

## TEXTILE MANAGEMENT

**1. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** Major changes are as follows:

a. Merges the requirements of VHA Directive 1850.03(1), Textile Management Services, dated April 4, 2017, and VHA Directive 1850.04(1), Employee Uniforms, dated April 6, 2017.

b. Adds responsibilities in paragraph 2 for the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Support; Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations; Executive Director, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Healthcare Environment and Facilities Program; Director, Environmental Programs Service (EPS) and Veterans Integrated Services Network Director.

c. Replaces the role of Chief, Environmental Management Service with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility Textile Care Officer.

**2. RELATED ISSUES:** VHA Directive 1850, Environmental Programs Service, dated January 30, 2023, and VHA Directive 1850.07, Textile Care Processing Facility Operations, dated May 17, 2023.

**3. POLICY OWNER:** The Office of Environmental Programs Service (19HEFC) is responsible for the content of this directive. Questions may be addressed to [VHA19HEFCAction@va.gov](mailto:VHA19HEFCAction@va.gov).

**4. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Directive 1850.03(1), Textile Management Services, dated April 4, 2017, and VHA Directive 1850.04(1), Employee Uniforms, dated April 6, 2017, are rescinded.

**5. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of June 2028. This VHA directive will continue to serve as national VHA policy until it is recertified or rescinded.

**6. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE:** This directive is effective upon publication.

June 13, 2023

VHA DIRECTIVE 1850.03

**BY DIRECTION OF THE OFFICE OF THE  
UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH:**

/s/ Alfred A. Montoya Jr., MHA, FACHE  
Acting Assistant Under Secretary for Health  
for Support

**NOTE:** *All references herein to VA and VHA documents incorporate by reference subsequent VA and VHA documents on the same or similar subject matter.*

**DISTRIBUTION:** Emailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List on June 14, 2023.

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## TEXTILE MANAGEMENT

### 1. POLICY

It is Veterans Health Administration (VHA) policy that each Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility maintain a Textile Management program which includes the procurement, repair, replacement and distribution of textiles and uniforms worn by designated VA medical facility employees. The program must provide security controls to ensure an uninterrupted and ample supply of clean textiles to support patient care programs. **AUTHORITY:** 5 U.S.C. §§ 5901-5903; 38 U.S.C. § 7301(b).

### 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health is responsible for ensuring overall VHA compliance with this directive.

b. **Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Support.** The Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Support is responsible for establishing policy and providing guidance and oversight as necessary to ensure the timely and successful implementation of this directive.

c. **Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations.** The Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations is responsible for:

(1) Communicating the contents of this directive to each of the Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISNs).

(2) Assisting VISN Directors to resolve implementation and compliance challenges in all VA medical facilities within that VISN.

(3) Providing oversight of VISNs to ensure compliance with this directive and its effectiveness.

(4) Coordinating with the Executive Director, Healthcare Environment and Facilities Program (HEFP), VISN Director and VA medical facility Director to ensure all necessary action is taken and funding is obtained to address textile management in a manner that meets the requirements of Federal, State and local statutes and regulations; applicable Executive Orders; and VA and VHA directives.

d. **Executive Director, VHA Healthcare Environment and Facilities Program.** The Executive Director, HEFP is responsible for:

(1) Overseeing the VHA Textile Management program.

(2) Periodically assessing VHA textile management for continued need, currency and effectiveness.

(3) Coordinating with the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations, VISN Director and VA medical facility Director to ensure all necessary action is taken and funding is obtained to address textile management in a manner that meets the requirements of Federal, State and local statutes and regulations; applicable Executive Orders; and VA and VHA directives.

e. **Director, Environmental Programs Service.** The Director, Environmental Programs Service (EPS) is responsible for:

(1) Developing and implementing VHA Textile Management policy and guidance.

(2) Providing oversight for VISN and VA medical facility compliance with this directive and ensuring corrective action is taken when non-compliance is identified.

(3) Administering and managing the VHA Textile Management program.

(4) Reviewing the Textile Care Inventory and Distribution Cost Report that is submitted annually into the EPS Textile Reports dashboard. **NOTE:** *The EPS Textile Reports dashboard can be found at <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/eps-textile-reports>. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

(5) Reviewing and approving action plans for those VA medical facilities that did not meet the established key performance indicators (KPIs) on the annual Textile Care Inventory and Distribution Cost Report submitted to the EPS Textile Reports dashboard. **NOTE:** *The EPS Textile Reports dashboard and performance management information can be found at <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/eps-textile-reports> and <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/textile-care-performance-measures>. These are internal VA websites that are not available to the public.*

f. **Veterans Integrated Services Network Director.** The VISN Director is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that all VA medical facilities within the VISN comply with this directive and informing leadership when barriers to compliance are identified.

(2) Ensuring that VA medical facilities are provided adequate resources and support to meet or exceed KPIs. **NOTE:** *For more information on performance measures, see <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/textile-care-performance-measures>. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

(3) Ensuring that all VA medical facilities within the VISN establish, implement and continue to operate a comprehensive VA medical facility Textile Management program.

(4) Ensuring VA medical facilities submit the Textile Care Inventory and Distribution Cost Report into the EPS Textile Reports dashboard no later than the 15th of December. **NOTE:** *The EPS Textile Reports dashboard can be found at <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/eps-textile-reports>. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

(5) Reviewing required action plans for those VA medical facilities that did not meet the KPIs on the annual Textile Care Inventory and Distribution Cost Report and submitting action plans to EPS at [VHA19HEFCAction@va.gov](mailto:VHA19HEFCAction@va.gov).

(6) Coordinating with the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations, Executive Director, HEFP and VA medical facility Director to ensure all necessary action is taken and funding is obtained to address textile management in a manner that meets the requirements of Federal, State and local statutes and regulations; applicable Executive Orders; and VA and VHA directives.

g. **VA Medical Facility Director.** The VA medical facility Director is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring VA medical facility compliance with this directive and that appropriate corrective action is taken if non-compliance is identified.

(2) Ensuring the overall performance, financial support and long-term stewardship associated with the operational success of the VA medical facility's Textile Management program.

(3) Appointing the service chief responsible for the VA medical facility Textile Management program as the VA medical facility Textile Care Officer (TCO).

(4) Ensuring the timely and accurate submission of the annual Textile Care Inventory and Distribution Cost Report into the EPS Textile Reports dashboard no later than the 15th of December. **NOTE:** *The EPS Textile Reports dashboard can be found at <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/eps-textile-reports>. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

(5) Ensuring the timely submission of action plans associated with annual reporting, identifying root causes of unmet performance measures and performing corrective actions as necessary. **NOTE:** *For more information about performance measures and reporting, see <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/environmental-programs-service/textile-care-performance-measures>.*

(6) Ensuring the VA medical facility TCO completes required training (see paragraph 4).

(7) Coordinating with the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations, Executive Director, HEFP and VISN Director to ensure all necessary action is taken and funding is obtained to address textile care management in a manner that meets the requirements of Federal, State and local statutes and regulations; applicable Executive Orders; and VHA and VA directives.

(8) Approving and overseeing compliance with the VA medical facility Uniform Standards established in compliance with VHA Employee Categories Required to Wear Uniforms, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) policy and 5 C.F.R. § 591.103, including the following actions. **NOTE:** *For additional information about OPM policy, see*

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/fact-sheets/uniform-allowances/>.

(a) Reviewing for approval deviation requests from the VA medical facility Uniform Standards.

(b) Authorizing deviations for VA medical facility registered nurses in perioperative areas from Association of peri-Operative Registered Nurses (AORN) guidance on wearing uniforms to and from work, if deemed necessary to fulfill VHA's mission to deliver quality health care to eligible Veterans in a timely manner. **NOTE:** For more information on AORN guidance, see <http://www.aornstandards.org/>.

(c) Determining when wearing a uniform is not consistent with the duties of the position and prescribing when the uniform will not be required. An employee who does not wear a uniform while on duty will not be paid a uniform allowance.

(d) Authorizing VA medical facility employees to wear alternative clothing when, in the opinion of the appropriate professional staff (e.g., supervisors, nurse managers), a benefit to patients may result. **NOTE:** Those employees granted permission to wear alternative clothing will not be entitled to issue uniforms, uniform allowance or laundry service at VA expense during the period when personal clothing is worn.

(e) Selecting the most economical methods (issue or allowance) to provide uniforms for health professions trainees.

(f) Consulting local labor bargaining units when uniform types undergo changes that impact bargaining unit employees.

h. **VA Medical Facility Textile Care Officer.** **NOTE:** The VA medical facility TCO is the chief of the service line under which the VA medical facility Textile Management Service resides. The VA medical facility TCO is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring the VA medical facility Textile Management Service adheres to this directive.

(2) Developing, maintaining and implementing a VA medical facility textile management plan that includes, but is not limited to, distribution and collection, establishing par levels, inventory, control and security, repair and conservation, consolidation agreements, Textile Care Inventory and Cost Report, record management and weigh scales as outlined in the EPS Textile Care Procedure Guide located at <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/eps-textile-care-procedure-guide>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

(3) Ensuring weigh scales are calibrated annually. **NOTE:** For more information on weigh scales, see the EPS Textile Care Procedure Guide located at <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/eps-textile-care-procedure-guide>. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

(4) Ensuring all VA medical facility employees are coded in the correct cost center and position description. **NOTE:** For more information on cost centers, see the *EPS Textile Care Procedure Guide* located at <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/eps-textile-care-procedure-guide>. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

(5) Establishing and serving as chair of a VA medical facility Textile Care Committee (TCC) that meets quarterly to ensure standard qualities of textiles and refinement of textile levels, explore new textile items, develop solutions for excessive losses and identify opportunities to improve the overall Textile Management program. **NOTE:** VA medical facility TCC membership must include at a minimum: the VA medical facility TCO, Laundry Operations Specialist for VA medical facilities with on-site processing, Infection Preventionist, Linen Supervisor and Nursing and Security Representative.

(6) Maintaining a customer service feedback mechanism and taking actions on items denoted as opportunities for improvement.

(7) Keeping abreast of industry standards, textile processing techniques, distribution technologies, best practices and safety requirements.

(8) Ensuring the use of disposable textiles in lieu of reusable textiles as justified by a cost and benefit analysis.

(9) Establishing and sustaining cooperative relationships with key VA medical facility stakeholders, including but not limited to VA medical facility leadership, caregivers and linen transport teams.

(10) When serviced by a VHA consolidated Textile Care Processing Facility (TCPF) or commercial TCPF contract, ensuring there is a process in place for:

(a) Preparing soiled textiles for shipment.

(b) Receiving and accounting for VA property.

(c) Validating service provided (e.g., weights, quantities, quality).

(11) Maintaining Certified Laundry & Linen Management training requirements from the Association for Linen Management (ALM) for institutional textile care management and processing. **NOTE:** For more information about ALM, see <https://www.almnet.org>.

(12) Developing VA medical facility Uniform Standards in compliance with VHA Employee Categories Required to Wear Uniforms, OPM policy and 5 C.F.R. § 591.103. **NOTE:** For additional information about VHA Employee Categories Required to Wear Uniforms, see <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/vha-employee-categories-uniforms>. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

(13) Establishing procedures to meet the Textile Care Performance Measures found at <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/environmental-programs-service/textile-care-performance-measures>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.



### 3. UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

a. **Selection.** Material type and style of uniforms for issue must be based on textile care processing costs, appearance and suitability of the garment for the environment where it is worn. Uniforms purchased by VA medical facility employees based on allowance must adhere to VA medical facility Uniform Standards.

b. **Procurement and Accountability.**

(1) **Procurement.** Uniforms are procured in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation and VA Acquisition Regulation.

(2) **Accountability.**

(a) Issue uniforms remain the property of VA after they have been issued and must be turned in by VA medical facility employees who no longer require them for official duty. Employees may be required to reimburse VA for loss or damage to uniforms when due to employee negligence.

(b) VA Form 10-1148, Employees Uniform and Property Issue Documentation, is used to account for the issuance of uniforms.

c. **Wearing Requirements.**

(1) VA medical facility employees are required to wear the uniform prescribed in VA medical facility Uniform Standards while on duty, except for deviations and exceptions outlined in paragraph 3.d. VA medical facility employees having frequent contact with patients must wear a uniform.

(2) Individuals serving VA in a “without compensation” status or under one of the Federally sponsored programs and patients and members assigned duties in a therapeutic program are issued the same type of uniform as those worn by VA employees who perform similar duties. In some cases, it may be appropriate to assign different style and color uniforms.

(3) The wearing of badges, patches, uniforms or equipment other than those prescribed under paragraph 3.e. is also prohibited.

d. **Deviations and Exceptions.** When a position title changes without a significant change in duties or position requirements, VA medical facility employees assigned in the position must continue to wear the same style of uniform.

e. **Identification Insignia.** VA medical facility designation and approved academic affiliation insignia are permitted as part of the uniform at the discretion of the VA medical facility Director. Non-VA medical facility insignia may also be permitted, but the cost for such insignia will be borne by the employee.

f. **Alteration and Repair.** Government-issued uniforms may be altered at VA expense. Personally owned uniforms may not be altered at VA expense unless the garment is damaged while performing official duties.

