas.

4 | Keep Your Distance

- Separate symptomatic individuals from non-symptomatic individuals in waiting areas whenever possible.
- Use physical barriers or designate separate seating areas to minimize exposure.

5 | Practice Hand Hygiene

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after any contact with respiratory secretions.
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not readily available.

QUICK REMINDERS

- ✓ Cover Your Cough: It’s a simple step that protects everyone.
- ✓ Sanitize Regularly: Clean hands = fewer germs.
- ✓ Spread Kindness, Not Germs: Respect boundaries and use proper respiratory etiquette to keep our community healthy.

HAND HYGIENE: PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

At Augusta Health, we are committed to delivering exceptional care while prioritizing safety. Practicing proper hand hygiene is one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs and protect our patients, team members, and community.

Why is Hand Hygiene Important?

Germs are everywhere. They spread when contaminated surfaces or materials come into contact with your eyes, nose, or mouth before you clean your hands. Consistently practicing hand hygiene is essential to breaking this chain of infection.

When Should You Perform Hand Hygiene?

You should clean your hands at key moments throughout your workday, including:

Before and After Patient Interaction:

- When entering or exiting a patient room/area.
- Before and after direct contact with patients.

After Contact with Potential Contaminants:

- Immediately after touching blood, body fluids, non-intact skin, mucous membranes, or contaminated items.
- When transitioning from a contaminated task/body site to a clean one.
- After touching medical equipment or objects in patient areas.

Personal Hygiene Moments:

- Before eating or drinking, and after using the restroom.
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.

Glove Use:

- Before putting on gloves and immediately after removing them.

How Should You Perform Hand Hygiene?

Choose the appropriate method—soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer—based on the situation.

Soap and Water (Best for visibly soiled hands or exposure to certain pathogens):

1. Wet your hands and keep them lower than your elbows.
2. Apply soap and lather for at least 20 seconds, scrubbing all surfaces (including fingernails and between fingers).
3. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
4. Dry hands with a paper towel and use the same towel to turn off the faucet.

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (Fast and effective when hands are not visibly dirty):

1. Dispense a metered dose of hand sanitizer.
2. Rub gel/foam on all hand surfaces, focusing on fingernails and between fingers.
3. Continue rubbing until your hands are completely dry (approximately 20 seconds).

For a detailed guide, check out the [CDC's Hand Hygiene Quick Reference](#).

PRECAUTIONS: PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

To keep our care environments safe, Augusta Health follows evidence-based infection control precautions. These guidelines minimize the risk of transmission from body fluids or contaminated surfaces.

What are Infection Control Precautions?

Precautions are divided into Standard Precautions and additional measures based on specific scenarios.

Standard Precautions:

These are foundational practices designed to protect both patients and healthcare workers. They include:

1. Proper hand hygiene.
2. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection as needed.
3. Safe handling and disposal of sharp objects and medical waste.

Why Use Precautions?

These practices act as a barrier, preventing direct exposure to infectious materials. Whether you're caring for patients or interacting with shared environments, following these protocols is essential to maintaining a culture of safety at Augusta Health.



TRANSMISSION-BASED PRECAUTIONS

At Augusta Health, patient and team member safety is our top priority. When standard precautions alone are not enough to prevent the spread of infection, we implement transmission-based precautions as an additional layer of protection. These specialized precautions are tailored to specific diseases that spread via contact, droplets, or airborne particles and are always used alongside standard precautions. Patients on specialized precautions will have signage outside of their rooms indicating additional precautions. PPE will be available outside patient room for easy accessibility.

Overview of Transmission-Based Precautions

- **Purpose:** To prevent the spread of highly transmissible diseases.
- **Application:** Always used in addition to standard precautions.
- **Policy Access:** For a detailed list of infectious agents requiring transmission-based precautions, refer to the CDC Guidelines for Isolation Precautions in Policy Manager, Infection Control folder, policies folder, CDC Isolation Precautions document.

Key Guidelines for Team Members

- **All team members** must complete training on proper PPE usage before entering isolation areas.
- Volunteers are not permitted to enter isolation rooms.
- Consult your supervisor or Infection Prevention and Control Team for further training or assistance.

Specific Isolation Precautions

Each category of isolation has unique protocols based on the mode of transmission. Follow signage and infection control policies specific to the precautions required.

Droplet Precautions	Airborne Precautions	Contact Precautions	Enteric Precautions
Transmission: Large respiratory droplets. (e.g, Flu A/B or RSV)	Transmission: Airborne particles (e.g., TB, COVID-19).	Transmission: Direct or indirect physical contact.	Transmission: Intestinal infections caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites (e.g., C. diff).
PPE Requirements: Gloves and a mask when within 3 feet of the patient or in their room.	PPE Requirements: Gloves and an N95 mask.	PPE Requirements: Gloves and a gown.	PPE Requirements: Same as contact precautions.
Transport: Place a surgical mask on the patient.	Transport: Place a surgical mask on the patient.	Transport: Limit patient movement outside their room.	Hygiene: Wash hands with soap and water after patient care (no alcohol-based hand sanitizers).
	Environment: Use a negative pressure room; keep the door closed.	Hygiene: Strict handwashing.	

For more information on managing transmission-based precautions refer to:

Policy Manager > Infection Control Folder > Policies > Standard and Transmission-Based Infection Control Practices. This document outlines practices by each category of precautions. It includes conditions/diseases, room assignments, PPE, ancillary team member guidelines transportation protocols and cleaning guidelines.

Difficult-to-Treat Organisms	Multidrug-Resistant Organisms (MDROs)
<p>Candida Auris (C. auris)</p> <p>Symptoms: Vary based on infection site.</p> <p>Precautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact isolation for colonized or infected patients. • Include C. auris in the patient’s medical history and discharge summary. • Ensure strict hand hygiene and thorough equipment disinfection. 	<p>CRE (Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae)</p> <p>Precautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact isolation for colonized or infected patients. • Include CRE history in discharge summaries. • Ensure rigorous hand hygiene and appropriate antibiotic use.
<p>Clostridioides Difficile (C. diff)</p> <p>Symptoms: Diarrhea, foul-smelling stools, possible mucous or blood.</p> <p>Precautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact/enteric isolation. • Use soap and water for hand hygiene; avoid alcohol-based sanitizers. • Clean surfaces with bleach-based products. 	<p>MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)</p> <p>Precautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact isolation. • Add masks for droplet-generating procedures (e.g., suctioning, wound care).
	<p>VRE (Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococcus)</p> <p>Precautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact isolation. • Use masks for droplet-generating procedures.



Contact the Infection Prevention Team

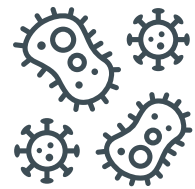
Donna Mikolay, BSN, RN

Infection Control Coordinator

✉ dwmikolay@augustahealth.com

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BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS



Exposure Control Plan

A written document that details how an organization:

- Prevents exposure to bloodborne pathogens
- Determines what is involved in responding to an exposure incident, should one occur.

The document includes engineering and work practice controls that reduce risk of exposures, and proactive vaccination.

Bloodborne Pathogens Terms

- Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP): are pathogenic microorganisms present in human blood and other body fluids that can cause disease in humans, including hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIM): are materials other than human blood that can contain bloodborne pathogens and may potentially be infectious.
- Occupational Exposure: is reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane or parenteral contact with blood or OPIM that may result from the performance of the team members' duties.

Work Practice Controls

- Do not handle blood, OPIM or any biological materials without proper training. Sharps containers are used to dispose of all contaminated sharps.
- All equipment and containers used to store, transport, or ship blood, OPIM or any biological materials must have a label with the word "BIOHAZARD" and the biohazard symbol.
- Labels and signs will be **RED** in color.

Exposure Risk

The following tasks and functions are examples of potential high-risk exposure to BBPs:

- Direct patient care activities likely to result in direct or indirect exposure to blood or body fluids
- Handling human blood, body fluids, tissues or organs
- Handling equipment, materials or waste that may be contaminated with human blood, body fluids or OPIMs
- Routinely administering first aid
- Needle sticks

Steps for Exposure to BBPs

- Clean/flush any injury immediately; seek care in the Emergency Room.
- If source patient is known, obtain labs and call EHS for further details (M-F 8am-4:30PM).
- After Hours, Holidays and or Weekends, contact the House Supervisor at hospital extension 4100 or 540.448.0162.
- File an event report through Meditech under the EMPLOYEE (non-patient) notification.
- Labs for the exposed team member may be necessary depending on results of the source labs and/or identification of exposure risk.

TUBERCULOSIS (TB): WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

At Augusta Health, we prioritize your safety and the well-being of our community. Understanding and managing tuberculosis (TB) is a key part of creating a healthy environment for everyone. Here's a breakdown of what TB is, how it spreads, and what our team does to control and prevent it.

What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, a bacteria that primarily affects the lungs but can also impact other areas like the kidneys, spine, and brain. TB can present in two forms: Latent TB Infection (LTBI) or Active TB Disease.

How TB Spreads

TB bacteria are airborne and spread when someone with active TB in their lungs or throat coughs, speaks, or sings. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.

- Common transmission areas: Family, friends, coworkers, or schoolmates.
- Non-transmissible actions: Shaking hands, sharing food, touching surfaces, or kissing.

Important: TB outside the lungs (e.g., in the kidney or spine) is generally not infectious.

Latent TB Infection (LTBI) vs. Active TB Disease

Not everyone exposed to TB bacteria gets sick. Here's how the two forms differ:

Latent TB Infection (LTBI)	Active TB Disease
No symptoms.	Symptoms like a persistent cough (3+ weeks), chest pain, fatigue, weight loss, fever, or night sweats.
Does not feel sick.	Usually feels sick.
Cannot spread bacteria to others.	Can spread bacteria to others.
Normal chest X-ray and negative sputum test.	May have abnormal chest X-ray or positive sputum test.
Requires treatment to prevent progression.	Requires immediate treatment.

Augusta Health emphasizes early testing and intervention to prevent the progression of LTBI to active TB disease.

TB TESTING METHODS

At Augusta Health, we prioritize your safety and the well-being of our community. Understanding and managing tuberculosis (TB) is a key part of creating a healthy environment for everyone. Here's a breakdown of what TB is, how it spreads, and what our team does to control and prevent it.

