



Field Employee Handbook & Orientation Guide

2016

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The policies and rules contained in this Handbook & Orientation Guide serve only as guidelines and are subject to interpretation, review and change by **DME-SS** at any time without notice.

DME-SS complies with federal and state regulations that regulate employment practices and protection of employees in the workplace, including, but not limited to, EEOC employment guidelines and OSHA safety regulations and guidelines for protecting employees against blood borne pathogens.

Statements in **DME-SS** Orientation Guide apply only to **DME-SS** field staff. Where statements in this Orientation Guide are in conflict with state or laws regulations, state regulations take precedence. **Mission of DME-SS.**

To be the premier Managed Service Provider Company for healthcare facilities in U.S. states. Providing the best Vendors according to the Clients requirements.

Vision of DME-SS-

To become a national company of choice for healthcare professional and customers by:

- Passionately provide jobs for healthcare professionals;
- Develop and provide a workforce of healthcare Vendors that provides superior healthcare service and patient care with passion, respect, compassion & dedication;
- Forge strong partnerships with those who share our values;
- Apply quality leadership and management principles to foster continued employee development;
- Hold integrity and honesty as our most important principles and perform at all times at the highest ethical standards;
- Achieve a competitive return for our investors;
- Strive for improvement day in and day out in everything we do;
- Use innovation and creativity to identify and solve problems;
- Always focus on the customer, external and internal, always giving our best.

We are proud to have you as a member of our team!

This orientation guide includes information that will be helpful to you as you work for **DME-SS**. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference. If this material does not answer all of your questions, please call **DME-SS office number 210-546-0970**.

INTRODUCTION

The State of Texas is an "at-will" employment state, which means, except as otherwise provided by law and absent any express contractual provisions to the contrary,

employers and employees are free to end the employment relationship at any time for any reason. This employee handbook does not alter that at-will relationship nor does it constitute a contract for employment between **DME-SS** and its employees. Employees of the Company are at all times employed at-will; in other words, either the employee or the Company may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without notice, and without any reason or cause. Your employment is for an indefinite period, and you cannot be guaranteed continued employment or any set amount of hours of work. Only the CEO has the authority to enter into any employment agreement with a prospective employee for any specified period, and as such, the agreement must be in writing.

DME-SS retains all managerial and administrative rights and prerogatives entrusted to it and conferred on employers inherently and by Texas and federal law. These include, but are not limited to, the right to exercise judgment in establishing and administering policies, practices and procedures, and to make changes in them without notice, and the right to take whatever action is necessary in its judgment to achieve **DME-SS** goals. **DME-SS** reserves the right to set standards of productivity and services to be rendered. Failure of **DME-SS** to exercise any such prerogative or function in a particular way shall not be considered a waiver of its right to exercise that prerogative or function in the future or to preclude it from exercising that prerogative or function in some other way.

The Company reserves the right to modify the provisions of this Guide at any time.

WELCOME

On behalf of your colleagues, I welcome you to **DME-SS** and wish you every success here.

We believe that each employee contributes directly to **DME-SS's** growth and success, and we hope you will take pride in being a member of our team.

This Orientation Guide was developed to describe some of the expectations of our employees and to outline the policies, programs, and benefits available to eligible employees. Employees should familiarize themselves with the contents of the Orientation Guide as soon as possible, for it will answer many questions about employment with **DME-SS** and what you can expect from us, as well as, what we expect from you.

The general rules, policies and procedures contained in this Orientation Guide may change from time to time, with the exception of the Company's "at-will employment" policy. The Company reserves the right to amend, modify, withdraw or implement policy at its own discretion and employees will generally be notified of such changes.

DME-SS proudly offers its customer's quality healthcare, dependable service, and 24 hour/7 day a week communication with a live person. The Company depends on the skill and energy each employee invests in providing this service. People like you play a major role in our continued success and we hope our relationship will be long and beneficial, both for you and the Company.

We hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding. Again, welcome!

Sylvia Flores
Vice President of Operations

DME-SS POLICIES

Equal Opportunity Statement

DME-SS is an equal opportunity employer. It is a fundamental policy of **DME-SS** not to discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, ethnic/national origin, age, veteran status, disability or any other basis prohibited by applicable law.

Equal opportunity applies to all programs administered by **DME-SS**, including all employment decisions, such as those affecting hiring, promotion, demotion, or transfer; compensation and benefits; and reduction in force and termination as required by law.

DME-SS assigns a high priority to the implementation of its equal opportunity policy and to assure compliance with all laws prohibiting discrimination in employment programs. Employees of **DME-SS** are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department regarding any questions or concerns about these matters.

CODE OF ETHICS AND BUSINESS CONDUCT POLICY

The Company expects all employees to act with integrity and honesty in all matters related to Company business. Employees may not obtain or use any property or services of the Company, fellow employees, clients, customers, visitors or vendors in a manner other than that authorized by Company policy or by federal, state or local laws.

