

October 11, 2002

**VETERANS CANTEEN SERVICE PARTICIPATION IN VHA'S OCCUPATIONAL  
SAFETY AND HEALTH AND FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM**

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive establishes guidance to ensure the Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) participates in facilities' Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and fire protection programs.

**2. BACKGROUND**

a. Executive Order (EO) 12196, section 1-201d specifies that Federal agencies must comply with the safety and health standards published by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Public Law 91-596, Section 19, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, contains special provisions to ensure safe and healthful working conditions for all Federal employees.

b. During the last review of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) OSH program by OSHA, the evaluation report recommended that the relationships between VCS operations and VHA safety and health programs, inspections, and operations should be clarified. This Directive clarifies this relationship.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy that VCS located at VHA facilities must comply with OSH and fire protection policies of the facility.

**4. ACTION**

a. **Director, VCS, VHA Central Office.** Director, VCS, VHA Central Office, must:

(1) Ensure that labor-management relations responsibilities are fulfilled prior to implementing any changes involving conditions at any level of Canteen employment.

(2) Develop and implement written policies and procedures to ensure VCS operational compliance with VHA, VA, local, state and Federal OSH and fire protection requirements.

(3) Encourage the active participation of VCS management and employees in the VHA OSH and fire protection.

(4) Participate in developing guidance and training on OSH and fire protection issues appropriate for VCS employees.

(5) Require the documentation of all OSH and fire protection training.

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b. **Facility Directors.** Facility Directors must ensure:

(1) Labor-management relations responsibilities are fulfilled prior to implementing any changes involving conditions of employment at the facility.

(2) Canteen Service Managers and employees are included in appropriate meetings, committees, and communications regarding OSH and fire protection issues.

(3) Assistance is provided to Canteen Service Managers and VCS employees to enable them to participate fully in the OSH and fire protection programs.

(4) Assistance is provided in identifying and developing alternative methods of training that minimize adverse impact on customer service and/or operations. **NOTE:** *Alternative training methods and content must be evaluated and approved by the facility Safety Manager or Industrial Hygienist.*

(5) Canteen Service Managers have access to the VHA facility system used to document OSH training.

(6) Resources for the correction of OSH or fire protection deficiencies are provided, within the limits agreed upon with the Canteen Service Manager or the Director, VCS, VHA Central Office.

c. **Canteen Service Managers.** Canteen Service Managers must:

(1) Ensure that labor-management relations responsibilities are fulfilled prior to implementing any changes involving conditions of employment at the facility.

(2) Ensure full compliance with all local, state and Federal requirements and VA and VHA policies, practices and directives associated with VHA facility OSH and fire protection programs. **NOTE:** *Canteen Service Managers may request assistance in compliance, or inspections related to compliance, when the need arises.*

(3) Develop and implement written policies and procedures that are in compliance with and support the facility's policies related to OSH and fire protection programs, as well as applicable local, state, Federal and VA requirements.

(4) Develop and provide service-specific training addressing compliance with established OSH and fire protection policies and procedures in Canteen operations.

(5) Solicit expertise or assistance from facility resources in the development of local policies and/or training initiatives, as needed.

(6) Document and track all OSH and fire protection training using the facility's system approved for documenting and tracking training.

(7) Require that contractors performing maintenance, renovation or construction in Canteen service areas comply with local Canteen and facility OSH and fire protection policies, relevant VA construction standards and guidelines and applicable local, state and Federal requirements.

(8) Participate in inspections, evaluations and job hazard analyses of Canteen work areas and operations intended to identify OSH and fire protection hazards.

(9) Ensure that immediate action is taken to eliminate OSH and fire hazards identified during Canteen inspections and evaluations. **NOTE:** *VCS Managers are to request assistance and/or required resources from the facility Director or from the Director, Veterans Canteen Service, as appropriate.*

(10) Provide and require the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for all employees, as identified in the facility PPE hazard assessment.

(11) Ensure that all VCS employees fully and actively participate in the facility OSH and fire protection programs by:

(a) Requiring that each employee attend all required OSH and fire protection training provided by the facility. **NOTE:** *Alternative training methods that have been approved by the facility Safety Manager or Industrial Hygienist may be used to minimize adverse impact on customer service and/or operations.*

(b) Requiring that each employee comply with established facility and Canteen OSH and fire protection policies and procedures and applicable local, state and Federal requirements. Upon in-processing, all new VCS employees must attend new employee orientation conducted by the facility, as well as VCS-specific training provided by the employee's supervisor.

(c) Requiring all employees participate, as specified, in the facility's emergency response plan, and in fire and emergency drills.

(d) Encouraging employee participation in hazard surveillance activities, including reporting of hazards in work areas to appropriate supervisors.

(e) Requiring employees to report all job-related injuries and illnesses to their supervisor immediately. **NOTE:** *Employees and supervisors are to complete required accident-reporting and workers' compensation forms in accordance with VHA and VHA facility policy and requirements.*

## 5. REFERENCES

a. Executive Order 12196, Section 1-201d.

b. Public Law 91-596, Section 19.

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- c. VHA Manual M-1 Part IV.
- d. VHA Manual M-1 Part IV, Chapter 1, paragraph 1.02(g).
- e. VA Directive 7700.
- f. VA Handbook 7700.1.

**6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10NB) and the Director, Veterans Canteen Service (103) are responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be referred to the VCS Washington Liaison Officer at 202-565-6045.

**7. RECISSIONS:** None. This VHA Directive expires October 31, 2007.

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Under Secretary for Health

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