Tuberculin Skin Test (TST):	TB Blood Test (IGRA)	Other Tests:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A small amount of fluid is injected into the forearm.• Requires reading within 48-72 hours.• At Augusta Health, new team members complete a two-step TST for accuracy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single blood draw with no follow-up required.• Tests like QuantiFERON®-TB Gold Plus (QFT-Plus) and T-SPOT®.TB are FDA-approved but not Augusta Health's primary testing method.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive tests indicate exposure but not active disease. Additional tests like chest X-rays and sputum samples confirm diagnosis.

AUGUSTA HEALTH TB RISK ASSESSMENTS

In our low-risk region, annual TSTs are not required. However, Annual TB Risk Assessments help us identify potential risks through:

- Symptom checks
- Exposure history reviews
- Evaluation of factors increasing susceptibility to LTBI or TB Disease

OUR TUBERCULOSIS (TB) INFECTION CONTROL PROGRAM

We use a multi-tiered approach to ensure a safe environment:

Administrative Controls	Environmental Controls	Personal Respiratory Protection Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual risk assessments and screenings for at-risk team members.• Policies to manage patients with suspected or confirmed TB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Airborne Infection Isolation Rooms (AIIR) with exhaust ventilation and HEPA filtration.• Airflow systems to prevent cross-contamination.• Use of ultraviolet germicidal irradiation where applicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual respirator fit testing for team members entering AIIRs.• Education on respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette for patients.• Access to Augusta Health's Respiratory Protection Program resources via PULSE.

TREATMENT FOR TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

If TB infection or disease is suspected:

1. Team members are referred to the Virginia Health Department or an infectious disease provider for specialized evaluation.
2. Treatment plans are tailored based on whether it's LTBI or active TB.

Augusta Health ensures seamless coordination with public health agencies to protect both individual and community health.

STAY INFORMED, STAY PROTECTED

Your commitment to understanding and following TB protocols helps us maintain a safe and thriving workplace. For more information, visit the Employee Health section on PULSE or contact Occupational and Employee Health and Wellness.





Compliance

OUR COMMITMENT TO INTEGRITY AND EXCELLENCE

At Augusta Health, delivering top-tier care to our patients and community goes hand-in-hand with adhering to the highest ethical and legal standards. Compliance isn't just a policy—it's part of who we are. By following the rules, we protect patient rights, avoid costly mistakes, and uphold our reputation as a trusted healthcare provider.

DEPARTMENT-SPECIFIC COMPLIANCE REGULATIONS

Each department at Augusta Health has regulations it must follow. For example:

- Nutrition Services follows state health department guidelines.
- Radiology abides by Nuclear Regulatory Commission standards.
- Environmental Services adheres to Virginia Department of Environmental Quality policies.

Pro Tip: Stay up-to-date with your department's regulations and complete required compliance training.

Documentation: The Backbone of Compliance

THE POWER OF ACCURATE DOCUMENTATION

Quality documentation is key to staying compliant. Make sure all records are:

- Accurate, detailed, and complete.
- Signed, dated, and timed.
- Free of errors and corrected properly if needed.

Use the Neil Davis Book of Abbreviations for clarity and avoid unapproved abbreviations.

YOUR ROLE IN COMPLIANCE

Success in our Compliance Program starts with you! Each of us plays a crucial role in ensuring that we meet both external requirements and uphold the high standards that define Augusta Health. Your active engagement with compliance expectations is essential to maintaining a culture of integrity and excellence.

WHAT YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR

We all share the responsibility to maintain a culture of transparency and ethical behavior. That means reporting any concerns you might have about illegal or unethical actions. If you spot something off, it's important to speak up, whether to your supervisor or directly to the Compliance and Privacy Office.

Reportable Issues

Here are the types of concerns that need to be reported:

Patient Information & Care	Billing & Coding	Ethics & Legal Compliance	Licensing & Compliance
Failure to secure patient information or safeguard confidentiality	Inaccurate or inappropriate coding – Ensure the right codes are used	Conflict of Interest – Transparency is key when making decisions	Failure to maintain required licensure – Keep certifications and licenses up-to-date
HIPAA/Patient Privacy Violations – Keeping patient data safe is a top priority!	Billing for services not rendered – Avoid fraudulent charges	Physician arrangements that may violate the Stark Law or Anti-Kickback Statute	
Inappropriate or unethical billing practices	Excluded party violations or sanctions – Make sure we're compliant with exclusion lists	EMTALA violations – Ensuring fair and equal access to emergency services	
Incorrect claims submissions – Be mindful of billing accuracy		Discrimination or retaliation in the workplace	
Altered or falsified documentation		Drug diversion – If you see it, report it	
Quality of care or safety concerns – Our patient's well-being comes first		Falsification of documents	

How to Report a Concern

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out. Here's how you can take action:

Talk to Your Supervisor

- Always start by having a conversation with your leader. Open communication is the first step.

Contact the Compliance Team

Scott Jones, Chief Compliance Officer

✉ SJones1@AugustaHealth.com or ComplianceHotline@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 245-7455

Use the anonymous compliance hotlines:

☎ 1 (888) 750.3230

🌐 <https://www.augustahealth.com/compliance/>



HIPAA and PHI

PROTECTING PATIENT PRIVACY: YOUR ROLE IN HIPAA & PHI SECURITY

At Augusta Health, we take patient privacy seriously. Every patient has the right to confidentiality, and it's our responsibility to protect their health information. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a federal law that ensures the privacy and security of health information. As healthcare professionals, it's not just a best practice—it's a legal obligation. We must be familiar with both federal and state regulations about using and sharing patient data, and we follow strict guidelines to safeguard Protected Health Information (PHI).

WHAT IS PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)?

Understanding Protected Health Information (PHI) is essential for all of us here at Augusta Health. PHI refers to any information that can identify a patient and is tied to their health. This includes not only medical details but also personal identifiers. Let's break it down.

Key Identifiers of PHI:

PHI includes anything that can directly or indirectly identify a patient. These identifiers can be found in various forms of communication, whether digital, verbal, or written. Here's a list of examples:

- ✓ Names (including initials)
- ✓ Dates (excluding the year)
- ✓ Phone numbers
- ✓ Geographic data (anything smaller than a state)
- ✓ FAX numbers
- ✓ Certificate or license numbers
- ✓ Vehicle identifiers (including license plates)
- ✓ Web URLs
- ✓ Device identifiers & serial numbers
- ✓ IP addresses
- ✓ Social Security Numbers
- ✓ Email addresses
- ✓ Medical record numbers
- ✓ Account numbers
- ✓ Health plan beneficiary numbers
- ✓ Full-face photos & comparable images
- ✓ Biometric identifiers (like retinal scans, fingerprints)
- ✓ Any unique identifying code or number

IDENTIFIER + HEALTH INFORMATION = PHI

In short, PHI is any information that combines identifying data with health-related details. It's not just your typical health records—it's any personal detail that could be used to trace back to a patient. Protecting this information is crucial for maintaining patient privacy and meeting compliance requirements.

Ask Yourself:

Could this information be used to identify, contact, or locate a patient?

If the answer is yes, then it's probably protected, and we need to handle it with care.

WHAT IS HIPAA?

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a federal law designed to protect confidential health information. It sets national standards to ensure PHI stays secure and private. As a team member, you play a critical role in upholding HIPAA standards and safeguarding patient trust.

WHY DOES HIPAA MATTER?

HIPAA was established to:

- Fight healthcare fraud and abuse
- Safeguard patients' privacy and confidentiality
- Protect electronic health information (ePHI) from unauthorized access

YOUR ROLE IN PROTECTING PHI

Every Augusta Health team member must follow HIPAA policies and procedures—no exceptions. Violations, such as improperly accessing or sharing PHI, will lead to disciplinary actions, including possible termination.

Reminder: Accessing, using, or assisting others to access PHI without proper authorization is a serious offense. Always prioritize patient privacy.

UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest arises when an team members personal interests could potentially influence their professional judgment or decision-making. This may occur when an employee has control or influence over a decision and could directly or indirectly benefit themselves or their family.

What is conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest happens when:

- A team members personal interest creates bias or compromises their ability to act in the best interest of the organization.
- A family member's connection to a decision creates a perceived or actual personal gain.

Examples include:

- Purchasing: Buying goods or services from a company owned by the employee or their family.
- Information: Sharing patient or hospital information for personal benefit. (Note: This also violates HIPAA Privacy rules.)

Avoiding the Appearance of a Conflict of Interest

Even the perception of a conflict of interest can:

- Harm the organization's credibility.
- Threaten the organization's not-for-profit status.
- Lead to public or internal embarrassment.

YOUR ROLE IN MANAGING CONFLICTS

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a federal law designed to protect confidential health information. It sets national standards to ensure PHI stays secure and private. As a team member, you play a critical role in upholding HIPAA standards and safeguarding patient trust.

- Acknowledge the issue: Inform your supervisor, manager, or compliance officer if you suspect a conflict exists and request to be recused.
- Report conflicts: Alert Human Resources or the Compliance Team to any potential or real conflict of interest.
- Remain objective: Act with independence and fairness when dealing with clients, vendors, and stakeholders.
- Ask for guidance: When in doubt, err on the side of caution and seek advice.

REPORTING & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Team members with decision-making authority bear a higher level of responsibility.
- Familiarize yourself with the Conflict of Interest Policy and educate your teams on its importance.
- Proactively address potential conflicts to uphold organizational integrity.

By maintaining transparency and adhering to these guidelines, we can foster trust, uphold ethical standards, and protect the organization's mission.

PHI: NEED TO KNOW & MINIMUM NECESSARY USE

- Access: Only access PHI if it is required for your job. Personal curiosity is not valid justification.
- Minimum Use: Use or disclose only the smallest amount of PHI necessary to perform your role.
- Questions: If unsure, consult your manager or the Compliance Team. Refer to the "Minimum Necessary Use and Disclosure of PHI" policy via Policy Manager.

ACCESSING YOUR OWN PHI VS. OBTAINING A RELEASE OF INFORMATION

- Personal Records: Use proper channels and job aids to obtain your own PHI, adhering to Augusta Health's guidelines.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PHI

- Strict Prohibition: Never post about patients on social media. PHI is protected for 50 years post-death, and breaches include any identifiable information, even unintentionally shared sentiments.