Conflicts of Interest

To avoid any possible conflicts of interest, it is the responsibility of every employee to report any offers of gifts, loans, misuse of company funds, kickbacks, rebates, or refunds that come to their knowledge through their position as an employee of the Company immediately to their manager or immediate supervisor.

Internal Anti-Fraud Policy

The Company is committed to protecting its revenue, property, assets, reputation, etc. To this end, it maintains an Internal Anti-Fraud Policy applicable to all employees. This Policy outlines prohibited conduct and each employee's reporting responsibilities. Please contact your manager, immediate supervisor, or Human Resource department for questions.

EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR

Employees must perform their assigned duties to the best of their ability and in the best interest of the Company, fellow employees, customers, clients, visitors and vendors. Employees must not take action that creates a risk, harm or damage to oneself, another person, the Company, or the property of the Company or the property of others.

Employees must adhere to and fully comply with all Company policies and procedures, which can be found in the Code of Conduct or obtained by request to the Human Resources department. Managers and immediate supervisors must be conscious of the fact that they can be agents of the Company, and as such, their actions may be attributed to the Company under certain circumstances even while off duty. Therefore, they are strongly advised to avoid situations that place the Company at risk, and/or call their professionalism into question.

For example, situations to be avoided are repeatedly fraternizing with hourly employees in places where alcohol is served such as bars and restaurants or repeatedly having lunch, dinner or breaks with some hourly employees but not others.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORKPLACE

Company employees who become involved in romantic relationships are encouraged to report it to their manager, immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Department. These types of relationships should not cause distractions in the workplace. Managers or Supervisors are prohibited from dating any subordinate who works or reports directly to them. If a senior employee becomes involved in such a relationship and the employees involved state that they desire to continue in the relationship, the subordinate employee may be reassigned to a different supervisor. Should the situation not be possible, the employee may be asked to resign, or face further disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Displays of affection in the workplace are discouraged. The Company expects you to display professionalism at all times while on the job. Overt romantic behaviors are simply not acceptable at work. Such overt displays may lead to termination of employment.

Policy against Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation

Explanation

Every **DME-SS** employee should be able to work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. In order for such an environment to exist, each of us must play a role. Management must take a proactive role in setting and enforcing appropriate standards of behavior, and all employees must behave in accordance with those standards. The following policy prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation applies any time an individual is on Company premises or engaging in work-related activities, including Company sponsored events, whether on or off premises.

Scope of Policy

DME-SS is committed to ensuring employees work in an environment of mutual respect and free of harassment and discrimination. The Company will not, under any circumstances, discriminate against an employee, applicant, customer or vendor with regard to race, color, sex (gender), age, religion, national origin, disability, protected veteran or other uniformed service status, or any other basis prohibited by applicable law.

Any manager and or employee will be disciplined appropriately, up to and including termination, if he/she:

- Violates this policy prohibiting harassment or discrimination;
- Makes reports of harassment or discrimination known to be false;
- Retaliates in any form against an employee who makes a complaint, participates in an investigation, or otherwise opposes discrimination or harassment including the use of the Company's Open Door Policy.

Discrimination Prohibited

DME-SS is an equal employment opportunity employer that encourages advancement of all employees. The Company does not discriminate in regard to its employment practices, including the following:

- Advertisement
- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Job assignment
- Transfers
- Promotions
- Compensation
- Training
- Termination
- Company-sponsored events

Harassment Prohibited

Harassment or disrespectful behavior can be verbal, non-verbal, or physical. Examples of conduct that could be perceived as harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive jokes (verbal, written and visual)
- Intimidation
- Name calling
- Threats of termination
- Scheduling in a punitive manner

DME-SS does not tolerate harassment of any kind on the basis of race, color, sex (gender), age, religion, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or any other basis prohibited by applicable law.

DME-SS define sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that takes place under any of the following conditions:

- Submission to such conduct, either explicitly or implicitly, affects an individual's employment;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work performance; or
- Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment includes a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors such as:

- Making unwanted sexual advances;
- Telling sexually explicit jokes or stories; also includes use of vulgar or derogatory language;
- Requests or demands for sexual favors;
- Other unwelcome verbal, physical, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature or with sexual overtones such as hugging, kissing, touching, or standing too close, intentionally brushing up against another's body, whistling, leering or displaying sexually explicit material such as cartoons or pictures;
- Promising (directly or by implication) a promotion, wage increase, special treatment, etc., in exchange for sexual favors;
- Threatening (directly or by implication) an employee with termination or adverse treatment if he/she does not submit to a sexual act or acts.

Retaliation Prohibited

DME-SS prohibits threats or acts of retaliation, retribution, intimidation or harassment against employees who in good faith report discrimination, harassment, retaliation or potential violations of **DME-SS** Code of Conduct. Furthermore, **DME-SS** will not tolerate retaliation against an employee who refuses sexual advances or who cooperates with or participates in a complaint investigation or who engages in any conduct protected by law.

What to Do / Who to Contact

The Company cannot address a problem if it does not know a problem exists. It is important for employees to come forward and report any harassing or disrespectful behavior. All complaints will be:

- Carefully investigated
- Kept confidential and discussed only with those who have a need to know

If an employee...	Then the employee should...
Believes he or she is the victim of discrimination or is being harassed or exposed to conduct that is offensive	Tell the person to stop the conduct immediately and contact a member of management.
Does not feel comfortable discussing the problem with a particular manager.	Contact the Manager of Human Resources.
Wants to report harassment or discrimination but wants to remain anonymous.	Contact Human Resources Department.

Employees who are not satisfied with the response received from a member of management should promptly contact the compliance hotline, manager, or the Human Resources Department. Employees at all times should feel free to use any of these avenues to address their concerns in the workplace.

If a manager a complaint, becomes aware of, or even suspects a violation of this policy prohibiting discrimination, harassment and retaliation, that manager has a responsibility to promptly consult the Human Resources Department for a proposed course of action. Anyone who condones or fails to take appropriate action may be found in violation of **DME-SS**.

When Managers Fail to Comply with These Requirements

All above requirements must be followed. Managers who deviate from these requirements may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Americans with Disabilities Act

DME-SS does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

If you are an individual who believes that you have a disability and require a reasonable accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of your job, contact the Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Department will work with you to determine if you qualify for benefits under the Act.

Open Door Policy

DME-SS's Open Door Policy is a commitment that each employee will have the opportunity to express job-related concerns and have them addressed by management. Most employee concerns are best addressed through open, honest and direct communication between you and your manager. However, at times you may feel the issue deserves further management review. Our Open Door Policy is intended to provide the communication channel for you to seek additional help. Although it is our goal to reach a resolution everyone finds satisfactory, there is no guarantee in each instance you will be satisfied with the result. You will, however, receive an explanation of the outcome.

In order to resolve an issue, managers may need to investigate and talk with you, your coworkers or others. The resolution of some issues may affect more than one employee. The Company will strive to keep any investigations and issues submitted to the Open Door Policy as confidential as possible.

Please raise work – related concerns as soon as possible. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, please feel free to raise it to the next level of management or avail yourself of the Grievance Policy and Procedures outlined in this Handbook.

Grievance Policy

DME-SS's grievance procedure is designed to provide prompt and orderly resolution of complaints or disputes arising in the course of employment. Any employee has the right to present any personal grievance regarding employment within five (5) working days of an occurrence and/or within five (5) working days of the employee having reasonable knowledge of the occurrence to have it considered on its merits.

Any form of retaliatory action against an employee who files a complaint or participates in the investigation of a complaint is expressly prohibited. Retaliation is a violation of this policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Grievance Procedure

No decision may be made at any step of the grievance procedure that conflicts with or modifies an approved **DME-SS** s' policy or is contrary to any law or any contract to which **DME-SS** is a party.

Initially, the grievance must be presented in writing to and discussed with the employee's immediate manager within five (5) working days of its occurrence. If the employee disagrees with the manager response to the grievance, the employee may appeal the grievance to our Human Resources Department in writing within five (5) working days of receipt of his or her manager's decision. A decision from our Human Resources department will be rendered within five (5) working days. If the employee disagrees with this response, the grievance can then be presented to the next level of management. It is the responsibility of the employee to submit a written request to our Human Resources asking that all correspondence be forwarded to the CEO or President within five (5) working days. The decision of the CEO or President will be final and will be provided to the employee within five (5) working days after receipt of the grievance correspondence.

Any dispute not resolved after complying with all steps of the grievance procedure may be submitted to Binding Arbitration. Please refer to **DME-SS's** Arbitration Policy for any questions related to Binding Arbitration.

Confidentiality

In the course of one's work, an employee may have access to information about **DME-SS's**, other employees, or customers, which is confidential. **DME-SS** requires all employees to protect the integrity and confidentiality of such information by safeguarding it and accepting responsibility for its security and proper use. Employees generally should take the following precautionary measures:

- Discuss work matters only with other Company employees who have a specific business reason or know or have access to such information.
- Do not discuss work or customer-related matters in public places.
- Monitor and supervise visitors to Company offices to ensure they do not have access to confidential information.
- Secure confidential information in desk drawers and cabinets at the end of every business day.
- Take steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic confidential information by limiting access, through for example the use of passwords.

If at any time you are uncertain as to whether you can divulge certain information or how you should secure it, please consult with your Supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

Confidential information to which employees are exposed are and shall remain property of **DME-SS**. Such information cannot be disclosed or used on behalf of anyone else except the Company, whether during your employment or afterwards. All documents and materials received in connection with your employment must be returned upon the termination of your employment, regardless of the reason.

