4. Systems
      5. Weapons Screening in Healthcare

STATEMENT:
Security systems are integral to the overall protection program. The Security Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) should guide Healthcare Facilities (HCFs) regarding weapons detection systems and processes as an additional layer of protection. Implementation of a weapons detection program should have a defined purpose and philosophy of use with consideration for the location, intent and operation of such activities.

DEFINITIONS for Glossary of Terms consideration.

Amnesty Box: a sealed container placed near a weapons detection area designed to allow people in possession of contraband or weapons to safely relinquish prior to screening.

Metal Detector: an electronic device for detecting the presence of certain forms of metal or metal objects. Equipment can include walk-through or handheld devices.

Weapon: Item(s) designed or used for the infliction of bodily harm or physical damage. Items may include firearms, knives, edged tools, explosive devices, etc.

Weapons Screening: Processes or technology used to detect concealed weapons or other dangerous items, which may include electronic, visual and physical search techniques. Equipment can include metal detection (walk through and/or handheld wands), X-ray devices and associated equipment and methodology.

INTENT:
a. Installation of a weapons detection system should be based upon a SVA led by a qualified healthcare security professional, with key facility stakeholders involved in the process.
b. Placement considerations of weapons screening should be based upon the overall risks identified in the SVA related to the area and persons being protected. Some areas for weapons screening may include:

1. Emergency Departments.
2. Facility Access Points.
3. Behavioral /Mental Health Units.
4. Forensic Patient Areas.
5. Security sensitive areas based upon risk and / or special patient populations.

    c.   Types of weapons screening processes:

       1. Metal detector - equipment that identifies whether a person or their personal belonging contains metal items which may be weapons.
       2. Weapons detection systems - A system which uses specially designed hardware and software to identify items, such as firearms, edged or, improvised weapons, or other prohibited items and their location on a person or in accompanied belongings.
       3. Hand wands - A handheld device used to scan a person's outer body to detect ferrous metal that may be concealed.
       4. X-ray machines - a device that scans personal belongings to identify potential weapons concealed within a bag or container.
       5. Physical Search: act of searching a person made by passing the hands over their clothing or visual inspection of belongings.

  d. Staffing
       1. The HCF should develop a staffing plan for the weapons detection process. Consideration should be given to:

          a. Appropriately equipped and trained personnel to monitor these areas and interact with individuals who may be in possession of a weapon.
          b. The number of personnel assigned to the weapons detection process should be based upon the volume of people being screened, the type of monitoring equipment, search processes, secondary inspections, storage of belongings, etc.
          c. The hours of operation.

  e. Signage
       1. Signage should be posted at building entrances to reflect the prohibition of weapons and that weapons detection systems are being utilized in the HCF, in accordance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.
          a. Consideration should be given to signage that provides information for those that may have medical devices or conditions that may be impacted by weapons detection screening, such as alternative screening processes, handheld wands, or visual inspection.
  f. Amnesty Boxes
       1. An HCF may consider the use of amnesty boxes. Placement of an amnesty box should be near weapons screening systems.

2. Clear signage should be in place indicating whether weapons will be returned or forfeited.
3. Amnesty boxes should be checked routinely for the presence of weapons and contraband. Any items should be handled and discarded in a safe and consistent manner which does not violate any known regulations, ordinances or statutes.
4. The HCF should have policies and procedures regarding security, storage, and clearing of the amnesty box. This may include liaising with local law enforcement.

g. Storage of Weapons
1. The HCF should supply lockable storage cabinets in the vicinity of weapons screening areas, for the storage of confiscated weapons.
2. Persons determined to have a weapon in their possession should be advised to secure the item(s) in their personal vehicle or otherwise have it removed from the HCF based upon policy and legal statutes.
3. For persons who cannot remove weapons from the facility due to incapacitation or lack of a vehicle, the item(s) should be secured by HCF security staff while the owner is receiving medical care.
4. Based upon local laws, the HCF should determine if law enforcement will be called to run a background check on the weapon prior to its return.
5. Items which are confiscated and are not eligible for return to the owner or a responsible family member (per HCF patient valuables and property policy) should be discarded in a safe manner with proper documentation of the item's disposal / destruction.

h. Weapons screening processes for a HCF should be administrative in nature. It is not the intent of this guideline to provide law enforcement with evidence to criminally prosecute or otherwise act based on items seized during such activities nor is it the intent of this guideline to prohibit the turning over of weapons to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The HCFs weapons detection protocols should address under what circumstances a law enforcement agency should be involved.

i. Weapons detection processes should not interfere, supersede or in any manner affect or interrupt any federal, state or local statute or regulation, particularly those which impact patient rights and the timely provision of medical care.

SEE ALSO:

Design Guideline new section being developed.

IAHSS Healthcare Security Industry Guideline 02.01, Security Staffing and Deployment

IAHSS Healthcare Security Industry Guideline 02.02, Security Officer Training

IAHSS Healthcare Security Industry Guideline 04.02, Electronic Security Systems

IAHSS Healthcare Security Industry Guideline 04.09, Testing of Physical and Electronic Security Systems

IAHSS Healthcare Security Industry Guideline 04.10, Security Signage

IAHSS Healthcare Security Industry Guideline 05.11 Patient Valuables and Property

IAHSS Healthcare Security Industry Guideline 05.03 Violent Patient and Patient Visitor Management

Approved: