



Monterey County Behavioral Health Policy and Procedure

Policy Number	402
Policy Title	Dangerous Consumers And Those In Possession Of Weapons
References	Policy No. 202 Safety Practices For Field Visits
Form	None
Effective	September 8, 1986 Revised: May 9, 2003 Revised: September 1, 2008

1 Policy

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3 It is the policy of the Monterey County Health Department – Behavioral Health Division to provide a
4 safe environment for its staff and consumers. Personnel having the responsibility for outpatient
5 services, day treatment, case management and support services are not required to provide such
6 services to clients who pose an immediate physical danger. Consumers, who are deemed
7 dangerous as a result of a mental disorder under the Welfare & Institutions Code 5150, will receive
8 treatment only in an appropriately safe and secure inpatient facility. Under no circumstances
9 should any staff member initiate or provide services to any customer in possession of a firearm or
10 other dangerous weapon. All staff is encouraged to attend training on managing verbal de-
11 escalation so they can identify early warning signs and possibly intervene before danger occurs.

12 Procedure

13 A. Belligerent Consumers – No Apparent Weapon

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17 1. Personnel having initial contact may exercise judgment as to:
18 a. Attempting to verbally calm the client.
19 b. Notifying the Behavioral Health Service Manager, Unit Supervisor, Case Manager, or Officer of
20 the Day - with an explanation of the problem, to calm the consumer.
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22 2. Calling 911 (police or security) in an emergency, if needed and feasible.
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24 3. Do not attend to the consumer alone unless it is deemed that no immediate danger exists. If a
25 questionable safety issue is present, follow the office protocol by requesting assistance using a
26 pre-designated code, such as, “cancel my appointments for the rest of the day”, which signal will
27 staff you need immediate assistance and/or 911. Staff are encouraged to utilize their “panic alarm”
28 as needed; exiting the room that the consumer is in if they won’t voluntarily leave.
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30 4. Staff should interview a potentially problematic consumer in a designated office that has ready
31 access to exits for the staff person or other personnel to enter and render assistance as needed.

32 Staff should make sure there are staff available to render assistance, if needed, prior to seeing the
33 consumer. (Consumers should not be seen alone if it is felt that consumer will be problematic, or
34 has a history of assaultive behavior).

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37 **B. Consumer in Possession of Dangerous Weapon**

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39 1. Never attend to the consumer alone.
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41 2. If an emergency situation exists, call the Behavioral Health Service Manager or designees using
42 the code "cancel my appointments for the rest of the day". That will inform staff that you need
43 immediate assistance and to call 911 as needed.
- 44
45 3. If the situation is felt an emergency situation does not exist, contact the Behavioral Health
46 Service Manager or designee to inform the consumer that the possession of a weapon precludes
47 services.

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49 **C. Community or Home Visits (Reference Policy 202)**

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51 1. Personnel should always assess community visits for personal safety and have exit plans in
52 mind if a consumer or others become threatening. They are not to place themselves at risk.
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54 2. When having a community visit to assess a consumer for possible inpatient psychiatric
55 hospitalization, follow the designated office protocol such as: inform your supervisor; let staff who
56 will be in a position to respond to problems know where you are going; never go alone; bring a
57 charged cellular telephone with you; stay in touch with your support staff.