

OREGON STATE HOSPITAL

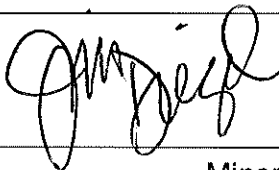
POLICY

SECTION 7: Patient Rights **POLICY: 7.001**

SUBJECT: Mail and Packages for Patients

POINT PERSON: Director of Facilities and Support Operations

APPROVED: James Diegel
Interim Superintendent



DATE: 8/13/2025

SELECT ONE: ☒ New policy ☐ Minor/technical revision of existing policy
☐ Reaffirmation of existing policy ☐ Major revision of existing policy

I. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

- A. The Oregon State Hospital (OSH) establishes the following policy and procedures to screen mail for contraband and other safety or security risks.
- B. This policy establishes mail processing for patient mail at Oregon State Hospital (OSH).
- C. This policy applies to all staff who handle patient packages, mail, journalist mail, official mail and legal mail.

II. POLICY

- A. All OSH patients have the right to communicate freely by sending and receiving sealed mail, including mailed packages.
- B. Patients may not use the OSH interoffice mail system. All patient-to-patient mail communications must be processed as regular mail.
- C. Direct Care Staff must provide reasonable amounts of plain paper, writing material, and plain envelopes.
- D. Staff must follow all corresponding procedures for handling patient mail, requests, exceptions, and disposal.
- E. Except as required for treatment, safety, security reasons, or when mail is addressed to OSH; OSH staff having read or examined a patient's journalist mail, legal mail, or mail shall protect the patient's confidentiality by refraining from discussions regarding it.

- F. Security staff must provide written notice of a package or mail held from the patient. Unit staff must promptly inform the patient verbally and provide the security notice of:
- G. Any limitation to the right to send or receive mail, including mail held from the patient. Any limitation of a patient's right to send or receive mail must be documented in the patient's Treatment Care Plan and progress note per OSH policy 7.015, "Patient Rights Restrictions."
- H. OSH security staff may delay the delivery of packages or items if they reasonably believe that items contain contraband. Security will notify the patient and/or unit unless OSH has good faith that the notification may increase risk to the safety or security of OSH or impact an ongoing criminal investigation or proceeding.
- I. OSH accepts all mail and packages at the Mailroom and Warehouse. Signing for mail does not acknowledge whether an individual is a patient at OSH, nor that the mail or package is authorized.
- J. All journalist mail, legal mail, or mail may be sent or delivered by hand or via any parcel delivery service.
- K. Any authorized item mailed to a patient becomes the property of the patient and must be handled in accordance with procedures in OAR 309-102, OSH Policy 8.037, "Patient Property and Valuables," and 7.017 "Native Artifacts."
- L. The exchange of electronic mail is an earned privilege and is related to the patient's recent behaviors, current level of care and other privileges determined by a patient's Interdisciplinary Team (IDT). For patient access to internet and electronic devices, see OSH policy 6.030 "Electronic Device and Internet Access."
- M. OSH and its address may not be used as a business address for any activity or business other than that of OSH.
- N. OSH must explain this policy, related procedures, and the requirements set out in OAR 309-102 to each staff at hire and annually.
- O. OSH follows all applicable regulations, including federal and state statutes and rules; Oregon Department of Administrative Services, Shared Services, and Oregon Health Authority policies; and relevant accreditation standards. Such regulations supersede the provisions of this policy unless this policy is more restrictive.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Authorized Package" means a package received by OSH for a patient that OSH has provided prior authorization for under OAR 309-102.

- B. "Contraband" means any controlled substance, drugs not prescribed to the patient, drugs not prescribed or authorized by OSH, drug paraphernalia, weapons, unauthorized currency, or prohibited items.
- C. "Journalist Mail" means any mail sent by a patient to a news media organization or sent to a patient from a news media organization except for periodicals (see below).
- D. "Legal Mail" means any mail received from or addressed to an attorney, court, disability rights organizations or the protection and advocacy system identified in ORS 192.517, or court official which is clearly labeled as "legal mail" on the addressee side of the envelope, set apart from the return and mailing addresses for ease of recognition, where the sender or receiver is verifiable as a licensed attorney, court, or court official. This includes medical records.
- E. "Mail" means any paper documents sent by or received by a patient in a standard sized, legal sized, or special handling envelope with a weight of 16 ounces or less, and thickness of no more than ½ inch. Mail does not include any item other than paper. Legal, Official and journalist mail are not subject to the envelope and weight restrictions.
 - 1. "Certified mail" means a service that provides the sender with a mailing receipt and is sent as first-class or priority mail, per USPS definitions.
 - 2. "Flat-size mail" means a flexible rectangular mail piece that exceeds one of the dimensions for letter-size mail (11-1/2 inches long, 6-1/8 inches high, 1/4 inch thick), but that does not exceed the maximum dimension for the mail processing category (15 inches long, 12 inches high, 3/4 inch thick). Flat-size mail may be unwrapped, sleeved, wrapped, or enveloped.
 - 3. "Letter-size mail" means a mail processing category of mail pieces, including cards, that do not exceed any of the dimensions for letter-size mail (that is, 11-1/2 inches long, 6-1/8 inches high, 1/4 inch thick).
 - 4. "Parcel" means mail that does not meet the mail processing category of letter-size mail or flat-size mail. It is usually enclosed in a mailing container such as a box. For the purposes of this policy, a parcel also means a "package".
 - 5. "Periodicals" means a class of mail consisting of magazines, newspapers, or other publications formed of printed sheets that are issued at least four times a year at regular, specified intervals (frequency) from a known office of publication. Periodicals usually must have a legitimate list of subscribers and requesters.
 - 6. "Registered mail" means secure mail offered by the USPS. The sender receives a receipt at the time of mailing, and a delivery

record is maintained by the USPS. This service also provides optional indemnity in case of loss or damage.

7. "Standard mail" means a class of mail that weighs less than 16 ounces. It comprises the subclasses of Regular Standard Mail, Nonprofit Standard Mail, Carrier Route Standard Mail, and Nonprofit Carrier Route Standard Mail. These subclasses include circulars, printed matter, pamphlets, catalogs, newsletters, direct mail, and merchandise. Standard Mail may be sent at Carrier Route, automation, nonautomation, and Not Flat-Machinable prices.
- F. "Official Mail" means any mail sent by a patient or sent to a patient from an elected official, appointed official, employee or agent of a federal, state, or tribal government, where the designation of the government official, employee or agent is clearly labeled on the addressee side of the envelope, set apart from the return and mailing addresses for ease of recognition, and whose status is verifiable.
- G. "Reasonable Cause" means an OSH staff member has knowledge or notice of facts or circumstances and the rational inferences drawn therefrom that would lead a reasonable and experienced OSH staff member to conclude.
- H. "Package" means any item sent by or received by a patient that does not meet the definition of mail, journalist mail, legal mail, or official mail
- I. "Prohibited item" means:
 1. Alcohol;
 2. Possession of drugs in the patient's room without authorization by OSH;
 3. Any item that reasonably could be used to escape or leave the hospital without authorization;
 4. Food stored in the patient room or in the patient's storage in the patient property room;
 5. Any item in the possession of a patient who is prohibited from possessing or using that item in their treatment care plan because it is considered detrimental to their treatment;
 6. Excess personal property;
 7. Any limited access item in the possession of a patient that exceeds the scope of the authorization or is not being supervised by OSH staff as required; or,
 8. Any item that could pose a safety or security risk for the hospital.
- J. "Scan" refers to passing an item through x-ray equipment.
- K. "Staff" means employees, volunteers, trainees, interns, contractors, vendors, and other state employees assigned to work at OSH.
- L. "Unauthorized Package" any package that is not an authorized package.
- M. "Unit staff" in this policy refers to Nursing Services staff assigned to a unit.

N. "Unrestricted Items" means any item that is not contraband that has been authorized by OSH for the patient's use or possession.

IV. PROCEDURES

Procedures A Provisions of Searching Mail and Processing Mail

Procedures B Mail Requests from Patients

Procedures C

Procedures D

V. RELATED OSH FORMS

References in 12 pt. font – does not need to be in APA format

This section is for internal OSH forms that are updated and managed by OSH departments and/or committees but may be necessary supplemental documentation for following the policy and procedure, such as a medical record form.

Form Title [if applicable: Form Number, Form Type]

For example: Informed Consent and Management Agreement for Long-Term Opioid Use [76050, Medical Record Form]

VI. RELATED OSH POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

6.011 Treatment Care Planning

7.011 Faiths Beliefs and Practices

7.015 Patient Right Restrictions

7.017 Native Artifacts and Property

8.019 Staff Response to Alleged Criminal Acts

8.037 Patient Property and Valuables

8.044 Contraband and Prohibited Items

9.002 Training for Staff

VII. REFERENCES

Oregon Administrative Rule §§ 309-102-0100 — 309-102-0150.

Oregon Revised Statute § 426.385