COMMON WAYS PHI IS MISUSED & HOW TO PROTECT IT

Examples of Misuse:

- Wrong patient discharge info: Verify patient identity and documents.
- Lost printed info: Securely transport and handle all PHI.
- Emailing PHI outside Augusta Health: Only send PHI within Augusta Health systems.
- Leaving PHI in patient rooms: Always secure patient information.
- Unlocked computer screens: Lock your screen when unattended.
- Social media comments: Keep professional and personal life separate.
- Looking up unrelated patient info: Do not access records without appropriate permissions.
- Wrong patient record entries: Double-check patient charts.
- Voicemails: Leave minimal details; ask for a return call.
- Misdirected faxes/emails: Double-check recipient details.

Summary

Protecting patient confidentiality is essential. Augusta Health team members must handle PHI responsibly to uphold trust and compliance standards. For concerns or clarifications, consult your supervisor or the Compliance Team.

ACCESSING YOUR OWN PHI

As a team member of Augusta Health, you have the right to access your own health information. However, accessing PHI of family members, friends, or others is prohibited unless they've given explicit permission. If you need to obtain your family's medical records, please contact Health Information Management.

STAY ALERT: REPORTING VIOLATIONS

If you suspect a breach of privacy or confidentiality, report it immediately. Augusta Health takes any violation seriously and is committed to ensuring that all PHI is handled with the utmost care. Always be proactive in protecting patient information and upholding our standards.

Compliance Contacts

✉ ComplianceHotline@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 245-7455

Anonymous Compliance Hotlines:

☎ 1 (888) 750.3230

🌐 <https://www.augustahealth.com/compliance/>



HIPAA and PHI | Frequently Asked Questions

At Augusta Health, patient privacy and confidentiality are our top priorities. It's critical that every team member understands their responsibility to safeguard Protected Health Information (PHI). If you ever have questions about HIPAA guidelines, review this FAQ for clarity.

1 | WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF HIPAA?

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) is designed to:

- Prevent fraud and abuse in healthcare.
- Ensure patient privacy, giving patients control over their personal health information.
- Protect the security of electronic health data (ePHI) and its integrity.

2 | WHO MUST COMPLY WITH HIPAA?

Everyone at Augusta Health is expected to follow HIPAA policies and procedures. This includes everyone—from clinical staff to administrative team members. If you violate HIPAA policies, disciplinary actions will follow, ranging from counseling to termination, depending on the severity.

Keep in mind: If you access, attempt to access, or share PHI improperly (whether intentionally or accidentally), it can lead to serious consequences. This includes accessing a family member's records or sharing medical information with unauthorized individuals. Always respect confidentiality—it's vital to our patients and the organization.

3 | WHAT IS THE "LIST OF EXCLUDED INDIVIDUALS"?

If a team member deliberately misuses PHI or violates electronic medical records (EMR) protocols at Augusta Health:

- They will not be eligible for rehire at Augusta Health or affiliated organizations.
- They will be prohibited from accessing Augusta Health's EMR systems when employed by other healthcare entities.
- Any external organization requesting access to Augusta Health's EMR must submit thorough documentation for review.

4 | WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE?

Noncompliance with HIPAA isn't taken lightly at Augusta Health. Violating privacy regulations could lead to immediate action, including escalated disciplinary steps, up to termination.

- Review the HIPAA Violation Guidelines Matrix below for more details on possible actions.
- Disciplinary decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Factors considered include intent, access level, previous violations, and other relevant details.

HIPAA Violation Guidelines Matrix

Here's a breakdown of potential violations and corrective actions.

Level	Examples	Corrective Actions
Level 1 Minor Violations	<p>These violations involve minor breaches, like leaving PHI unattended or not securing devices properly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Failing to log off devices with PHI visible.• Leaving PHI in public spaces (lobbies, elevators).• Discussing PHI in unsecured areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mandatory HIPAA education and review of the proper process.• Coaching and corrective action as determined by leadership.
Level 2 Moderate Violations	<p>These involve more serious breaches, including unauthorized access or improper sharing of PHI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sending PHI to the wrong recipient.• Accessing PHI out of curiosity (family, friends, celebrities).• Sharing ID/password with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coaching, education, and potential termination for repeated offenses.• Notify the Privacy Officer immediately.
Level 3 Severe Violations	<p>These are highly significant breaches, like posting PHI online or accessing it without a legitimate need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing PHI on social media.• Accessing or allowing access to PHI without a valid reason.• Using PHI for personal gain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final counseling or termination depending on the circumstances.• Mitigating factors like training history may influence final decisions.
Level 4 Critical Violations	<p>These violations involve deliberate misuse of PHI for personal gain or tampering with patient data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selling or sharing PHI for personal profit.• Destroying or modifying patient information without authorization.• Failing to report violations by others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immediate termination, no mitigation.• Violation will be reported to appropriate licensing boards and third-party agencies.

Why It Matters?

Protecting patient information is more than just policy—it's about trust. Our patients rely on us to safeguard their sensitive data, and every Augusta Health team member plays a critical role in maintaining that trust. If you have any doubts or questions, don't hesitate to reach out to our Compliance team for guidance.

Remember: If you ever suspect a violation, report it immediately to the Privacy Officer.

Risks and Consequences of PHI Theft

Protecting Patients Starts with Protecting Their Information

Your role in safeguarding Protected Health Information (PHI) makes a difference. Explore the key reasons why it's critical to keep PHI secure:



USE

Hackers don't just target social security numbers or credit cards—they use PHI for far more damaging crimes. Stolen PHI is used to:

- Obtain drugs illegally
- Commit insurance fraud
- Receive unauthorized medical care

In 2016, 1 in 3 patient medical records were compromised nationwide.



VALUE

Patient records have a higher value than you might think. On the black market:

- PHI can sell for \$60–\$70 per patient, compared to just a few dollars for credit card details.

As the FBI reports, the stakes are high—and so is the demand.



COST

The financial impact of identity theft in healthcare is staggering:

- \$30 billion is lost annually in the healthcare industry.
- Affected patients spend \$13,500 on average resolving identity theft issues.

Protecting PHI isn't just a policy—it's a priority.

CYBERSECURITY AT AUGUSTA HEALTH

Let's learn how to protect both Augusta Health and our patients' sensitive health information, making sure you're always part of the team's cybersecurity defense.

Protect Our Network: Stay Informed, Stay Secure

To access Augusta Health's secure network, you need to familiarize yourself with our [Acceptable Use Policy](#). You can easily find this document on Policy Manager, available through the Pulse homepage links.

Tip: Everyone has access to view our IT policies. Take a moment to read through them. If you ever have questions, don't hesitate to reach out to our IT Help Desk x5555.

Your User ID: Guard It Like a Key

Your user credentials are unique to you and should never be shared. Whether it's your username, password, or badge, it's all on you to ensure no one else is using your login. Any unauthorized access is a serious breach of policy.

When logging into Meditech, check the "last login" time to ensure that it was you—and not someone else—accessing your account. Always be vigilant and only access patient health information (PHI) that's necessary for your job role.

Safeguard Your Passwords: More Than Just a Word

Your password is your first line of defense—make it strong!

Here's how to create secure passwords:

- Use 12+ characters with a mix of uppercase, lowercase, numbers, and symbols.
- Consider a passphrase (a random combination of words) like "train3\$beachB@ll" rather than generic words.
- Never reuse passwords across different sites. Use a password manager to keep track of your logins.
- Avoid saving passwords on paper or in browsers. They are vulnerable to hacking.

Lastly, always activate multi-factor authentication (MFA) for extra security.

Workstation Security: Lock It Up, Don't Leave It Unattended

Your workstation includes any computer, laptop, tablet, or other device used for work. Before leaving your desk, lock your screen to prevent unauthorized access. Simple, but crucial.

The Threat of Tailgating

Tailgating occurs when someone follows you into secure areas, bypassing security. Whether they're after equipment, sensitive info, or trying to access servers, always be aware of who's around you. Don't hold the door open for anyone—always verify that they have authorized access. If you see something suspicious, report it to security immediately.

Portable Devices: Protect Them, Protect Us

PHI should never be stored on portable devices like laptops, USB drives, or smartphones. Instead, use your “Z” drive(home folder), which is encrypted and backed up twice daily.

Encryption is required for all portable devices—report any loss or theft to IT Security ASAP. Never connect to public Wi-Fi—it’s an easy way for hackers to steal data.

Data Protection: Secure, Store, and Back It Up

To safeguard your work:

- Always store data on your Z drive.
- Do not store PHI on your computer’s hard drive unless absolutely necessary.
- If you must transfer PHI, only use encrypted storage and get IT Security approval.

Remember, hard drives fail, and if you store data on them, it may not be recoverable.

Remote Access: Extra Security, Extra Care

When accessing Augusta Health remotely, be sure to enable two-factor authentication (2FA). If you ever get a 2FA prompt you didn’t initiate, don’t approve it—call Help Desk right away at x5555.

Use Citrix (preferred) or VPN for secure remote access—both require 2FA. Always get written approval from your department director before gaining access to these services.

Recycling Devices: Dispose of Them Securely

Before recycling any device or media containing PHI, it must be destroyed securely. This includes hard drives, USB drives, CDs, and DVDs. IT department will ensure that these are properly wiped using a DOD Three-pass Wipe.

Always reach out to Help Desk if you need assistance with device destruction or reassignments.

Internet Use: Stay Smart, Stay Safe

While you’re allowed limited personal internet use on breaks, please note that some sites are blocked for security reasons. If you need access to a site for work purposes, submit a Help Desk ticket.

Remember, all internet and email activity is logged for security purposes.

Report Security Incidents: Act Fast, Stay Safe

If you suspect a security breach or think your email or workstation has been compromised, report it immediately. Reach out to your manager and the MIS Help Desk. Always stay informed and read through the Acceptable Use Policy to ensure you’re following all necessary protocols.

Email Security: Double Check Before You Send

When handling PHI via email, remember to:

- Add “secure” to the subject line and use the “Encrypt and Send” button.
- Always double-check the recipient’s email address.
- Never forward Augusta Health emails to personal accounts.

Also, be on the lookout for phishing attempts. Don’t click on suspicious links, especially from external sources. Use the Phish Alert Button in Outlook and Webmail to report anything you find suspicious.





Commitment to a Tobacco-Free Environment

At Augusta Health, we're passionate about fostering a culture of health and wellness—not just for our patients, but for our team members, volunteers, and visitors. As part of this mission, our entire campus is a 100% tobacco-free zone. This includes all forms of tobacco products such as cigarettes, e-cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and similar products. Our policy applies across all main campus areas, offsite locations, and outdoor spaces.

By creating a tobacco-free environment, we're taking a proactive step towards reducing health risks, supporting clean air, and promoting overall well-being.

