

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Mental Health Security Officer

Class Code: 70343
Pay Grade: GF

A. Purpose:

Protects and maintains a secure psychiatric hospital environment by enforcing rules and regulations to provide for the safety of personnel, patients, visitors, and the facility.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

The Mental Health Security Officer typically works alone at a psychiatric hospital and provides safety and security to patients, personnel, and the facility by performing foot and car patrols and responding to codes to de-escalate crisis situations.

The Security Officer typically works alone on a shift and is responsible for issuing parking tickets and securing buildings and grounds by foot and car patrol.

The Senior Security Officer serves as a lead worker and assigns and checks work, trains personnel, establishes and adjusts work schedules, and has complete responsibility for all actions of shift personnel.

The Security Supervisor has full responsibility over all security activities of permanent staff.

The Patrol Officer requires law enforcement certification, is deputized by local governmental units, and has full arrest authority.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Provides security measures during involuntary and voluntary admissions to the psychiatric hospital to ensure the safety of personnel.
 - a. Ensures patients are restrained if they become abusive to personnel.
 - b. Attends committal hearings to provide security to patients and personnel.
2. Responds to emergency codes to assist and manage combative patients to ensure the safety of patients and personnel.
 - a. Responds to out of control (code green) pages to assist in de-escalating patients and preventing a physical confrontation.
 - b. Prevents patients from harming themselves or others by physically restraining them.
 - c. Assists in preventing violent outbursts by providing added security to the units before patients become combative.
 - d. Responds to medical codes (code blue) by escorting emergency personnel and vehicles to the unit or site.
3. Coordinates the search for unauthorized leaves from the facility to ensure the prompt apprehension of patients and the safety of the community.
 - a. Obtains information regarding the missing patient.
 - b. Provides information to local law enforcement to assist in the search.
 - c. Searches the campus and community for the patient.
 - d. Apprehends the patient and returns them to the facility.
4. Provides general security for the facility to ensure the safety and security of buildings, patients, and personnel.

- a. Escorts unauthorized visitors from campus.
 - b. Monitors visitors to ensure they do not assist a patient in escaping from the facility.
 - c. Ensures the safety of personnel that have been threatened by patients or their families, which includes monitoring visitors on the campus and escorting personnel to work site and vehicles.
5. Assists the Department of Corrections staff in various duties at the trusty unit to ensure the safety of personnel and patients.
- a. Assist in the event of an escape or unmanageable trusty.
 - b. Assists in conducting room searches and stopping and checking suspicious vehicles and individuals.
 - c. Removes unauthorized visitors from the trusty unit.
6. Patrols buildings and grounds by foot and vehicle to ensure personal and property safety.
- a. Checks buildings for unlocked doors and windows; vandalism; fire and other hazardous conditions; and proper operation of the heating plant.
 - b. Directs traffic and parking.
 - c. Maintains a log of shift activities and prepares incident reports.
 - d. Provides information and assistance to the public.
 - e. Removes snow and monitors trustees involved in the removal of snow.
 - f. Responds to maintenance calls to determine the nature of the problem and take the appropriate action.
 - i. Completes work orders.
 - ii. Notifies appropriate personnel to fix immediately if necessary.
 - g. Monitors weather radios during times of inclement weather to ensure the safety of personnel and patients.
7. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Typically does not supervise, but may provide work direction and training to direct care staff.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include crisis intervention; responding to psychiatric and medical problems; making sound decisions under stressful situations; maintaining composure when dealing with physically and verbally abusive and assaulting individuals; maintaining a high degree of visibility and constant monitoring of a large campus and grounds area; responding quickly and responsibly to potentially dangerous and life-threatening situations; resolving and calming patients and visitors that may be extremely agitated; and responding in and working in all types of weather conditions.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include when and how to intervene in emergency situations; what actions should be taken to maintain security and safety of personnel, patients, and visitors; whether to call local law enforcement to assist in a situation; interpreting and resetting alarms on equipment; determining proper enforcement procedures to implement in any security situation; making appropriate system adjustments to equipment; when to initiate evacuation and/or emergency measures; prioritizing calls to determine most appropriate action; and analyzing a situation to determine if maintenance or administrative personnel need to be contacted.

Decisions referred include personnel disciplinary actions; resolving extraordinary situations; final approval of policy changes; and hiring.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with patients during admissions, emergency code situations, and physical conflict; personnel to give assistance in providing patient safety, provide technical assistance regarding hospital rules and regulations; law enforcement upon receiving admissions and to assist in security matters; and the general public to provide information and assistance and give directions.

H. Working Conditions:

The incumbent works with adult and juvenile psychiatric and chemical dependency patients who are unpredictable, unmanageable, and verbally and physically abusive both to other patients and hospital employees. Physical assaults by patients are not unusual.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- de-escalation techniques;
- psychiatric patients and/or disorders;
- law enforcement and security principles and procedures.

Ability to:

- interpret and enforce facility rules and regulations;
- function decisively and with authority in crisis situations;
- deal effectively with hostile individuals;
- communicate information clearly and concisely to patients, personnel, and the general public;
- operate communication systems;
- walk and stand for extended periods of time;
- perform some building maintenance;
- recall and record information concisely and accurately;
- deal tactfully with coworkers, patients, and the general public.