g. **Care and Processing.** Uniforms issued and worn by a VHA employee while performing official duty may be processed by a VA laundry facility, provided the service is available. The maximum weekly quantity of uniforms that may be processed for each employee is at the discretion of the VA medical facility TCO.

h. **Allowance and Issue.**

(1) When authorized in VHA Employee Categories Required to Wear Uniforms and prescribed uniforms are worn, an allowance is paid to specific groups of VA medical facility employees. The rates payable and timelines are specified in VHA Employee Categories Required to Wear Uniforms. **NOTE:** For more information on uniform allowance and rates, see: <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/vha-employee-categories-uniforms>. This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

(2) All full-time VA medical facility employees approved to wear uniforms that must be laundered between uses, in accordance with VHA Employee Categories Required to Wear Uniforms, must be issued a minimum of seven uniforms. For other VA medical facility employees, the minimum number of such uniforms issued to each VA medical facility employee must be the number required to ensure that a clean uniform is available each day.

#### 4. TRAINING

All VA medical facility TCOs must complete curriculum VHA-213 ("Textile Care Officer Training") in the Talent Management System within 90 days of assignment to the Textile Management program and maintain 45 continuing education units (CEUs) every 3 years thereafter. The course (VA – 131007157) within this curriculum provides the foundational technical knowledge needed to effectively manage textiles.

#### 5. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

All records regardless of format (e.g., paper, electronic, electronic systems) created by this directive must be managed as required by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) approved records schedules found in VHA Records Control Schedule 10-1. Questions regarding any aspect of records management should be addressed to the appropriate Records Officer.

#### 6. BACKGROUND

VA medical facility Textile Care Processing and Textile Management (employee uniform, textile management and distribution and, if applicable, Patient Assistance Program (PAP)) are equal but separate EPS functions under the supervision of the VA medical facility TCO. Both functions contribute to the proper distribution, handling,

processing and management of textile goods and services within VA medical facilities. Combined, they form the VHA Textile Care Management Program.

## 7. DEFINITIONS

a. **Deviation.** A deviation is permission to differ from the approved VA medical facility Uniform Standard.

b. **Par Level.** Par level is the term used to describe the quantity of each textile item needed in circulation for a 24-hour period directly related to textile usage, losses, processing and storage locations.

c. **Patient Assistance Program.** The PAP is the service within the VA medical facility where the inventory, storage, securing and re-issuance of a patient's personal effects are conducted while the patient is hospitalized. The PAP also provides clothing, shoes and personal hygiene items to indigent patients, as well as haircut vouchers to the VA medical facility, if applicable.

d. **Textile.** A textile is any linen item used in support of patient care that includes, but is not limited to, sheets, pillows, pillowcases, blankets, bathrobes, towels, patient gowns, government purchased employee uniforms, lab coats, scrubs, aprons, donated patient clothing, tablecloths and laundry bags.

e. **Textile Care Inventory and Distribution Cost Report.** The Textile Care Inventory and Distribution Cost Report is a report designed to capture actual cost and inventory of textiles, man-hours and cost for services that are outsourced and KPIs of unexplained textile disappearances and replacement costs.

f. **Textile Care Processing Facility.** A TCPF is a laundry processing facility that provides textile services to VA medical facilities and ensures a consistent supply of clean textiles in support of patient treatment programs.

g. **VA Medical Facility Uniform Standards.** VA medical facility Uniform Standards are uniform requirements set according to position category. VA medical facility Uniform Standards must comply with VHA Category of Employees Required to Wear Uniforms, OPM policy and 5 C.F.R. § 591.103.

## 8. REFERENCES

a. 5 U.S.C. §§ 5901-5903, 7903.

b. 38 U.S.C. § 7301(b).

c. 5 C.F.R. § 591.103.

d. VA Form 10-1148, Employee Uniform, and Property Issue Documentation.

e. EPS Textile Care Performance Measures: <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/environmental-programs-service/textile-care-performance-measures>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

f. EPS Textile Care Procedure Guide: <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/eps-textile-care-procedure-guide>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

g. EPS Textile Management: <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/topics/textile-care-management>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

h. EPS Textile Reports and User Guide: <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/eps-textile-reports>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

i. VHA Employee Categories Required to Wear Uniforms: <http://vaww.hefp.va.gov/resources/vha-employee-categories-uniforms>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

j. Association for Linen Management (ALM): <https://www.almnet.org>.

k. Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN): <http://www.aornstandards.org/>.

l. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Policy, Data, Oversight: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/pay-administration/fact-sheets/uniform-allowances/>.