Employees who are found violating the Company's policy on confidentiality will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. **DME-SS** also reserves right to take any legal action necessary to enforce its proprietary interest in any confidential information and to protect such information from unauthorized disclosure.

New Employee Introductory Period

As a per PRN, employment is on an **as needed** basis and field employees **will not** accrue benefits.

Employment Philosophy

DME-SS places a high value on our employees and their contributions to help achieve **DME-SS** overall mission.

DME-SS offers you a work atmosphere conducive to helping you be the best you can be in your job. At the same time **DME-SS** expects you to perform your job responsibly, effectively, efficiently and competently. **DMESS** management staff is responsible for hiring, orienting, training, evaluating and developing competent fulltime and part time employees to meet **DME-SS** objectives. **DME-SS** managers and employees must be committed to meeting or exceeding **DME-SS** performance expectations.

As a **DME-SS** Staffing Service employee:

- You have the right not to participate in aspects of care or treatment that are in direct conflict with your cultural values or religious beliefs;
- You should address any conflicts with a manager at time of hire;
- Your personal values and beliefs will be honored before assignment to a case. This consideration, however, can reduce the amount of work cases to which you may be assigned.

DME-SS policies and procedures are also a guide to assist **DME-SS** management staff in working effectively with employees who do not perform up to **DME-SS** standards.

DME-SS encourages employees to take responsibility for their own actions and be committed to doing their jobs well. **DME-SS** leaders set an example for **DME-SS** employees by their on-going commitment to achieving quality health care services.

Employment Practices

Office employee functions are assigned by **DME-SS** the Vice President of Operations and or his or her designees. Office employees perform tasks related to scheduling client care, information and orientation for personnel, data entry, payroll and billing activities, maintenance of clinical records and employee files and other functions necessary for providing health care services.

DME-SS complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. **DME-SS** does not accept payment for securing or soliciting clients or pay doctors, nurses, or other for client referrals. During orientation and or training, **DME-SS** conveys these policies to all employees.

DME-SS maintains overall management and control of all aspects of the health care services delivered by **DME-SS**.

Ongoing Communication

In an effort to keep you informed, **DME-SS** will use flyers, newsletters, and direct communication to keep you updated on all policy and procedure changes.

Scheduling

When you work for **DME-SS** you choose the days and shifts you work and the type(s) of assignments. Field employees may be assigned to care for clients on an hourly or visits basis.

1. Hourly assignments vary in length, but are generally 4, 8, or 12-hour shifts;
2. Visit length depends on client needs, but usually extends from one to four hours.

When your availability changes, please contact **DME-SS** so that we will know the new time you prefer us to offer you assignments. **DME-SS** does not guarantee assignments or a number of hours per week.

It is important that you accept assignments that you are confident you can complete. If you are not certain that you can make necessary arrangements, please do not accept the assignments until you are certain you can meet your commitment.

Promptness and dependability are important when you work for **DME-SS**. Please be sure to allow plenty of time for parking and reporting to your assignment so that you are on the job and ready to work when your assignment begins. If you are delayed getting to your assignment, please call the office so we can notify the client.

ONLY DME SS Staff (office) CAN SCHEDULE ASSIGNMENTS. IF A CLIENT REQUESTS THAT YOU RETURN, CONTACT DME-SS 210-546-0970 OFFICE IMMEDIATELY SO THAT WE MAY SCHEDULE YOU PROMPTLY. IF YOU ARRIVE AT YOUR ASSIGNMENT AND THE CLIENT TELLS YOU YOUR SERVICES ARE NO LONGER NEEDED, PLEASE CONTACT DME-SS 210-546-0970 BEFORE YOU

LEAVE. WE WILL EXPLAIN THE PROPER PREOCEDURE (S) TO FOLLOW. ALWAYS GET YOUR TIME SHEETS SIGNED.

When you are away from your telephone for several hours, especially before a scheduled assignment, please contact **DME-SS 210-546-0970**.

Call **DME-SS 210-546-0970** within 24 hours of your last assignment, so that we can offer you other assignments. If you do not contact **DME-SS** within 30 days from your last assignment, **DME-SS** assumes that you are no longer available we will send you a notice via mail regarding continued employment. If you do not respond you will become inactive.

Cancellations/No Shows

DME-SS considers cancellations a very serious matter. If an emergency arises and you cannot fulfill your obligation to the client (s) and **DME-SS** you need to notify us immediately. You must talk directly to a staff member.

Cancellations for home care cases require an 4-hour notice and facility cancellations require a 2-hour or more if required by the facility. Frequent cancellations are grounds for disciplinary action up to and termination. More than 2 cancellations of less than two hours for facilities or four hours for home care will also result in a warning (“no call/no show”) could be grounds for immediate termination.

The rule of thumb is to cancel only in an emergency and to give DME-SS as much notice as possible so that we can schedule someone else to assume your client responsibilities.

If you show up for a scheduled shift and it's canceled, please be sure to call the office before you leave. Get your time sheet signed so you will get paid your two hour drive time.