EMPOWERING TEAM MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS WITH SUPPORT

We understand that choosing a tobacco-free lifestyle is a journey, and we're here to support you every step of the way. Augusta Health's Employee Health Department offers a variety of tools to help team members and volunteers succeed, including:

- Nicotine Replacement Options: Access to effective solutions that can ease the transition to a tobacco-free life.
- Smoking Cessation Programs: Expert-led resources and strategies designed to help you quit and stay tobacco-free for good.

RESOURCES FOR OUR VISITORS

We care deeply about the health of everyone who visits our facilities. If you or a loved one need support during your visit, we offer the following:

- Nicotine Replacement Therapy: Available for purchase at our convenient Outpatient Pharmacy.
- Inpatient Cessation Resources: For those admitted to our care, we provide tailored resources and guidance to encourage tobacco-free living.

Together, We Thrive

Augusta Health is proud to lead by example, offering a supportive environment that aligns with our mission to inspire health and healing in every interaction. By working together, we're making a lasting impact on our community's well-being.

Need More Help?

For questions about our tobacco-free policy or to explore available resources, please reach out to the Employee Health team or visit the Outpatient Pharmacy. Let's take this important step toward a healthier future—together.



Disability Awareness

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SENSITIVITY AT AUGUSTA HEALTH

At Augusta Health, our mission is to provide compassionate, patient-centered care to everyone we serve. A cornerstone of this commitment is recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of our patients, families, and team members. By fostering cultural sensitivity, we ensure that our healthcare environment is inclusive, understanding, and effective for all.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Delivering culturally competent care means understanding and respecting each patient's unique cultural values, beliefs, and needs. It involves:

- Patient Interactions: Ensuring assessments, teaching, and discharge planning align with cultural preferences and communication styles.
- Organizational Practices: Developing attitudes, skills, and policies that support meaningful connections with patients and their families.

KEY AREAS OF CULTURAL RESPECT AT AUGUSTA HEALTH:

- Language: Communicating effectively with patients who speak different languages.
- Age: Understanding generational differences in healthcare expectations and needs.
- Religion and Spirituality: Respecting beliefs that may influence medical decisions or practices.
- Abilities and Resources: Meeting patients where they are with the tools they need to succeed.
- Sensory or Physical Impairments: Providing accommodations for hearing, visual, or mobility challenges.
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: Fostering an environment that embraces individuality and equity.



MULTICULTURAL HEALTHCARE TIPS FOR TEAM MEMBERS

Creating an inclusive and welcoming space starts with small, intentional actions:

1 | Be Mindful of Communication

- Avoid slang, jargon, or shouting if someone doesn't understand.
- Be aware of and utilize translation services and tolls to support understanding.

2 | Respect Personal Boundaries

- Observe cultural preferences for physical contact and personal space, especially with patients of the opposite gender.

3 | Ask Questions Thoughtfully

- Replace "Do you understand?" with open-ended questions like "Can you tell me how you'll follow these instructions?"

4 | Adapt to Different Perceptions of Time

- Frame discussions around daily routines, such as meals or natural events, to resonate with varying time concepts.

5 | Use Preferred Names and Pronouns

- At first meeting, introduce yourself, then ask how you can refer to them with respect.
- On future meetings, ensure you and other team members are following their wishes by using their preferred name and pronouns, if provided.

DISABILITY AWARENESS: ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS

At Augusta Health, we are deeply committed to accessibility and inclusivity for all individuals, as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Our goal is to remove barriers to care and promote dignity, respect, and equitable access for every patient.

Who Is Protected Under ADA?

- Individuals with physical or mental impairments that significantly impact major life activities (e.g., breathing, walking, or concentrating).
- Those with a history of such impairments.
- People perceived as having impairments, regardless of actual diagnosis.



CREATING AN INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

Accessible care goes beyond treating disabilities—it's about addressing the whole person. Many individuals with disabilities miss preventive care due to systemic barriers like inaccessible diagnostic tools or health programs.

How Augusta Health is Bridging the Gaps:

- Physical Accessibility: Removing obstacles like inaccessible doors, forms, or stairways to ensure seamless care.
- Preventive Health Promotion: Closing gaps in care by making diagnostic testing and wellness programs available to everyone.
- Team Training: Empowering our staff with education and tools to support patients of all abilities.

ACCESSIBILITY AT AUGUSTA HEALTH

We are committed to removing obstacles through:

Communication Support

- Sign language interpreters.
- Large-print materials, text-to-speech options, and simplified forms.
- Extra time for clear explanations of procedures and care plans.

Physical Accessibility

- Wheelchair-accessible entrances, counters, and exam rooms.
- Pathways designed for safe navigation.

Accessible Medical Equipment

- Adjustable exam tables, appropriate scales, and transfer lifts.

Inclusive Programs & Procedures

- Flexible scheduling to meet unique needs.
- Quiet spaces and additional assistance with forms.
- Interpreter services for non-English speakers and those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Empowering Patients with Disabilities

At Augusta Health, we combat stereotypes and empower patients with disabilities to actively participate in their care. We're committed to providing the tools, respect, and access they need to make informed decisions and thrive in all aspects of their healthcare journey.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO CARE

To ensure equitable access, we must eliminate physical, communication, and programmatic barriers that might hinder people with disabilities from receiving care.

Ways we can accommodate:

- Flexible Scheduling: Allow for adjustments to meet specific needs.
- Quiet Spaces: Provide calm environments or assistance with paperwork.
- Extra Time: Offer additional time for instructions or care explanations.
- Accessible Materials: Ensure materials are available in large print, electronic formats, or through Text-to-Speech Programs / Interpreters: Provide sign language or other communication services as needed.
- Sensitivity Training: Equip staff with tools and knowledge to interact compassionately and effectively.

Accessible Facilities:

- Adjustable exam tables and roll-on scales.
- Accessible waiting areas, restrooms, and diagnostic equipment.
- Stable, slip-resistant travel routes within facilities.

AWARENESS AND ETIQUETTE

Disability etiquette fosters respect, minimizes discomfort, and creates a welcoming space for all. Let’s break it down:

Choose Words Thoughtfully	Practice Patience and Consideration	Engage Directly
<p>At Augusta Health, we embrace person-first language to promote dignity and inclusivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say: “A person with a disability” instead of “a disabled person.”• Say: “A person who uses a wheelchair” rather than “wheelchair-bound.”• <u>Note</u>: The Deaf community prefers identity-first language, such as “a Deaf person,” and does not use “hearing impaired.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be kind and respectful—without being patronizing.• Take your time to ensure clear communication and understanding.	<p>Make eye contact and speak directly to the individual, not their interpreter or companion.</p>
<p><u>Always ask before assisting</u>: Respect autonomy by asking how you can help.</p>		<p><u>For service animals</u>: Avoid asking about the person’s disability. Instead, inquire about the services the animal provides.</p>

People First, Always

Individuals with disabilities are, first and foremost, people—valued, capable, and deserving of dignity. Let’s appreciate their strengths and contributions while removing barriers to their success.

COMMUNICATIONS ACCESS: ENSURING CLARITY FOR EVERY PATIENT

At Augusta Health, we are committed to delivering care with compassion, respect, and clarity. Effective communication is a fundamental right of our patients, and we are here to ensure that every individual can access information in a way they understand.

Your Responsibility: Understanding Patient Preferences

It's our duty to ask patients about their preferred method of communication and make every reasonable effort to meet their needs. This includes accommodating patients who are:

- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Non-English speaking

Options for Effective Communication

Here's how you can support our patients with effective communication:

1 | In-Person Interpretation

For face-to-face interactions, certified interpreters provide clear and professional communication.

2 | Over-the-Phone Interpretation

Quick and accessible for real-time language support.

3 | Video Remote Interpretation (VRI)

- iPads with VRI access are located in the Nursing Supervisor's Office.
- The VRI app is also available on My Rounding iPads for unit use.

4 | Written Communication

Patients may prefer to write on paper as a way to communicate. If this is the case:

- Document the request and any communications in the patient's medical record.

Respecting Boundaries: The Role of Family and Companions

While family members or companions may sometimes act as interpreters, there are important guidelines:

- You cannot ask a family member or companion to interpret for patients who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speak a foreign language.
- If a patient specifically requests a family member or companion to interpret, you must:
 - Offer a certified interpreter first (at no cost to the patient).
 - Document the offer and the patient's choice in their medical record.

Children and other patients should never serve as interpreters due to the sensitivity and accuracy required in healthcare communication.



Diversity at Augusta Health

VALUING EVERY VOICE, EMBRACING EVERY DIFFERENCE

Diversity is more than just recognizing differences; it's about creating a culture where differences empower us and bring out the best in our team and patient care. At Augusta Health, diversity includes the many dimensions that make us unique—from our backgrounds and identities to our perspectives and ideas.

Why Diversity Matters

At Augusta Health, we believe that a diverse, inclusive environment enhances collaboration, boosts creativity, and drives better patient outcomes. We all benefit from a workplace where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued.

What Diversity Looks Like

Diversity includes a wide range of traits and experiences that shape who we are:

- Race, Gender, and Ethnicity
- Cultural Backgrounds and Sexual Orientations
- Physical Abilities and Speech Patterns
- Educational Backgrounds and Economic Statuses
- Religious Beliefs, Social, and Familial Statuses
- Occupation, Value Systems, and Countries of Origin

Cultivating Respect and Equality

In a diverse environment like ours, it's okay to encounter perspectives different from your own. What matters is fostering an atmosphere of respect and support, whether for our coworkers or our patients. Here's how you can make a difference:

- Choose Your Words Wisely: Speak thoughtfully, and if you unintentionally offend, be quick to apologize.
- Stay Attuned to Others: Show empathy and compassion in every interaction.
- Prioritize Listening: Listening can make others feel valued, improving their confidence and willingness to collaborate.
- See the Individual, Not the Stereotype: Avoid assumptions based on appearance or any one characteristic; each person has a unique story.

Together, we create a safe, inclusive workplace where every team member and patient can thrive. Thank you for your commitment to respecting and celebrating our differences at Augusta Health!



Safety and Emergency Preparedness

At Augusta Health, your safety and preparedness are priorities. Here's everything you need to know to stay ready and respond effectively in any emergency.

