

POLICY & PROCEDURES DOCUMENT

POLICY TITLE: Use of Volunteers in Emergency and Disaster Situations

POLICY NUMBER: 6.5

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Volunteer Association are committed to the health, safety and accountability of volunteers whose skills may need to be utilised in times of extreme emergency and disaster

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Volunteers being utilised in emergency situations will be properly accounted for during an emergency situation
- The resources of volunteers can be properly and effectively coordinated through one central point
- A clear 'line of command' shall be created for the introduction of volunteers into various areas during emergency situations
- To ensure a coordinated introduction of volunteers into an emergency situation

PROCEDURES (To implement Policy)

1. In the case of the Lyell McEwin Hospital becoming involved in a major emergency or disaster situation (eg train wreck, chemical spill, terrorist action etc) the Lyell McEwin's own Disaster Plan would be implemented. As a part of that plan, the Executive Officer would be contacted as a first port of call for the Volunteer Association.
2. In the case that the Executive Officer was not contactable, the Executive Director Nursing & Patient care Services would contact either the Director of Volunteer Services, who would continue to try and contact the EO while beginning to implement the Volunteer Association's own internal policies. If the EO was off-site it would be the EO's responsibility to contact and appoint a proxy to act in his/her place. This person is referred to in the remainder of this policy as the 'Duty Officer'
3. The Duty Officer's first responsibility would be to ascertain the nature of the incident, likely number of arrivals at LMH and where volunteers would most likely be needed.
4. Requests for volunteer assistance will come from the hospital's Control Centre. Volunteers should not respond to individual requests from wards or departments.

5. The Duty Officer would then need to contact volunteers from the various areas where help may be required to assess their availability should the need eventuate. This may involve coordinating with those volunteers already on-site or calling in additional resources if the disaster occurs out of regular working hours. Areas where additional volunteer help may be required could include Emergency Dept, ICU, Administration, Playroom, Transport, Kiosk, Palliative Care and PSG. The Duty Officer should liaise with appropriate Department heads prior to calling in volunteers to avoid confusion or duplication.
6. Pastoral Care volunteers would be called in by the Coordinating Chaplain as a part of that Department's own internal disaster plan and as such should not be included within the plan for this policy
7. The Duty Officer would be responsible developing a register listing all those volunteers on-site at the time the disaster occurred as well as those reporting to assist once called in.
8. All volunteers arriving at the LMH whether called in by the Duty Officer or arriving to see if they can assist in some way without being called in, would be required to report to the Duty Officer who would be located in the Volunteer Administration area. Volunteers who have been specifically called in to help would be required to sign in with the Duty Officer before starting their shift. Volunteers arriving at the hospital to help without being called in may be allocated a task by the Duty Officer or they may be sent home again if not required by the Duty officer.
9. For insurance purposes, only registered volunteers of the Lyell McEwin Regional Volunteer Association would be able to render volunteer assistance in an emergency situation of this kind.
10. All volunteers would need to 'sign off' with the Duty Officer before leaving.
11. Any medical or nursing professionals calling to offer their services in a voluntary capacity will be referred to the 'staff pool' that will be created by the LMH in any scenario of this kind (via switchboard)
12. Volunteers called in to assist in any emergency situation will wear their ID badge and uniform provided at all times for the purpose of easy identification
13. Volunteers shall not speak to the media under any circumstances, in accordance with LMRVA Policy 5.4

Consultation: Board of Governance, Policy Sub-Committee, LMHS Disaster Plan

Last reviewed June 2011