Late Call

A late call occurs when you are offered a shift in less than one-hour before the shift starts. As encouragement to accept the shift assignment, you have one hour from the time of the acceptance of the assignment to arrive at the facility. **IF YOU ARRIVE WITHIN THE ONE-HOUR OF ACCEPTING THE ASSIGNMENT, YOU WILL BE PAID FOR THE FULL SHIFT.** If you do not arrive within the one-hour, the shift is no longer a late call and the facility or home care client will pay for only the hours that you work. Only applicable to hospitals and nursing homes. Not applicable to private duty.

Time and Trouble

If the facility or home care client fails to contact DME-SS 210-546-0970 to cancel your shift and you show up for work, please contact DME-SS for instructions. We may have other work for you. If we do not we will give you instructions on how to complete your time slip.

Payroll

DME-SS's goal is to provide you with an accurate paycheck weekly. Therefore filling out your time slip completely and accurately is very important.

Please be sure to turn in your time slips into the office on **Sunday's**. **If you do not turn in your time sheets on Sundays you will not be paid until the next week.**

You will receive a copy of our time slip and instructions for completing the time slip in your orientation packet.

If you have any questions about completing your time slip and or need help please contact **DME-SS 210-5460970**.

Please use a new time slip for each assignment that you work for **DME-SS**. Timesheets must be submitted within the week worked. Timesheets submitted after a two week time period will be ineffectual.

After you have completed your assignment, leave the pink client copy of your signed time slip with the facility. Keep the yellow copy (the employee copy), and return the white original to **DME-SS**.

DME-SS work week begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday.

Weekly Pay

Your check will be available for pick up in the **DME-SS** office on Wednesdays. If you want your check to be mailed to your home address, please contact the office (**210-546-0970**) or simply write, "Mail Check" on your time sheet. Be sure to verify your address with **DME-SS** to ensure your correct address is on file.

For your protection paychecks will be released only to you. If you would like a friend or relative to pick up your check, you will need to give him/her on a written release along with a copy of a photo id.

Recognized Holidays

DME-SS observes the following holidays and *will pay up to time and a half* if approved by the client. If the clients do not agree to pay holiday rates you will be notified and can choose to accept or decline the shift. If possible all home care cases will be rescheduled to allow the employee to be home with their families. Approved holiday changes will be brought to your attention immediately.

New Year's Day	January 1 st
*Martin Luther King Day	3 rd Monday in January
*President's Day	3 rd Monday in February
*Memorial Day	Last Monday In May
Independence Day	4 th of July
*Labor Day	1 st Monday in October
*Columbus Day	2 nd Monday in October
*Veterans Day	November 11 th
Thanksgiving Day	4 th Thursday in November
Christmas	December 25 th

HOLIDAYS ARE THOSE GENERALLY ACCEPTED OR DESIGNATED BY THE FACILITY.

Liability Insurance

Professional Liability Insurance covers claims arising from alleged malpractice, error, or mistakes by **DMESS** employees while on assignment. Claims of negligent supervision or improper delegation of nursing tasks by **DME-SS** nursing supervisors are also covered under the policy.

Comprehensive General Liability Insurance provides insurance coverage for injury to persons or property by a **DME-SS** when acting within the scope and duties of his or her job description.

You are not protected if you perform intentional harmful acts of injury or if you operate outside the guidelines of your job description.

Employee Responsibility

It is your personal responsibility to ensure your well-being. You should be knowledgeable about safety procedures affecting you, follow established safety rules, and take precautions to protect yourself from work related injuries. Report property and equipment problems to your manager immediately. Compliance with safety rules is a condition of your employment.

Managers Responsibility

All management employees have a primary responsibility for safety. Managers should promote work place safety by maintaining property and equipment in safe operating condition and keeping employees aware of applicable safety procedures. Managers should report all work related injuries to the Human Resources Department, immediately and complete the proper forms.

Designated Doctor or Clinic for Treatment

DME-SS can recommend a doctor or clinic where injured employees may be treated. Concentra Clinics **YOU MUST call DME-SS IMMEDIATELY at the time of injury. We are available 24 hours 7 days a week-210-546-0970.**

Universal Precautions

Universal Precautions are measures taken by healthcare workers to help in protecting themselves and the patient against infections. Universal precautions, as recommended by the Center for Disease Control, should be followed by all health care workers to protect themselves against infection with HIV, HBV, and other blood borne viruses and microbes.