EMERGENCY CODES & OPERATIONS PLAN

Emergencies are unpredictable, and we're committed to ensuring every team member—from staff to students and contractors—knows exactly what to do. During your departmental orientation, you'll go over the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which is available on your unit and digitally on Pulse. Take this time to familiarize yourself with critical details:

- **Exit Routes:** Know the quickest, safest paths out.
- **Emergency Equipment:** Identify the location of fire extinguishers, defibrillators, and other safety tools.
- **Communication Systems:** Understand the emergency communication protocol in your area.

In an emergency, your role is to act calmly and follow pre-established procedures. Report to your supervisor for instructions unless you're off-duty—only report to duty if specifically called in. Remember to bring your badge and check in with your supervisor when you arrive.

EMERGENCY CODES

Understanding Our Code System

Inside the hospital or Medical Office Building (MOB), we use specific emergency code names to maintain clarity and confidentiality. Here's how it works:

- In the Hospital/MOB: Dial 2222, state the emergency code and the exact location. This will prompt the security dispatcher to broadcast the code via intercom, activating the necessary response teams.
- Elsewhere on Campus or at Off-Site Locations (like clinics): Call 911 directly for immediate emergency response.

All team members, regardless of location, must be familiar with all policies and the internal code names.

Plain Language Code	Emergency Event
Security Alert + Bomb Threat + Details	Bomb Threat
Security Alert + Armed Intruder + Details	Active Shooter or Hostage Situation
Attention Please + Evacuation + Details	Evacuation
Attention Please + Hazardous Material Incident + Details	Hazardous Spill
Attention Please + Surge Alert Mass Casualty Incident + Details	Mass Casualty Incident
Attention Please + Missing Patient + Details	Missing Adult

Plain Language Code	Emergency Event
Attention Please + Tornado Warning/Watch + Details	Tornado
Code Blue	A patient or visitor (pediatric or adult) needs a physician
Code Red	Fire or Fire Alarm Activation
Code Green	Crisis Intervention
Code Pink	Infant Abduction

PREPARING FOR A CODE RED ALERT: KNOW RACE AND PASS

At Augusta Health, safety is everyone’s responsibility. Here’s what you need to know to respond quickly and effectively in a fire emergency. Get familiar with the acronyms RACE and PASS to stay prepared.

WHEN A FIRE OR SUSPECTED FIRE OCCURS, REMEMBER: RACE

RESCUE

- Safely move patients, visitors, and team members from danger. Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes for your department.
- Evacuate patients horizontally to an unaffected area on the same floor—never use the elevators.
- Remain calm and give clear instructions. Once a room is empty, place a bed pillow or white linen item on the hallway floor outside to signal that the room is cleared.
- Close all patient room doors and keep hallways clear. Account for everyone in your area—patients, visitors, and team members.

ALARM

- Activate the nearest fire alarm.
- Dial 2222 (or 911 if you’re at an offsite location). Report the fire to ensure everyone is alerted.

CONTAIN

- Close doors to prevent smoke and fire from spreading.
- Remain in a safe area until you hear “all clear” announced over the PA system. Do not reopen doors unless you’ve checked that they’re cool to the touch.

EXTINGUISH OR EVACUATE

- If directed, use a fire extinguisher to put out the fire or help move patients to safety.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER BASICS: PASS

If it's safe and you're trained, you can try to put out small fires using the PASS method:

- Pull the pin.
- Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire.
- Squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent.
- Sweep the nozzle from side to side to cover the area effectively.



Stay vigilant and ready to act. Knowing these steps could make all the difference in an emergency.

TORNADO PREPAREDNESS: BE READY TO ACT

In Virginia, tornadoes often occur during heavy rainstorms. When severe weather is forecasted, stay informed through Everbridge Alerts, radio, TV, or weather apps. Understanding the difference between a Tornado Watch and a Tornado Warning can help you take the right actions.

Tornado Watch: Be Prepared!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>What it means</u>: Tornadoes are possible in and near the watch area. Conditions are favorable for tornado development, but none have been detected yet.• <u>What to do</u>: Review the Tornado Watch section of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP). Monitor weather updates and stay alert.
Tornado Warning: Take Action!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outpatient Pavilion• Family Practices• Urgent Cares• Fitness & Aquatics Center• Infectious Disease Office
Key Preparedness Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify your shelter location.• Familiarize yourself with the hospital's warning system.• Enable emergency alerts on your mobile device.

Stay Prepared Year-Round

Participate in the annual Statewide Tornado Drill to practice real-life emergency response. Regularly review the Tornado section of the ERP to ensure you're ready for any event.

Stay safe and informed!

EVERBRIDGE MASS COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The Everbridge Mass Communication System is a critical tool at Augusta Health designed to keep everyone informed about events that could impact life, safety, or operations. It ensures clear communication before, during, and after emergencies, empowering team members to take necessary actions to stay safe.

Key Features of Everbridge:

- Emergency Codes: Communicates details about emergent situations affecting the campus.
- Response Teams: Alerts specialty teams for emergency codes and patient care needs.

Receiving Everbridge Alerts:

- Automatic Enrollment: Team members are auto-enrolled upon hire through secure integration with employee profiles, adhering to safety laws and protecting personal information.
- Alert Types:
 1. Team-wide alerts for safety-related incidents or required actions.
 2. Specialized alerts for leadership and response teams based on their roles.

For assistance, contact EmergencyManagement@AugustaHealth.com.

Emergency Contacts: Call 2222 or 911?

When to use 2222: Dial 2222 from buildings connected to the main hospital for emergencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main Building: Patient Tower• Cancer Center• Heart and Vascular Center• Medical Office Building• Childcare Center• Business Office
When to call 911: For buildings not connected to the main hospital or off-campus locations, call 911, such as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outpatient Pavilion• Family Practices• Urgent Cares• Fitness & Aquatics Center• Infectious Disease Office



AUGUSTA HEALTH: COMMITMENT TO A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

At Augusta Health, safety is more than just a policy—it's a promise. We are dedicated to fostering a workplace free from violence, intimidation, and fear. By working together, we can protect our team, support each other, and ensure a culture of respect and trust.

What Is Workplace Violence?

Workplace violence includes any behavior or action that threatens, intimidates, or harms others, such as:

- **Physical Violence:** Any form of physical assault or aggression.
- **Harassment:** Verbal, nonverbal, or written actions that create a hostile environment.
- **Intimidation:** Actions meant to instill fear or exert control.
- **Disruptive Behavior:** Threatening language or gestures, outbursts, or other forms of aggression.

Who can commit workplace violence?

Anyone—from current or former team members to patients, visitors, or even unknown individuals.

Recognizing Warning Signs

Behavioral Indicators

- Frequent Absences or Tardiness: Potential signs of personal struggles or disengagement.
- Unusual or Extreme Behavior: Acting irrationally or out of character.
- Substance Abuse: Issues with drugs or alcohol that increase risk factors.
- Signs of Depression: Withdrawal, hopelessness, or lack of engagement.
- Poor Impulse Control: Sudden, unpredictable emotional reactions.
- Weapon Mentions or Possession: Only authorized personnel (e.g., law enforcement or security) may carry weapons on our premises.

Verbal Red Flags

Be alert to statements suggesting harm, revenge, or chaos:

- “I’ll get even.”
- “You’ll regret this.”
- “They won’t forget me after I’m gone.”

Physical Escalation Signs

- Intense staring or a vacant gaze.
- Flushed face or rapid breathing.
- Tense posture, pacing, or restlessness.
- Shouting, profanity, or overly aggressive communication.



Suspicious Behaviors to Watch For

- Nervousness, avoiding eye contact, or reluctance to engage.
- Attempting to access restricted areas.
- Spending unusual time in restrooms or isolated areas.
- Carrying suspicious or empty-looking bags or backpacks.
- Taking photos in sensitive areas or behaving out of place.

Focus on behaviors, not appearances.

When to Take Action

Report Concerns Immediately

If you observe suspicious or concerning behavior, speak up:

- Report through Meditech (system).
- Inform your manager, HR, or Security right away.

Emergency Situations

- On-site emergencies: Dial 2222 and activate a Code Green.
- Off-site emergencies: Dial 911 first, then notify Augusta Health Security.

Seek Support

If you witness or experience violence, ensure your own safety:

- Get medical care if necessary.
- Access counseling services for emotional support.

Prohibited Behaviors

Augusta Health has a zero-tolerance policy for:

- Threats, harassment, or bullying of any kind.
- Racist or discriminatory language or actions.
- Verbal or physical aggression.
- Weapon possession on premises without authorization.
- Property damage or vandalism.

Important Reminder:

If you have a protective or restraining order, inform Security and HR to coordinate your safety plan.



Our No-Retaliation Policy

YOU ARE PROTECTED.

Any team member reporting concerns in good faith is safeguarded against retaliation.

Our Shared Responsibility

Together, we can create a workplace that reflects Augusta Health's values: safety, respect, and integrity. By staying vigilant and proactive, we ensure a positive, supportive environment for everyone.

Let's keep Augusta Health a place where every team member feels valued, secure, and empowered.



WHAT TO DO IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER EMERGENCY

At Augusta Health, your safety is our top priority. While we hope you never encounter this scenario, being prepared can make all the difference. Here's a guide to help you respond if faced with an active shooter situation.

Imagine This:

It's Monday morning, and you're on your way to grab a coffee refill. Suddenly, you hear shouting followed by gunshots. You instinctively drop to the ground and take cover behind a nearby desk. Your heart races—it's the unthinkable: an active shooter is in the building. What's next?

