



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Function:	Environment of Care	Policy Number:	THS 188 Combines SFH# 1010.00 and TMH # S 5.0- Cellular Phone Use
Subject:	Cellular Phones and Other Wireless Technologies	Distribution:	Thomas Health System-wide
Prepared By:	TH Director of Preparedness Planning, Safety and Security; TH Director of Plant Operations; TH Director of Information Technology TH Vice President - General Counsel;	Effective Date:	April 25, 2016
		Last Review, Revision Date:	May, 2018 March 2020
Approved By:	COO; CMIO	Approved By:	President/CEO

PURPOSE

The Thomas Health) recognizes that cellular phones and wireless devices have become a general means of communication within our culture. However, there may still be potential risks of interference with medical instruments and other equipment as well as risks of HIPAA violations. Therefore, this policy provides the following guidelines for usage of cell phones and other wireless devices by students, employees, volunteers, patients, and patient’s families in specific areas of the facility so that phone usage does not interfere with patient care or disturb family privacy. THS recognizes that the use of electronic devices within the hospital environment can pose a potential electromagnetic interference (EMI) risk to medical equipment. Cellular phones are recognized as a source of EMI. This policy is intended to provide directions to assist in controlling the hazards related to interference with electronic patient care equipment.

SCOPE & RESPONSIBILITY

This policy applies to all hospital departments including inpatient, outpatient, and outpatient provider based outpatient departments. It is the responsibility of all hospital staff, medical staff, volunteers, contracted service personnel, patients and visitors to adhere to this policy. Thomas Health issued phones, handheld electronic record devices, Security department phones or radios, Maintenance Department issued equipment and communication equipment issued during an emergency are exempt from this policy.

This policy applies to the use of hand held radios, cellular phones, wireless computers, IPODs, IPADs and other devices (referred to as “wireless technology” within this policy) that may cause

interference with medical equipment used in the hospital facility as well as the delivery of safe and effective patient care.

POLICY

1. Thomas Health will minimize this risk by limiting the use of cellular telephones in areas where patients are dependent on equipment which, if the equipment malfunctions, could cause or contribute to the serious illness, injury or death of the patient.
2. Due to the potential risk of interference by wireless communication involving electronic medical equipment, Thomas Health will minimize the risk associated with this phenomenon by restricted use of these devices in Frequency Sensitive Areas (FSA).
3. Frequency Sensitive Areas: (Thomas Health)
Usage of wireless communication should be limited as much as possible in the Thomas Health System designated Frequency Sensitive Areas (FSA):

ICU/PCU (excluding waiting areas)
Surgical Suites/Operating Room/Procedure Rooms
PACU
CVU/Cath Lab
ED (Treatment Areas only)
Addiction Healing Center at Saint Francis Hospital
Saint Francis First (Treatment Areas only)
Med Psych
Telemetry
NBN/NICU
Outpatient Behavioral Health Services
NAS-Baby Steps Unit

Wireless technology will be permitted for use by visitors in all other nonpatient care areas.

Response to reported electromagnetic interference (EMI)

In the event EMI is thought to be causing interference with medical equipment. Hospital nursing staff will address patient care issues and

- Ask that all cell phones/ wireless equipment be turned off
 - Contact Bio Med or Plant Operations to report problem
 - Complete an occurrence report
 - Communicate Bio Med/ Plant Operation findings of reported problem to employees and medical staff
4. Although there are certain potential risks associated with two-way radios, there are unacceptable risks in prohibiting the use of these devices by safety, maintenance and security personnel. Two-way radios play an important role in daily tasks as well as during emergencies. Staff utilizing this equipment in accordance with job duties, should limit the frequency of use and maintain awareness of the potential for interference in areas where medical equipment is in use. Staff should take precautions to keep the two-way radios away from sensitive equipment when and where appropriate.
 5. Wireless technology usage necessary to the orderly operations of the hospital (as determined by job description, administrative authority or scope of service) or necessary to patient safety; should be conducted in a manner that limits disruptions to other functions or work flow and provides for protection of privacy and confidentiality.

6. Thomas Health employees are permitted to use cell phones for personal use while on break and/or lunch. No employee is permitted to carry cell phones or wear blue tooth headsets while on duty unless required for the performance of the job duties and as approved by department manager. All staff is required to sign the Employee Cellular Phone and Other Wireless Technology Usage Agreement. The signed agreement will be placed in the department/unit based or individual staff files and kept at the department/unit level.

Restriction of Use:

1. No one shall use any wireless technology within one foot of patient wherein medical equipment and/or monitors are in use.
2. The Picture/ Photo/Video feature may not be used in any area of the hospital without express permission from THS Administration or Hospital Legal Counsel.

Employees whose job responsibilities include regular or occasional driving are required to comply with all state and local traffic statutes including the prohibitions and guidelines for cellular phone use when operating a motor vehicle.

Cellular phone etiquette – Cell phone calls during meetings are a distraction and interferes with productivity and is discourteous to others. A reasonable standard is to place phones on silent or vibrate mode during meetings and to excuse yourself to answer the phone outside the meeting room.

Cell phone conversation held outside of the meeting venue should be conducted in an appropriate manner and extreme care must be taken to ensure that the subject matter and the language used are appropriate and that the voice volume is well controlled. Hospital business may not be discussed.

Enforcement Procedures

This policy will be enforced by all Thomas Health staff, with the assistance of security. Within the FSA, when approaching someone in violation of this policy, staff will request compliance by stating “Please turn off your wireless equipment while in this area”. While it is unlikely, there is a possibility of interference with patient care equipment and we ask that you go to (suggest the closest suitable area). Refusal or noncompliance to this policy is to be reported to appropriate manager or designee and an Occurrence Report entered.

Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action. The Medical Executive Committees will have oversight of disciplinary actions against medical staff members.

Associated Form: Employee Cellular Phone and Other Wireless Technology Usage Agreement

Reviewed/Revised Date: 4/16, 5/18, 03/20



Employee Cellular Phone and Other Wireless Technology Usage Agreement

- Thomas Health employees are permitted to use a cell phone during worked hours to carry out a requirement of their job as determined by job description, administrative authority or scope of service.
- Cell phone usage necessary to the orderly operations of the hospital, or necessary to patient safety, should be conducted in a manner that limits disruptions to other functions or work flow and provides for protection of privacy and confidentiality.
- To ensure safe patient care and a productive work environment, employees must limit personal cell phone usage to break/lunch times. Unless required by job description, staff use of ear phone pieces, such as Bluetooth, is strictly prohibited while on duty.
- The Picture/Photo/Video feature may not be used in any area of the hospital without permission from Thomas HealthAdministration or Thomas Health legal counsel.
- Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action.

I have read and understand the bullet points above as they relate to Cellular Phone and Other Wireless Technology Usage during work time. I acknowledge it is my responsibility to adhere to established hospital and department policies at all times while on duty.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____