

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT POLICIES		
SUBJECT:	Patient Property, Care of	NO. 31
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Patient Population

Neonate	√
Pediatric	√
Adolescent	√
Adult	√
Geriatric	√

POLICY: Emergency Services nursing personnel will make every effort to ensure that patient property is handled in a reasonable and safe manner.

IMPLEMENTATION:

I. Care of Patient Property in the Emergency Department:

A. Articles of clothing and luggage, etc.

1. All articles of clothing should be kept with the patient or significant other at all times.
2. If the patient is not able to assume responsibility for clothing, then items should be placed in a bag, the bag sealed and labeled with patient name and the bag number placed on the chart.
3. If bag is opened for any reason, items should be transferred to a new bag then sealed.
4. If the patient goes to the operating room or expires, all clothing should be itemized and sent to Security.
5. Document the disposition of all property on the chart.

B. Valuables

1. All valuables are to remain with the patient or significant other at all times.
2. If the patient is not able to assume responsibility for his/her valuables, the Emergency Department staff will itemize the valuables and place them in the medication cabinet.
3. If the patient goes to the operating room or expires, the valuables are sent to Security and the receipt placed in the chart.
4. Document the disposition of all property on the chart.

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C. Admissions

1. If the patient is to be admitted, attempt to send all clothing and valuables home with the family, otherwise send all property to the floor with the patient. There are no exceptions.
2. Document the disposition of all property on the chart.

II. Special Considerations:

A. Legal Evidence:

If a patient comes into the Emergency Department and the Police deem it necessary to remove any property for evidence, the property removed, as well as the officer's name, shield number and precinct number should be listed in the chart by a nurse. Consent from the patient must be obtained.

B. Weapons

If a patient possesses a weapon and is identified as a member of the law enforcement community, the patient's shield and gun will be surrendered to a properly identified partner or supervisor. Such an individual who anticipates entering Mount Sinai as a patient should prearrange for his/ her weapon to be picked up and safeguarded. In the event the individual is being treated in the ED, security will remain present and assist the officer as required to contact the appropriate agency for weapon retrieval.

Civilians in possession of a weapon must relinquish the weapon to hospital security before treatment in the ED. Security will also assist ED staff to safeguard them and our patients.

Treatment of any patient in possession of a weapon may be withheld if in the judgement of ED clinical staff, treatment such as electrical current or sedation, may further endanger hospital staff, patients or visitors.

C. Loss or Damage to Patient's Property:

For patient's reporting lost or damaged property, the department will conduct an internal search. If all attempts prove unsuccessful, utilize the following guidelines:

1. For patients still in the Emergency Department:
 - a. Notify Security at x46068 when a loss has occurred. Complete a “Non-Employee Occurrence Report” form noting the name of the Security Officer notified.
 - b. Document loss or damage reported in the patient’s chart.
2. Direct patients who have left the Emergency Department to the Security Control Center.