Staying calm and prepared can save lives. Let's break it down step by step:

Recognizing Potential Risks Before They Escalate

Being vigilant about unusual behaviors can help identify and mitigate potential risks. Here are some warning signs to watch for:

Suspicious Behaviors

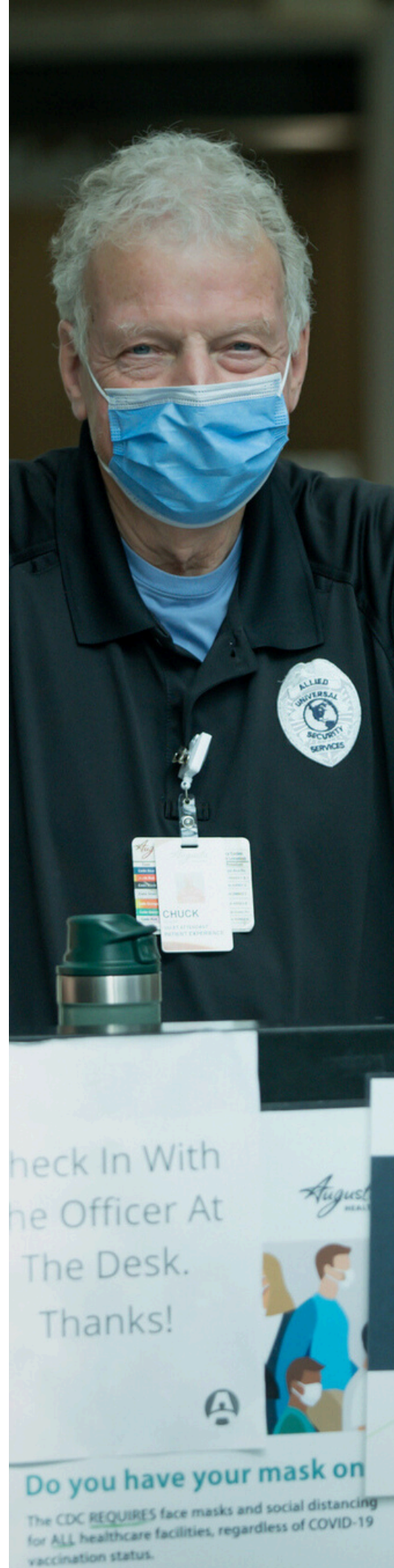
- Attempts to Gain Unusual Access: Trying to enter restricted or multiple areas without authorization.
- Carrying Odd Items: Large, seemingly empty bags or backpacks in inappropriate settings.

Escalating Emotional Responses

- Irritability: Easily angered or unable to tolerate others' presence.
- Impulsivity: Sudden mood swings or erratic behavior.
- Sensitivity to Provocation: Overreacting to minor perceived slights.
- Denial of Requests: Intolerant or hostile when requests are denied or asked to wait.

Verbal or Physical Warning Signs

- Negative Attitudes: Persistent antisocial or aggressive beliefs.
- Verbal Threats: Intentional intimidation through shouting or threats of harm.



Recognizing Potential Risks Before They Escalate



RUN

Escape if You Can

- Locate the 2 nearest exits and evacuate immediately if it's safe to do so.
- Help others escape, but don't delay your exit if they cannot follow.



HIDE

Stay Out of Sight

- If running isn't an option, find a secure hiding place.
- Lock and barricade doors using furniture or heavy objects.
- Silence your phone and remain as quiet as possible.



FIGHT

As a Last Resort

- If running isn't an option, find a secure hiding place.
- Lock and barricade doors using furniture or heavy objects.
- Silence your phone and remain as quiet as possible.

Call 911 as Soon as It's Safe

Once you've reached safety, dial 911 and provide details about the situation. Prioritize getting yourself and others to safety—physical intervention should always be the final option.

Stay Prepared: Watch the Active Shooter Readiness Video

In collaboration with Rush University Medical Center, Augusta Health offers an Active Shooter Readiness Video to guide you through how to respond during a violent event.

Take a few minutes to watch this essential resource—your preparation could save lives.

Remember: Awareness, preparation, and action can make all the difference in a critical situation. At Augusta Health, we're committed to creating a safe environment for everyone.

Stay vigilant, stay prepared, and always prioritize safety.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Many roles may involve handling, transporting, or disposing of hazardous substances. To keep everyone safe, it's essential to complete all required safety training and strictly follow established procedures. This isn't just our policy—it's the law and the safest way to work.

What Are Hazardous Materials?

Here are some common examples of hazardous materials and waste you might encounter:

Chemicals and Chemical Waste

- Acids, bases, and solvents
- Alcohols, creams, gels
- Pharmaceuticals, paints, oils, fuels
- Cleaning supplies

Hazardous Drugs

- Chemotherapy drugs (cytotoxic agents)
- Antivirals, hormones, and other medications

Radioactive Materials and Waste

- Found in radiology, nuclear medicine, x-ray areas, radioactive implants, and laser-use zones

Regulated Medical Waste

- Refer to the Waste Management section for details

Flammables, Corrosives, Poisons/Toxins, and Reactives

Your Role in Hazardous Material Safety

Safety at Augusta Health starts with you. Here's how you can stay informed and proactive:

Training is Key

- Never handle hazardous substances without completing the required safety training. It's your legal and ethical responsibility.

Know the Product

- Review product labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for each material you use. SDS are available 24/7 on Pulse.

Store & Use Safely

- Keep chemicals in designated areas with proper labeling.
- Ensure adequate ventilation—never mix chemicals unless instructed.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS & YOUR SAFETY

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to develop written hazard communication programs to protect team members who work with hazardous materials. Here's what you need to know:

Your Safety Precautions

- Know the chemicals in your area: Review Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and container labels.
- Follow safety protocols: Wear required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and adhere to safety procedures.
- Ask if unsure: Talk to your supervisor if you have questions. If you don't know—pause, learn, then proceed!

For more details on Environment of Care, Safety, or Biohazardous Waste Disposal, contact:

Nat Sellers

Director of Emergency Management and Safety

✉ nlsellers@augustahealth.com

☎ 540-332-5028

Jonathan Knotts

Emergency Management Coordinator

✉ jeknotts@augustahealth.com

☎ 540-245-7337 / 540-255-6710

CJ Carter

Director of Environmental Services

✉ cjcarter@augustahealth.com

☎ Phone: (540) 332-4761

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Proper healthcare waste management is essential to safeguard the health of our team, patients, and the surrounding community. Together, we can maintain the high standards of hygiene and safety that define Augusta Health.

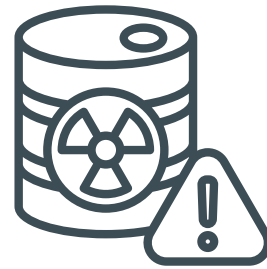
Why Waste Management Matters

- Protect Team Members & Patients: Prevents exposure to infections, toxins, and hazardous waste.
- Support Hygiene & Safety Standards: Promotes hospital-wide cleanliness and compliance.
- Safeguard the Community: Reduces risks for waste handlers and local populations.

Disposing of Regulated Medical Waste

Red Bag Guidelines

- Use two leak-proof red plastic bags for Regulated Medical Waste.
- Seal bags securely using the “goose-neck” method:
 1. Twist the open end.
 2. Seal with waterproof tape to prevent leaks.
- Label each bag with:
 1. Augusta Health’s name
 2. Room/area number
 3. Date
 4. Regulated Medical Waste symbol



What Qualifies as Regulated Medical Waste (RMW)?

- Biological Waste: Cultures, stocks of microorganisms, and biological specimens.
- Blood & Body Fluids: Any waste containing human blood, urine, or body fluids.
- Tissues & Anatomical Wastes: Includes biopsies, organs, and other tissue samples.
- Sharps: Needles, syringes, blades, scalpels, or broken glass. Place all sharps in designated sharps containers.
- Contaminated Materials: Items used in RMW cleanup or solid waste contaminated by RMW.
- Saturated Absorbent Materials: Bandages or gauze that would release blood/fluid when compressed.

Please Note for Glass & Suctions:

- Medical and broken glass should be placed in large, eight-gallon sharps containers.
- Suctions with blood/body fluids may go in red waste bags but must include Isolize.

Know Your Pickup Points: Consult your manager or preceptor for the location of Regulated Medical Waste collection areas in your unit or department.



HANDLING SOLID WASTE

Solid waste should be disposed of in clear trash bags and is accumulated from various areas, including operating rooms, labs, patient rooms, and emergency departments.

Examples of Solid Waste:

Uncontaminated Items:

- Empty medication vials and packaging.
- Uncontaminated surgical drapes, PPE, and procedure trays.

Non-Regulated Personal Items:

- Diapers, sanitary napkins, adult incontinence products (unless contaminated).

Miscellaneous Solid Waste:

- Band-aids, cotton balls, and gauze with minimal absorbed fluids.
- Glass and various medical tubing (IV, suction, feeding, etc.).
- Empty urine bags, colostomy/ileostomy bags, and bedpans.

EMERGENCY REPORTING & SPILL PROCEDURES

Report Exposure Immediately:

- Notify your supervisor, charge nurse, or instructor within two hours of any incident.

Know Emergency Procedures:

Familiarize yourself with protocols for:

- Cleaning and disinfecting rooms, floors, and equipment.
- Handling and transporting lab samples.
- Storing and laundering contaminated materials.
- Cleaning up spills.

RADIATION AND MRI SAFETY

At Augusta Health, your safety is our priority. We strive to provide exceptional care while ensuring our team members have the knowledge and tools to stay protected in environments with radiation or MRI equipment. Let's break it down:

Radiation Safety: Staying ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Achievable)

Radiation plays a vital role in modern healthcare, from diagnosing illnesses to life-saving treatments. While it's essential, exposure to radiation comes with risks. Our goal is to minimize exposure while maximizing its benefits to patient care.

Recognizing Radiation Hazards

Keep an eye out for the international radiation symbol—a three-bladed design in magenta, purple, or black on a yellow background. This symbol indicates areas or materials where radiation is present. You might spot it on:

- Doors to certain departments, rooms, or hallways
- Waste containers and package labels
- Equipment like fume hoods, sinks, or refrigerators



If you see this symbol and aren't sure what to do, contact the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) right away. Remember, all radioactive materials must be clearly labeled for your awareness and protection.

Where Radiation May Be Present

Some key areas at Augusta Health where radiation is part of daily operations include:

- Radiology Department
- Cancer Center
- Nuclear Medicine (Main Hospital and H&V Center)
- Interventional Cardiology Lab
- Anywhere portable X-rays are taken

Always follow posted safety protocols in these spaces.





MRI SAFETY: MAGNETS ARE ALWAYS ON

Understanding MRI Technology

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is a game-changing technology, giving us detailed insights into internal organs using powerful magnets. While it enhances patient care, it requires strict safety measures to protect you, your team, and our patients.

Key MRI Safety Rules

1. Remember the magnet is ALWAYS on.
2. Screening is mandatory every time you enter Zone 4 (the MRI suite). Only MRI Technologists can clear you.
3. Remove all metallic objects (including jewelry, tools, and devices) before entering.
4. Use MRI-approved equipment only—non-approved items can be hazardous.

Metallic Implants & Patient Screening

Before entering Zone 4, team members and patients with metallic implants or devices (e.g., telemetry pads, temperature-sensing Foleys, pain/nicotine patches, or linens infused with silver or copper) must be thoroughly screened.