Since all blood and body fluids are considered potentially infectious, **DME-SS** staff must protect themselves from direct exposure to blood or body fluids that are visibly contaminated with blood to prevent exposure to HIV. However many potentially serious communicable diseases, such as Hepatitis, are transmitted by body fluids such as saliva, urine or feces, regardless of contamination with blood. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that precautions be taken to prevent direct contact with all body fluids through the use of gloves, gowns, masks, and or goggles when appropriate to the situation. Please review the OSHA handout provided in your orientation folder covering universal precautions. Other policies and procedures include the following:

- **DME-SS** employees are permitted to wear gloves at their discretion. **DME-SS** clients cannot deny any **DME-SS** employee the right to protective equipment. All categories of staff should wear gloves when they handle or have potential for contact with blood or body fluids.
- Wear disposable protective gloves for procedures involving contact with mucous membranes, unless otherwise indicated, and for the client care or diagnostic procedures that do not require the use of sterile gloves.
- Wear protective gloves any time you may touch a dressing or any refuse containing blood or body fluids. **Place all wound dressings in plastic bags. Close bag; place in a second red plastic bag; dispose of medical waste according to local regulations for medical waste disposal.** Some communities allow disposal of double-bagged medical waste in trash receptacles. Others require that medical waste can be burned or carried directly to landfill.

(continued)

- Wear protective gloves anytime you are drawing specimens of body fluids or excrement. Label all specimen containers with the client's name, social security number, date, time, and required laboratory before you put in the specimen. Place all specimen containers in a closed plastic bag.
- Provide the client with container for disposable of sharps. All contaminated sharps should be discarded in a closed plastic bag.
- Clean any spills of blood and body fluids with a freshly prepared solution of household bleach and water. Solution strength should be in ratio of 1 to 9-bleach water. A 10% solution prevents contamination.
- If you have weeping sores or dermatitis, which cannot be securely covered, do not work directly with clients until your skin heals.
- In the event of an accident exposure or needle stick, wash the infected area immediately and thoroughly. Notify the charge person or **DME-SS** supervising nurse if on home care case and complete the facility's form, if applicable. Notify the **DME-SS** office immediately, and bring a copy of the completed report to the office for follow-up. **DME-SS** follow the CDC guidelines for management of exposure to potentially infectious blood/body fluids.

Protective Equipment Guidelines

Because of the danger of contracting infection from blood and other potentially infectious body fluids, DMESS considers all body fluids potentially infectious and puts in place work practice controls, **DME-SS** makes protective equipment that is provided by **DME-SS** as needed. On home care cases that require protective equipment; **DME-SS** makes the equipment readily accessible to all employees.

“Appropriate” protective equipment does not permit blood or other potentially infectious substances to pass through to the employees work clothes, street clothes, undergarment, skin, eyes, mouth, or mucous membranes. **DME-SS** also makes available, upon employee request, at no cost to employees' vaccinations for Hepatitis to Tuberculosis. The policy protects employees and identifies sources of tuberculosis exposure, including high-hazard procedures, repeated or prolonged contact with high-risk groups, and any direct with infectious individuals in the workplace.

HIV/AIDS Discrimination

Refusal to work with HIV-infected co-workers or patients will be carefully monitored and documented by **DMESS**. If you have accepted an assignment, you cannot refuse or abandon the patient based on diagnosis. Please review the handout in your orientation folder provided by the Texas Department of Health on HIV/AIDS.

Hiring Standards

DME-SS complies with JCAHO Standards when hiring staff for client staffing assignments. A file on each employee is maintained to include:

- Completed application;
- Completed skills checklist (a clinical skills checklist is required for all patient caregivers);
- Written competence (skill) evaluation in nursing or allied specialty with a passing score of 80% (client facility may require higher score);
- Professional references;
- Current CPR card; ACLS if applicable;
- Valid license/certification/registration verified with the specific state agency governing the profession;
- References showing that each Health Care Professionals having minimum of one (1) years relevant experience in their specialty area. Health Care Professionals need to have (1) year of experience;
- Current health statement including TB skin test or chest x-ray, proof of immunity to MMR, rubella, varicella and tetanus, as per specific client requirements;
- Current annual records of Infection Control, Safety Procedures, and other mandatory JCAHO and OSHA in-services as appropriate.

Staffing Assignments: Charting

- Follow facility rules for charting on staffing assignments.
- Chart exactly what client; clients' family or client's roommate says if there is an incident or problem.
- Chart only what you do for the client. If, for example, the nurse performs a dressing change to a wound, the nurse should document the procedure and treatments used, observations and measurements of wound, wound drainage, type of dressing applied, and sign his or her full name and designation.
- Keep charting accurate and objective. Avoid opinion. For example, If you find a client on the floor, chart "Client on the floor" and not "Client fell out of bed" Remember to follow through with good charting by recording the exact time and your course of action.
- Sign notes with complete signature, i.e. first name, last name, and title.
- When charting a series of statements, only one signature is necessary unless you administer a narcotic or barbiturate.
- Write in the present tense.
- Check column headings and place all recorded notations in the columns where they belong. Start at the extreme left of each column and not in the middle.
- Do not leave blank lines on the clinical record.
- Always chart what you see not what you think!
- Block charting is not allowed on any documents anywhere.
- A good rule to remember: **Document, Document, Document!**

Patient Rights, HIPPA, and Confidentiality

Privacy & Confidentiality means that patients have the right to control who will see their protected, identifiable health information. This means that communications with or about patients involving health information will be private, and limited to those who need the information in order to provide treatment, obtain payment and perform related health care operations. Only those people with an authorized need to know should have access to the protected information. Such communications may involve verbal discussion, written communications, or electronic communications. This concept of privacy and confidentiality allow patients to feel comfortable sharing information with their doctors.

