



STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE
SAN JUAN ISLAND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
SAN JUAN COUNTY PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT NO.1

Communication and Social Media

SOG #
136-10

Approved: Chief Jim Cole

ISSUED
11/23/2010

PURPOSE: To prevent distractions in the workplace and help ensure the safety and privacy of all personnel and the patients we serve.

POLICY: Mobile phone use and use of personal digital assistants (PDAs) while on a call shall be limited to necessary work-related activities. Use of personal cameras – whether cell phone cameras, stand-alone cameras, or cameras contained on any other such personal device – whether digital or conventional film cameras – while on duty or when performing any patient care functions for or on behalf of SJIEMS – is strictly prohibited.

PROCEDURE:

I. Mobile Phone Use

- a. Personal cell phones are permitted to be carried while on a call, but personal calls shall not be answered while on a call. Messages may be checked on “down time” when not actively involved in a call or about to perform or in the process of performing work duties.
- b. Personal mobile phone use must never be cause for delay in responding to a patient or beginning an assignment.
- c. Personal phone use must not unduly interrupt administrative tasks or meetings.
- d. While attending to a patient or while operating a company vehicle, personnel shall not, under any circumstances, respond to (or make) a personal cellular phone call, send text messages, or check electronic mail on PDAs or other such devices.

II. Camera Use

- a. Under no circumstances shall any personnel be permitted to use the camera function of a personal mobile phone while on a call.
- b. Personnel are only permitted to use cameras or other picture taking or image generating devices authorized and issued by SJIEMS while on duty. The agency issued devices are intended to be used for medical purposes only such as to document the position of vehicles and patients at the scene of an accident or to document mechanism of injury for use by the receiving facility to assist in guiding treatment. No other picture taking devices including personal electronic devices, PDAs, cameras, or other personal computers (not issued or authorized by SJIEMS for patient care purposes) shall be used by personnel while on duty.
- c. All on-scene photography shall be for clinical, documentation, education, and quality assurance or research purposes only and conducted only at the direction of SJIEMS personnel in charge at the scene or by medical command.
- d. Any photographs containing individually identifiable information are covered by the HIPAA Privacy Rule and must be protected in the same manner as patient care reports and other such documentation.
- e. Any on-scene images and any other images taken by an employee in the course and scope of their employment/volunteering are solely the property of SJIEMS and *not* the property of the individual staff member. This includes any image inadvertently taken with a staff member's personally owned cell phone camera or other digital imaging device.

- f. No images taken by personnel in the course and scope of their activities may be used, printed, copied, scanned, e-mailed, posted, shared or distributed in any manner without the express, written approval of the Chief. Example: This prohibition includes posting photos on personal web sites, such as Facebook or MySpace, or on other public safety agency web sites, or e-mailing images to friends, colleagues or others in the EMS industry.

- g. If any images or records were taken intentionally or inadvertently at a scene, they are to be immediately erased from the device following the call.