MRI Equipment You Should Know

- MRI Safe Fire Extinguishers: White and made of non-ferrous materials. Located in the MRI suite and hallway.
- Approved Patient Monitoring Equipment: Only MRI-certified tools are allowed inside the MRI suite.



PREVENTING BACK INJURIES AT AUGUSTA HEALTH: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR YOUR WELL-BEING

Back injuries are a leading cause of workplace discomfort and lost time. At Augusta Health, we’re committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for all team members. Let’s break down how you can protect your spine and maintain a healthy, injury-free work life.

UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS: WHY LIFTING CAN BE HAZARDOUS

The Big Three Risk Factors in Patient Handling:

Awkward Postures

- Tasks like bending, reaching, or leaning forward while moving or caring for patients can strain your back.

Force

- Lifting patients, who often weigh 100 pounds or more, puts significant pressure on your muscles.

Repetition

- Performing dozens of patient lifts or transfers each shift adds up, increasing your risk of injury over time.

Protect Your Spine: Best Practices for Everyday Movements

When Sitting	When Standing	When Lifting	When Storing Supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure your chair supports your spinal curves.• Adjust your chair so your knees and hips form a 90-degree angle.• Keep your wrists straight when using a desk or keyboard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear supportive shoes.• Distribute your weight evenly across both feet.• Flex your knees slightly and avoid locking them.• Use a footrest to alternate feet for balance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bend at the hips and knees, not the waist.• Keep the object close to your body and maintain good posture with your head up.• Lift with your legs, not your back.• Avoid twisting your body while lifting—pivot your feet instead.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Store heavier items at waist level to minimize strain.• Place lighter items on lower or higher shelves.• Use a step stool or ladder for out-of-reach items—never substitute with unsafe items like chairs or tables.

Advanced Tools: Safe Patient Handling Equipment

For our clinical team members, using the right equipment is essential. Make sure to stay up-to-date on safe patient handling training provided via HealthStream. These tools are designed to reduce physical strain and keep you and your patients safe.

Your Back Deserves Care

By following these simple yet effective steps, you can prevent injuries and alleviate back pain. Remember: investing in your health ensures you can provide exceptional care to our patients while protecting your own well-being.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AT AUGUSTA HEALTH: PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Each year, nearly 700 workplace fatalities and countless injuries are caused by slips, trips, and falls, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. At Augusta Health, we're committed to creating a safe and secure environment for everyone. Explore the sections below to understand common hazards and learn how to minimize risks.

Slips

What They Are: A loss of balance caused by too little friction or traction.

Common Causes:

- Wet surfaces or unexpected spills
- Rain, snow, or icy conditions
- Poorly maintained footwear with low traction
- Running, hurrying, or being distracted

How You Can Prevent Slips:

- Clean and Dry: Ensure floors are clean and dry at all times.
- Increase Floor Traction: Use abrasive coatings, non-skid strips, or rubber mats.
- Secure Rugs: Add skid-resistant backings to loose rugs.
- Wear the Right Shoes: Choose slip-resistant footwear with soft rubber or patterned soles.
- Highlight Hazards: Use visible safety signs around slippery areas, such as icy walkways or wet floors.

Trips

What They Are: Losing balance due to your foot hitting an object.

Common Causes:

- Cluttered or poorly lit workspaces
- Objects like furniture or equipment in walkways
- Uneven or damaged flooring
- Rushing, hurrying, or being inattentive

How You Can Prevent Trips:

- Declutter: Keep floors clear of obstacles and ensure pathways are wide and accessible.
- Fix Hazards: Repair uneven surfaces or use safety signs to alert others.
- Light It Right: Ensure proper lighting in all work areas—neither too dim nor too bright.

Falls

What They Are: Losing balance and falling to the ground or from a higher level.

Common Causes:

- Slips and trips
- Improper use of stairs or ladders
- Neglecting housekeeping when working at heights, such as on scaffolding or rooftops
- Failing to notice holes or openings in floors

How You Can Prevent Falls:

- Keep Staircases Safe: Clean, well-lit stairs with handrails make a big difference.
- Use Ladders Correctly: Choose the appropriate ladder height, lock the spreader, and climb straight without leaning.
- Be Attentive: Stay alert near floor openings or when navigating unfamiliar spaces.

BEST PRACTICES TO KEEP YOU SAFE

Most falls happen at foot level, where people trip or slip on walking surfaces. When conditions are hazardous—like icy sidewalks or wet floors—try these simple techniques:

1 | Walk Like a Duck

- Keep your feet flat and slightly apart.
- Point your toes outward and take short, slow steps.
- Keep your center of balance under you.
- Use wide turns at corners to stay steady.

2 | Use Your Arms for Balance

- Keep arms at your sides, ready to support yourself if needed.

3 | Hold Rails and Stay Centered

- Use both hands when climbing ladders or stairs.
- Climb straight up without leaning to one side.

AUGUSTA HEALTH'S COMMITMENT TO YOUR SAFETY

Your well-being is our top priority. Together, we can create a safer workplace by being proactive and following these safety tips. Let's take steps—literally and figuratively—to ensure a secure and supportive environment for everyone.



Back Safety and Body Mechanics

Preventing Injury:

- Use large muscles for lifting and holding; smaller muscles for repetitive movements.
- Keep joints neutral and work close to your body.
- Wear comfortable shoes and use a footrest for prolonged standing.
- Safe Lifting Tips:
 1. Test the load and seek help if needed.
 2. Use your legs, not your back, for lifting.
 3. Avoid twisting at the waist; pivot with your feet.
 4. Push or pull rather than lift when possible.
 5. Use available tools to assist with heavy lifting.
- Safe Patient Handling:
 1. Use lift devices for unsteady patients or lateral transfers.
 2. Follow Augusta Health's guidelines to ensure proper assessment and equipment usage.

Reporting Work Injuries, Illnesses, or Exposures

Immediate Steps:

1. Administer first aid.
2. Report needle sticks and body fluid exposures within 2 hours.
3. Report all other injuries within 8 hours.

Contact Information for Reporting:

Employee Health

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 AM–4:30 PM

☎ 540.332.4725

After Hours | Contact the Nursing Supervisor:

☎ Office: 540.932.4100 | Mobile: 540.448.0162

Documentation: Complete an Occurrence Report on Pulse under the Employee Health section.

SAFETY GUIDELINE OVERVIEW FOR TEAM MEMBERS

Medical Equipment Safety

- Training Requirement: Operate medical equipment only after proper training.
- Reporting Malfunctions:
 1. Report issues to Maintenance or Clinical Engineering.
 2. Attach a “DO NOT USE” tag to defective equipment.
- Oxygen Cylinder Safety: Always secure portable oxygen cylinders upright in racks or carts.

Utilities & Electrical Safety

- Emergency Outlets: Only plug essential equipment into red emergency power receptacles.
- Electrical Safety Checks:
 1. Report cracked or broken outlets and switches.
 2. Notify maintenance of flickering lights or hot switches.
 3. Inspect power cords for cuts or damage.
- Approved Equipment Only:
 1. Use hospital-supplied extension cords, outlet strips, and space heaters.
 2. Inspect patient-owned medical equipment before use.
- Safe Practices: Turn off equipment via the power switch before unplugging.

Needle Sticks, Sharps, and Body Fluid Exposure Safety

Immediate Steps for Exposure:



1 | If exposed by a sharp:

- “Milk” the site (encourage bleeding).
- Wash thoroughly with soap and water.



2 | If splashed by body fluid:

- Rinse eyes for 10 minutes at an eye wash station or sink.



3 | Report the incident to your supervisor and Employee Health immediately:

- Post-exposure evaluation, medical attention, and follow-up will be provided at no cost.
- All needle sticks and sharps injuries must be reported within 2 hours.



4 | Reducing Risk:

- Wear proper PPE (e.g., gloves, masks, eye protection).
- Dispose of used needles promptly in designated sharps containers.
- Adhere to hospital policies and standard precautions.
- Keep vaccinations up to date (e.g., free hepatitis B vaccine through Employee Health).

Contact Information for Safety Concerns

Nat Sellers

Director of Emergency Management and Safety

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CJ Carter

Director of Environmental Services

✉ cjcarter@augustahealth.com

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EVENT REPORTING: KEEPING OUR TEAM MEMBERS AND PATIENTS SAFE

What is Event Reporting?

At Augusta Health, Event Reporting is a critical tool to track, analyze, and learn from events—whether they are actual incidents or near-misses. These reports help us stay proactive in improving patient safety and quality of care.

Types of events to report include:

1 | Policy or Procedure Deviations

Example: Medication errors, patient identification mix-ups.

2 | Physical Impairments

Example: Temporary or permanent changes during hospitalization, such as unexpected decompensation.

3 | Unexpected Adverse Events

Example: Patient falls, leaving against medical advice (AMA), equipment failures.

4 | Workplace Violence Incidents (NEW)

Category Update: Use the new “Workplace Violence” category for all non-patient incidents affecting team members.

Clarifications: Do not use “Employee” or “Behavior” categories for these events.

Routing Improvements: Events are automatically routed to the appropriate team members based on classification (e.g., verbal vs. physical abuse).

Why Report?

Event reporting isn’t just about documenting an issue—it’s about driving change and upholding our commitment to excellence. Here’s why it matters:

- **Rapid Response:** Timely reporting allows for quick investigations and corrective actions, prioritizing patient and team member safety.
- **Accuracy Over Time:** Reporting immediately ensures all details are captured while fresh, minimizing memory lapses or inaccuracies.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Patterns from reports highlight areas for process enhancements and future prevention.

Enhanced Reporting Accuracy (NEW)

- **Additional Specificity:** Expanded options in multiple categories improve how we classify and trend events, reducing reliance on vague labels like “Other.”

How to Handle Event Reports

Confidentiality is Key

- **Restricted Access:** Keep copies and discussions within appropriate circles.
- **Not in Medical Records:** Event reports should never appear in patient files or be shared with patients or their families.
- **Internal Use Only:** Avoid referencing event reports in medical documentation.

Leadership Review Enhancements (NEW)

- **Severity Selection:** Leaders now select severity levels for each report based on HPI methodology.
- **New Options:** Include "Not a Safety Event" and "Under Review (TBD)."

Who Should Report?

Everyone has a role in maintaining safety at Augusta Health. If you witness, cause, or discover an event or near-miss:

- **Act Immediately:** Complete the report during your shift.
- **Team Accountability:** By reporting, you contribute to a safer environment for everyone.