Hospitals and health care organizations have always upheld strict privacy and confidentiality policies. And unless you're new to health care, this idea will be familiar to you. **But there are changes.** The US government has begun to strengthen the laws that protect privacy and confidentiality in response to private medical information getting into the wrong hands. As cases of health information being misused increase, Congress has taken action to make hospitals and health care providers do more to protect health information privacy and confidentiality.

And with enactment of the **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996**, or **HIPPA** as its known the idea that patients have the right to have their health information kept private and secure became more than just an ethical obligation of physicians and hospitals, it became the law.

What is HIPPA? HIPPA is a broad law dealing with a variety of issues. One of its goals is to make it easier for people to move from one health insurance plan to another as they change jobs or become unemployed. This also means they must be able to move their medical records and information easily, to get the care they need. Patient privacy is a right. Whether they are in the hospital, physician's office, lab or other setting, patients receiving medical care expect privacy. They expect to be physically separated from strangers and Team Members when they consult or interact with their doctors and nurses, and they expect that their private health information will not be shared with other parties.

What is confidential information? When patients provide information to their providers, they expect that the only people who will see it are those with a need to know in order to provide treatment, obtain payment, or perform health care operations. Under the HIPPA privacy rule this is called protected health information (PHI). PHI includes patient identity, address, age, Social Security number, and any other personal information about the patient. In addition, PHI includes why a person is sick or in the hospital, what treatments and medications they may receive, and other observations about their condition or past health conditions.

How is patient information used? All the information that a provider collects or creates so that it can take care of patients and perform other related functions can be used only in limited ways.

What are health care operations? “Health care operations” are defined as activities considered in support of treatment and payment and for which protected health information could be used or disclosed without individual authorization. Some of the examples provided by HIPPA include:

- Conducting quality assessment and improvement activities;
- Reviewing/evaluating the competence, qualifications and licensing of health care professionals and plans;
- Training future health care professionals.

Who is allowed to see patient information? All members of the workforce at a health care facility contribute to the quality of care. But that does not mean that everyone needs to see the health information about patients. Many Team Members have no access to patient information, either in the computer or in paper form. That’s because they don’t need to know the information. That’s an important phrase to remember: “Need to know”. Whether or not you have access to medical records in order to perform your job you should look at and use only the protected health information that you really need. Do not look at medical records, either in the computer or on paper, that are not needed in order to do your job.

Infection Control

When ill persons are found close together, the number of infectious organisms in the area is multiplied, especially since the nursing staff and medical staff care for persons with different types of illness and degrees of resistance to illness. Since highly stressful experience reduces the body’s ability to resist infection, organisms that normally do not because illness may do so

For infection (systemic or local) to develop there must be a series of orderly conditions and events:

- An infectious agent.
- A reservoir of organisms.
- A portal or exit from the reservoir.
- A means for the organism to be transmitted.
- A portal of entry into another person (host). ▪ A person susceptible to the organism.

If any of these six factors is absent, an infection cannot occur. These factors can be considered as links in the infection chain.

An infection acquired while in the hospital is called a **nosocomial infection**.

An infection acquired away from the hospital is called a **community-acquired infection**.

Before the advent of antiseptics and antibiotics, we experienced an extremely high incidence of nosocomial infections and high death rate. With antiseptics and antibiotics, the incidence fell significantly. Unfortunately, after the introduction of antibiotics, the incidence of nosocomial infections again increased. Possible reasons are:

- Laxity in hand washing.
- Overuse of antibiotics.
- Development of antibiotic resistance strains disease.

- Increased number and seriousness of surgeries.
- Increased life span.
- Increased number of older, infirm persons admitted to hospitals.

Measures to reduce nosocomial infections are:

- Isolating the sick.
- Careful hand washing.
- Grouping of patients likely to have or to develop the same infectious.
- Paying careful attention to how disease is transmitted from one person to another.
- Proper ventilation.
- Using antiseptics and disinfectant.

Hand washing is the most important means to control infections. Hand washing removes soil, debris, and transient pathogens by friction, soap or detergent, and running water. Careful hand washing reduces the spread of infection to other individuals, objects, and self.

Fire Safety in Healthcare Facilities

To insure an environment safe from fire hazard, **DME-SS** employees follow these procedures when working in a facility.

- Locate fire extinguishers.
- Learn evacuation plan for the unit in the event of a fire.
- Participate in fire drill procedures.
- Report unsafe conditions or fire hazards to the proper person.
- Review classification of fires and appropriate extinguishers for each.

