

CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Home visit safety is a shared responsibility between employer and employee.
2. Risks for visiting staff can occur in any location or community; however, risks may be increased depending upon the demographics of the areas served.
3. Agencies should provide training in personal safety and maintain mechanisms for reporting and recording incidents.
4. Emergency contact numbers and procedures need to be available to all staff.
5. All issues of staff safety should be documented and corrective action should be taken to minimize future risk.

EQUIPMENT:

Cell phone
Flash light
Whistle
Other personal safety equipment, as appropriate

PROCEDURE:

1. Identify safety risk factors during the intake process. Alert visiting staff to known safety risks prior to making a home visit:
 - a. Contain all pets prior to making a home visit
2. Assure that cell phone is in working order:
 - a. Program emergency telephone numbers into cell phone
3. Arrange for visit escorts, as needed. Call US Security Associates (800) 228-3840.
4. Conduct visits during daylight hours, if possible.
5. Prior to entering a home, assess the area for risks.
6. Lock your car doors.
7. Avoid leaving items in view when leaving your car.
8. Dress in a protective manner:
 - a. Wear shoes/clothes that allow for ease of movement
 - b. Avoid wearing expensive jewelry
 - c. Do not carry a purse
 - d. Carry a minimal amount of money
9. Use elevators instead of stairs.
10. Upon entering a home, assess the layout of the home.
11. Keep the door in sight.
12. Recognize possible escape routes.
13. Leave home immediately if personal safety is in doubt.
14. Contact supervisor after leaving home.
15. For visits made after dark:
 - a. Assess the area in daylight, if possible
 - b. Call patient prior to the visit
 - c. Park as close to home as possible
 - d. Arrange for visit escorts as needed
 - e. Follow procedure as above

AFTER CARE:

1. Document any potential safety risks.
2. Conference with supervisor.
3. Alert physician of safety risks as needed.

REFERENCE:

Gershon, R. et al. (n.d.). Home Health Care Patients and Safety Hazards in the Home. Retrieved July 4, 2012 from http://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/advances2/vol1/Advances-Gershon_88.pdf

Public Health, Seattle & King County. Health Care for the Homeless Network – Community Health Services (2007). *Promoting Personal Safety During Outreach, Shelter and Home Visits*. Seattle, WA.

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