How to Document an Event

Follow these best practices to ensure clear, actionable reports:

- **Be Objective:** Stick to the facts—what happened, when, and where.
- **Avoid Assumptions or Blame:** Refrain from speculating or using judgmental language.
- **Focus on the Incident:** This isn't the place for team frustrations—keep the details focused on the event.

Resources for Guidance

Follow these best practices to ensure clear, actionable reports:

- **Policy Manager:** Access the Event Reporting End User Guide and Event Reporting Leader Guide under QRM > Processes-Job Aids-Algorithms.
- **Meditech Globe:** Explore resources for navigating the event reporting system.

Our Shared Responsibility

Everyone at Augusta Health plays a role in maintaining a safe environment. Identifying and reporting safety concerns is an essential part of our shared responsibility to protect our patients. By staying diligent and reporting issues promptly, we help ensure the best possible outcomes.

Contact Information for Reporting:

For questions or assistance, reach out to:

Linda Ratcliff Moran, BA, COHP

Director of Occupational and Employee Health and Wellness


 lmoran@augustahealth.com

 (540) 245-7067

Kelli Carter

Safety Management Coordinator, QRM

 kdcarter@augustahealth.com

 (540) 332-4846

Angela Kuremsky

Occupational Health Nurse Lead

 akuremsky@augustahealth.com

 (540) 245-7520

Additional Policies and Forms

Explore resources on:



Employee Injury Reporting



Exposure to Blood or Infectious Material



Occurrence Protocol



Exposure Control Plan

Visit Policy Manager and Pulse for complete details.

Returning to Work After Illness

Your health is important to us! To ensure a safe and smooth return to work, here's what you need to know when coming back after an illness.

Clearance Requirements:

If you've been out for three or more consecutive days, you'll need to be cleared by Employee Health before returning to work.

Employee Health Operating Hours:

- Monday–Friday, 8 AM–4:30 PM.

Health Guidelines for Returning:

To keep everyone safe, you must meet the following health requirements before coming back:

- Fever-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication
- No vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours

How to File a Claim:

Need to file a claim for your absence? Use Matrix Absence Reporting to get it done.

- Website: matrixabsence.com
- Phone: (877) 202-0055

Have Questions or Need Assistance?

Contact Employee Health Services for any questions or help:

Employee Health

✉ EmployeeHealthServices@AugustaHealth.com

☎ (540) 332-4725

EXPRESS EDUCATION GUIDE OVERVIEW

We Get It—That Was A Lot to Absorb!

To keep things simple and actionable, here's a breakdown of the key points from this guide. Whether you're a new hire or a seasoned team member, these takeaways will help you protect our patients, coworkers, and community while upholding Augusta Health's mission of excellence.

Infection Control: Keeping Everyone Safe

At Augusta Health, infection prevention is everyone's responsibility. Follow these guidelines to protect yourself, your patients, and the community.

- Handwashing Is Your Superpower: The single most effective way to stop the spread of infection. Wash your hands thoroughly and often. Clean hands = safer care!
- PPE Is Non-Negotiable: Standard precautions require you to use personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves, masks, gowns, and eyewear when exposed to blood, body fluids, or contaminated items.
- Know Your PPE: Before entering isolation areas, ensure you're trained on proper PPE application and removal. Volunteers should not enter isolation rooms. Need help? Reach out to your supervisor or the Infection Prevention Team for guidance.
- What If You're Exposed?:
 1. Perform immediate first aid.
 2. Notify your supervisor or charge nurse.
 3. Complete the Occurrence Report on Pulse under "Employee Health."
 4. Call Employee Health Services at ext. 4725 within 1-2 hours to receive care.

Your actions directly impact our commitment to high-quality, safe care for all.

Safety First: Always Be Prepared

Safety is a team effort. Stay informed and proactive to ensure a secure environment:

- Emergency Preparedness:
 1. Review the Augusta Health Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and your department's specific policies.
 2. Inside the hospital or MOB? Call 2222 with the code phrase and exact location.
 3. Off-campus or clinic locations? Call 911 immediately.
- Workplace Violence Prevention: Prevention starts with awareness. Report any suspicious behavior or incidents to Security, your manager, or a shift supervisor right away.
- Equipment Training: Never use equipment unless you've been trained to operate it safely.
- Protect Your Back: Proper posture and body mechanics are key. Healthcare workers face a high risk of back strain, so use lifting aids and ask for help when needed.
- Report Incidents Promptly: If you experience an injury or exposure, notify your supervisor or charge nurse immediately (within two hours) to ensure proper follow-up.

Our Obligations: Living Our Values Daily

As part of the Augusta Health family, your role is critical in upholding our standards, values, and commitment to compliance:

- Accreditation Matters: We're accredited by DNV, a CMS-approved organization, ensuring we meet the highest standards of care and compliance.
- Compliance Is Everyone's Job: Be vigilant in preventing and detecting violations of laws, regulations, and patient rights. It's a shared responsibility to maintain trust and integrity.
- Protect Patient Privacy: Every patient has the right to confidentiality. Safeguard their information and always follow HIPAA guidelines.
- Know Patient Rights: Review patient rights and responsibilities on the Augusta Health Website under the "Patients and Visitors" tab.
- Support Accessibility: Remove barriers to ensure patients with disabilities can access the care and services they need.
- Foster Inclusivity: Create an environment that values diverse beliefs, ideas, and backgrounds. Respect and acceptance build stronger connections with both coworkers and patients.

Remember, Excellence Is In The Details

When we each do our part—following infection control protocols, prioritizing safety, and upholding compliance—we embody Augusta Health's mission to provide compassionate, high-quality care. Let's work together to make every day a reflection of our commitment to excellence.

Need support or have questions? Don't hesitate to reach out to your supervisor, the Infection Prevention Team, or Employee Health Services. We're all in this together!



Congratulations!

You have now completed the Express Education Module. You've taken a significant first step in your onboarding journey with us here at Augusta Health, where excellence, compassion, and innovation thrive. We're thrilled to have you on the team!

What's Next?

Your onboarding doesn't stop here—there's more to explore and accomplish as you transition into your new role. Let's keep the momentum going!

1 HealthStream Training

- Log in to HealthStream and complete all mandatory training assignments.
- Need help? Your supervisor is your go-to resource for guidance.

2 New Team Member Orientation

- Don't miss your chance to dive deeper into Augusta Health's culture, values, and mission at an upcoming New Team Member Orientation session.
- Pro tip: Check Pulse or reach out to your supervisor to confirm the date and time!

3 Departmental Orientation

- Get hands-on and learn the ins and outs of your role with the help of your educators, supervisor, and teammates.
- Collaborate, ask questions, and build connections with your department's amazing team!

4 Policy Review in Policy Manager

- Log in to Policy Manager, our internal source of truth, and familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures covered in this module.
- Staying informed is key to making confident, compliant decisions in your new role.

We're Here to Support You!

At Augusta Health, we believe in empowering our team members to grow, thrive, and deliver exceptional care to our community. If you have questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to reach out to your supervisor or any member of your team.

Once again, welcome to the Augusta Health family—where your journey of excellence begins. We're so excited to have you here!

Good luck, and remember: You've got this!



Glossary of Terms

KEY LAWS AND HEALTHCARE STANDARDS

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA):

A pivotal law ensuring no one faces discrimination due to a disability. It applies to five key areas: employment, state and local government, public spaces, transportation, and communication.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act of 1986 (EMTALA):

Guarantees public access to emergency care, regardless of a patient's ability to pay.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA):

Sets the national standard for protecting patient health information. HIPAA safeguards your privacy, ensuring sensitive medical data remains secure across electronic, written, and verbal formats.

AUGUSTA HEALTH-SPECIFIC

Augusta Care Partners (ACP):

Our Accountable Care Organization (ACO), fostering collaboration among healthcare professionals to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care.

Augusta Medical Group (AMG):

Established in 2008, this hospital-owned network includes primary care, specialty care, and urgent care clinics, central to Augusta Health's tradition of innovation in healthcare delivery.

Pulse:

Your go-to intranet for all Augusta Health updates, announcements, and resources. Check Pulse regularly to stay informed!

HealthStream:

Augusta Health's online learning platform. Log in often to track your training requirements, access educational materials, and schedule courses.

Investing in Us Website:

Your hub for professional growth and personal development at Augusta Health. The website features:

- Educational resources to support your career journey.
- A schedule of upcoming learning opportunities.
- Comprehensive details about Augusta Health benefits.
- Recognition programs to celebrate your achievements.
- And much more!



Glossary of Terms (continued)

LIFE SUPPORT CERTIFICATIONS

Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS):

A specialized course for managing cardiopulmonary emergencies, geared toward those leading or participating in emergency response teams.

Basic Life Support (BLS):

For healthcare professionals needing essential CPR and cardiovascular life support skills in a variety of settings.

Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS):

Designed for healthcare providers who manage pediatric emergencies in high-stakes environments like emergency rooms or critical care units.

ROLES IN HEALTHCARE AT AUGUSTA HEALTH

Advanced Practice Providers (APPs):

Our team of nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) bring expertise and compassion to every patient interaction. They're integral to personalized care plans.

Certified Medical Assistants (CMAs):

CMAs keep our clinics running smoothly by providing vital support to physicians, ensuring efficiency and excellent care.

Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs):

Working under the guidance of RNs and LPNs, CNAs help patients with daily activities, offering comfort and essential care.

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs):

LPNs provide hands-on care and assist RNs and physicians in hospitals, nursing homes, and long-term care facilities.

Registered Nurses (RNs):

As patient care champions, RNs work alongside doctors to craft treatment plans and educate families about health and wellness.



Glossary of Terms (continued)

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES AND TOOLS

Team Member Occurrence Forms:

If you experience a workplace injury or exposure, report it ASAP—blood/body fluid incidents within 1–2 hours, and all other injuries within 8 hours. Forms are in Policy Manager.

Emergency Operations Plan (EOP):

Our playbook for responding to situations that disrupt daily operations. It ensures safety while adapting to emergencies efficiently.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS):

Your safety companion for handling hazardous materials. SDS provides clear instructions for the safe use, storage, and disposal of chemicals.

FEDERAL AGENCIES AND THEIR ROLES

Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

The leading national public health institute, guiding the U.S. on health and safety initiatives.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS):

Oversees Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, and health insurance marketplaces, ensuring programs operate efficiently for public benefit.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA):

Focused on workplace safety, OSHA establishes and enforces regulations to protect employees across industries.