Classification Extinguisher

Class A Fires - Ordinary combustibles: Water, Dry Chemical, Carbon Dioxide Wood, Paper, and Textiles (CO₂) Extinguishers.

Class B Fires - Flammable Liquids: Dry Chemical, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) or Gasoline, Oil, Fats, Foam Extinguishers.

Class C Fires - Live Electrical Wiring, Dry Chemical, or Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and Appliances. Extinguishers.

Remember the PASS system for using extinguishers:

- P- Pull the Pin
- A- Aim at the Base of the Fire
- S- Squeeze the handle or trigger
- S- Sweep from side to side

Health Care Providers should be aware of the steps in fire safety outline in the R.A.C.E. for fire safety.

- R- Rescue
- A- Alarm
- C- Squeeze
- E- Sweep from side to side

- Remove patients from immediate danger and sound alarm for help.
- Sound alarm and notify the facility switchboard. Close doors, windows, chutes, or dumb waiters. Turn off oxygen in the room and close and latch doors from the room to the corridor.
- If you can safely do it, extinguish the fire. First determine the fire classification; then use appropriate extinguisher to put it out. Remember the PASS system for extinguishing fires.

Safety:

It is our sincere hope that you are never injured, However, if you are injured on the job, we want you to have the best medical care possible and receive all the benefits in a prompt manner. In order for that to take place, you must be aware and comply with the following:

- You MUST comply with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Proper Back Safety, Proper Lifting & Patient Transfer and the use of Assistive Devices requirements.
- You MUST report any unsafe working condition to our office IMMEDIATELY. If injured on the job, you MUST notify our office immediately at 210.546.0970. An Injury Report Form must be completed within 24 hours of your injury. Failure to report your injury IMMEDIATELY could affect your eligibility for benefits.
- The use and / or possession, or sale of illegal drugs on company and/or client/hospital/patient property is strictly prohibited. If injured on the job, you are required to submit to a drug and alcohol test IMMEDIATELY. If you refuse to take the test, you will automatically forfeit any worker's compensation benefits and may be released from employment.

Recruiting Policy

DME-SS employees will not recruit while on the job at various client facilities. This is a function of our office. If you are questioned about the agency, please refer the person to our office at **210.546-0970** during business hours (**8:30 A.M. through 5:30 P.M. Mon-Fri**).

Employees are reminded that we cannot guarantee a certain number of hours per week and that we are often the first to be placed on call or canceled for our scheduled shifts. This is the nature of a PRN staffing agency. **DME-SS** does not encourage its Nurses to leave their present employment.

It is necessary to address these issues so there will be no misunderstanding the staff or our client facilities.

On-Call Policy

On-Call: Personnel placed on call will remain for the entire shift for which they are available unless called in to work; then they will receive the agreed upon rate from the time they reach the facility. Accepting “on-call” is the option for the nurse.

Late: Personnel called in late will be paid from the beginning of the shift or for two (2) hours, which is less.

Cancellations: Personnel canceled from work after arrival at the facility will be paid for two (2) hours.

As PRN staff, personnel are hourly employees in the Department of Labor and as such, are not exempt from overtime (1½ times hourly rate).

As your agent to assist in securing temporary work:

- 1 -2 years of experience in the area(s) to which you are to be assigned.
- Submit the following credentials and renewals as they occur:
 - A valid license to practice professional Nursing in the state of Texas.
 - Certificates showing that you satisfactorily completed requirements necessary for Basic Cardiac Life Support, and Advanced Cardiac Life Support if working in the areas of the hospital or facility where it is required (MICU, SICU, NICU, PAR, CATH LAB)
 - Documentation of a current physical examinations and negative TB skin test or chest X-Ray, HBV series immunizations
 - In-service documentation for Blood Borne Pathogens, Confidentiality and patient’s rights.
 - Resume and/or skills check list (**provided by DME-SS**)
- Any other certifications that pertain to or enhance your nursing standards, all applicable laws and regulations, including those of the client facility.

Cancellations after Confirmation

As employees of **DME-SS** staff is expected to be at the client facility on time, wearing an appropriate uniform and ready to work. No one is required to accept an offer of a shift. However, after a shift has been accepted and confirmed, you are expected to be there. Cancellations after confirmation will be accepted only in dire emergencies. If a staff member cancels two times after being confirmed without a valid excuse, they will be counseled. If it continues to happen, the offer of work may be withheld temporarily or the employee may be terminated. The client facility can and will designate an unreliable employee as a “no return” and **DME-SS** will not be able to place that person at the facility in the future.

Availability

Employees of **DME-SS** are requested not to accept offers from client facilities for a period of at least six (6) months from the date they first begin in that facility through **DME-SS**.

Cell Phone Usage Guidelines

Cell phone usage permitted only during authorized breaks, i.e. lunch.

Address:

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DME-Synergistic Systems

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