

**CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE FACILITY
DEPARTMENT OF STATE HOSPITALS – STOCKTON
ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE**



CHAPTER 14: PATIENT POLICIES
SECTION 14.19: MAIL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE: SENIOR PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIAN
UNIT SUPERVISOR
EFFECTIVE DATE: 07-22-13 **REPLACES:** NEW

I POLICY:

It shall be the policy of the Department of State Hospitals-Stockton to review the content and assess the response of patients to potentially sensitive incoming and outgoing mail excluding legal mail.

All mail will be processed in accordance with the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 15, Federal Postal Regulations and California Health Care Facility Operational Procedures. [Violation of law, the policies set forth in the CCR or of California Health Care Facility Operational Procedures may result in disciplinary action and/or temporary suspension or denial of correspondence between the person(s) involved.]

II PROCEDURE:

- A. Nursing staff shall inform patients of the mail service process during initial patient orientation.
- B. The third watch unit Officer will sort all incoming patient mail and then turn it over to the Senior Psychiatric Technician (SPT)/Shift Lead or designee.
- C. The third watch SPT or designee will be responsible for checking all incoming/outgoing patient mail to identify potentially sensitive material that might trigger self injurious or assaultive behavior (i.e. death of a friend/family member, termination of a significant relationship, etc.).
- D. The third watch SPT or designee will then direct and monitor distribution of the incoming mail to the patient. Staff may choose to wear gloves to open or handle mail. If the incoming/outgoing patient mail contains potentially sensitive material, staff shall:
 - 1. Communicate concerns to the treatment team and document action taken, if any.
 - 2. Assess the patient's reaction to the letter and need for staff intervention (i.e. 1:1 counseling, PRN medication, Low risk suicidal observation, etc.).
 - 3. Intervene with patient as indicated.
- E. In cases where the unit officer or correctional counselor must distribute the mail, the SPT shall be notified of such to ensure proper follow up is given if warranted.

If the treatment team determines that incoming/outgoing mail presents a danger or threat of danger to any person, the mail may be withheld from the patient. In this instance, staff will follow guidelines outlined in Title 15, Sections 3135 and 3156, and CDCR operations Manual, Sections 54010.6, 54010.7, and 54010.29.1.

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APPROVED FOR GOVERNING BODY



STIRLING PRICE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR