

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Val Verde Regional Medical Center

801 Bedell Avenue
Del Rio, Texas 78840

“Quality Healthcare Here At Home”

Policies in this manual are effective March 15, 2006, for all Val Verde Regional Medical Center employees, and are subject to change or revision without advance notice. This handbook supersedes previous publications and does not constitute an expressed or implied contract.

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VAL VERDE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

“QUALITY HEALTHCARE HERE AT HOME”

This manual is designed to provide you with information concerning Val Verde Regional Medical Center and your job. This manual is not a contract modifying the “at-will” nature of your employment with the hospital. It is, instead, a set of informational guidelines and its provisions may be modified, revoked or changed at any time without notice.

Employment by the hospital is not for a definitive period and may be terminated by you or VVRMC at any time and for any reason. No employee or representative of the hospital has any authority to make any oral or implied agreement, which changes or contradicts the “at-will” nature of your employment. This can only be modified by an express written agreement signed by the *Chief Executive Officer/Administrator* of the hospital.

This handbook is VVRMC property and requires that any individual ceasing employment at the hospital return the handbook to Human Resources upon termination.

Welcome to Val Verde Regional Medical Center:

As a new employee, you will play an important role in determining how we are viewed in the community and surrounding areas we serve. We appreciate your willingness to commit to the Mission of our hospital, as well as our customer service standards.

In this handbook, you will find responsibilities and privileges that you have as an employee. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the contents of your handbook. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to ask your Supervisor, Department Head, or the Human Resources Department.

You have joined an exceptional team of healthcare professionals and much is expected of you. On behalf of our Board of Directors and Administration, thank you for your contribution to our future!

Sincerely,

Polly Davenport
Chief Executive Officer

Our History

Val Verde Memorial Hospital was established in 1959. It was licensed for 40 beds and served a community of approximately 20,000 residents. From 1969 through 1971, the hospital was remodeled and additional beds were added. In February 1982, a new 24-bed wing was opened. In the fall of 1996, another wing was opened that included a Primary Care Clinic, an ultra modern physical therapy gym, an outpatient referral center, an expanded day surgery center and a new Women's Health Center.

In February 1997, Val Verde Memorial Hospital's name changed to Val Verde Regional Medical Center.

In June 2002, an 11 million dollar construction/renovation project was completed, adding 3500 square feet with an additional 3000 square feet renovated as well. This construction project included a new Emergency Department, Primary Care Center, Radiology, Outpatient Laboratory, Respiratory Care, Business Office, and much more! The goal of this construction was to enhance the availability of outpatient services to our patients and their families.

Currently, the hospital is licensed for 93 beds and serves a community of approximately 42,000 residents.

Our Mission

Here at Val Verde Regional Medical Center, our goal is to:

Provide the availability of high quality healthcare services to all residents and visitors of the hospital district and surrounding service areas.

Respond to community needs by empowering employees, physicians, board members, and volunteers to use their wisdom, skills, and talents in providing quality healthcare and education to our community and visitors.

Interact with other healthcare providers through collaborative and cooperative arrangements to broaden our scope of services.

Demonstrate fiscal responsibility to those whom we serve by exercising sound financial principles and moral integrity.

Emphasize excellence through Continuous Quality Improvement as we seek innovative strategies to maximize efficiency, cost effectiveness, and quality of service.

Our Vision

Building on our rich tradition of caring, VVRMC will be the leading healthcare provider of rural hospitals in the State of Texas. We will be a center to promote, guide, and provide the highest quality healthcare within and beyond the hospital's walls. We will optimize and continually improve accessibility, quality, and cost effectiveness of services for all our customers. VVRMC will be the employer of choice, recognize the value of this vision, and embrace change as the key to success.

Human Resources Philosophy

The management of VVRMC has the responsibility and the right to exercise the customary functions of management in a manner consistent with its philosophy. The Hospital Board and Management believe it is in the best interest of its patients and its employees to remain union-free, to work as a team to provide uninterrupted, consistent patient care and to provide employment opportunities whenever possible.

Employees have the right and responsibility to convey their concerns and questions about patient care and about their employment to management through formal and informal communication channels. Open communications can assure that problems are solved quickly and fairly.

Open Communications

Communication is key to effective cooperation. Mutual discussions will improve understanding and benefit the working environment. Communication is also a two-way process. Therefore, it is important that you remember to:

Ask questions - Talk with your supervisor or department leader if there is anything you do not understand about VVRMC, your department, or your job.

Make suggestions - When you have a suggestion, share it with your department leader or supervisor. Help create a better place in which to work by improving patient care, increasing safety, eliminating waste, reducing costs and saving time.

Read communications - Carefully read handbooks, policies, memos, letters, payroll check enclosures, bulletin boards, newsletters and other written communications.

Attend meetings - Attend all meetings, training, and in-service programs scheduled by your supervisor or department leader.

Customer Service

Excellence in Customer Service is focused on creating and maintaining a unique, caring environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect. This focus is fully supported by all VVRMC managers. Patients, visitors, board members, volunteers, suppliers, employees, and all who come in contact with Val Verde Regional Medical Center are our customers. Caring for them and meeting or exceeding their expectations, is always our goal.

All employees are expected to follow the Behavioral Expectations listed below and consistently treat everyone with the same dignity and respect they would expect for themselves.

Behavioral Expectations

It is the responsibility of every Val Verde Regional Medical Center employee to treat all of our customers, including patients, families, physicians, co-workers, and all outside contacts, with courtesy, dignity, respect, and professionalism. The following are specific expected performance and customer service standards by which all employees, including contract and agency, are measured in their appraisals:

Courtesy

- Welcome and/or greet customers in a professional, polite, and respectful manner.
- Greet others in hallways, elevators and at workstations with a kind word or smile.
- Assist people in finding proper resources for problem resolution.
- Assist customers in finding their way around our facility.
- Make eye contact; introduce yourself and explain purpose, when appropriate.
- Listen carefully; do not interrupt; give people your full attention.

Respect

- Respect privacy and dignity.
- Use a professional and respectful tone of voice.
- Discuss confidential or sensitive information about customers, employees, or hospital business only with those having a valid need to know and do so privately, never in public areas. **Remember HIPAA!**
- Do not make disparaging remarks about others.
- Respect individual and cultural differences.

Responsiveness

- Respond to requests for help in a timely manner.
- Provide the services or information requested, or find someone who can.
- Provide a timeframe for providing service and explain any delays.

Communication

- Offer information on departmental processes and procedures, when appropriate.
- Invite questions and comments.
- Communicate with clarity and professionalism both orally and in writing.
- Keep people informed while resolving issues or getting answers to questions.
- Communicate at the comprehension level of the person being helped. Arrange for interpretation services when needed.

Teamwork

- Take responsibility for improving processes and systems. Always look for new and better ways of doing things.
- Work as a member of the VVRMC team; perform your duties in a way that makes it easier for others to perform theirs.
- Follow through in meeting deadlines and keeping promises.
- Work with customers and clients to address complaints, frustrations, and service concern; communicate compliments and suggestions.

- Participate openly and share opinions honestly.
- Maintain positive working relationships with co-workers and customers.
- Demonstrate willingness to accept assignments in a positive manner.

Professionalism

- Present a positive image.
- While on duty, wear name badge so that your name, title, and photo is clearly visible at all times.
- Limit eating, drinking, and smoking to designated areas.
- Avoid personal conversations with co-workers when providing patient care or other customer service.
- Make no inappropriate or negative comment about patients, co-workers, physicians, or any part of VVRMC in the presence or within hearing distance of any customer.
- Demonstrate pride in your workplace by keeping areas clean and safe.
- Demonstrate a professional attitude toward co-workers and customers.
- Demonstrate an ongoing responsibility and commitment to the job through attendance and punctuality.
- Follow appropriate telephone guidelines.
- Maintain a professional appearance.

Employment Relationship

This Employee Handbook has been prepared to provide you with information concerning the Hospital's policies and benefits. While we hope to be able to continue the policies and benefits discussed in the handbook, changes to may be made from time to time by the hospital. When changes are made, it may be with or without prior notification. Memos, postings, departmental meetings or other means may be utilized in the notification of employees.

We hope that our employment relationship will be long and mutually beneficial. However, notwithstanding any other provision of this handbook, all employment at VVRMC is on an **at-will** basis: either the employee or VVRMC is free to terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause. No exceptions to this policy will be recognized unless contained in a written employment agreement signed by the Administrator of VVRMC and the employee. Nobody has the authority to modify this policy verbally.

This Employee Handbook supersedes all prior employee handbooks.

Equal Employment Opportunity / Non-Discrimination

VVRMC provides equal employment opportunities to all, in accordance with state and federal law. It is the policy of VVRMC not to discriminate against any applicants and employee because of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, pregnancy or disability. In addition, harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sexuality, gender, national origin, pregnancy, or disability is *strictly prohibited*.

Persons with disabilities will be considered for employment so long as they are otherwise qualified to perform the essential functions of the job, provided that any necessary accommodation does not create an undue hardship for the hospital.

This non-discrimination policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

It is also the policy of the hospital to admit and treat all patients on a non-discriminatory basis in accordance with state and federal law. The same requirements for admissions, assignment and transfer within the hospital are applied to all patients. There is no distinction in eligibility for any patient service provided by the hospital, or by others inside or outside of the Hospital. All facilities are available without discrimination and rules of courtesy are uniformly applied in accordance with state and federal law. Staff privileges and the referral of patients to or from the Hospital are also granted in accordance with state and federal law.

Diversity

The hospital has a diverse workforce and patient census. Therefore, it is always important to respect and be aware of the ethnic and cultural values of a heterogeneous population. That which may be the norm for a particular group of people may not hold true for another group. Values and expectations may also be different, so it is important to be familiar with the different aspects of various population groups. This is imperative in all aspects including, but not limited to the hiring, working relationships and the provision of healthcare services.

Accommodation of Individuals with Disabilities

VVRMC complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any applicable state laws providing for non-discrimination in employment against qualified individuals with disabilities. The Hospital also provides reasonable accommodation for such individuals in accordance with these laws.

Procedure for Requesting an Accommodation

Qualified individuals with disabilities may make requests for reasonable accommodation to the Director of Human Resources. Upon receipt of the request, the Director will meet with the requesting individual to discuss and identify the precise limitations resulting from the disability and the potential accommodation that the Hospital might make to help overcome those limitations.

The hospital will inform the employee of its decision regarding the accommodation request and/or how to accommodate the employee.

Employment

Application for Employment

It is the policy of VVRMC to provide all qualified individuals with the opportunity to seek employment at this institution. Applications for employment are available in the Human Resources (HR) Department and may be completed with or without assistance by those individuals.

Applications will only be made available when there are vacancies to be filled. No individual will be considered for employment without first submitting an application for employment to the HR Department. Incomplete applications may be summarily rejected. Applicants for regular, full-time employment must be at least 18 years of age.

Completed applications for employment will be maintained in the HR Department and are considered to be the sole property of the organization and its authorized agents. Applications for employment are considered to be "active" for a period of 90 days, after which the applicant will need to submit a new application if he/she wants to be considered for employment.

Applicant Referrals / Employment of Relatives

Various recruiting sources are utilized to identify applicants including employee referral. Employees are encouraged to refer qualified applicants by directing applications and/or resumes to management or Human Resources.

When making a referral, employees should be aware of our policy concerning the employment of relatives. Relatives who are able to qualify on their own merit will be considered. However, an employee will not be placed in a position with authority over another relative. In the employment process, care is taken so that personal relationships do not have a negative effect on working relationships.

Anniversary Date

All employees establish an anniversary date on the date of their employment. Part-time and pool employees who change their status to full-time will maintain their original anniversary date; it will not be adjusted to the number of hours worked during the part-time period.

A temporary employee who changes to regular full-time or part-time status will receive an adjusted anniversary date to the day full-time or part-time status is obtained.

Benefits begin accruing the first day of the month following employee reaching full time status (Ex: If employee goes full-time July 13, benefits will start accruing August 1). Most benefits for newly hired full time and part-time employees will begin on the first of the month following the month of hire.

Beginning in October, 2006 all employees will be changed to an anniversary date of October for merit increase purposes. Employees who have changes in their pay due to promotions, demotions and adjustments will be prorated to maintain an October anniversary date. Job titles, which receive salary adjustments due to competitive adjustments will not have a prorated anniversary date and will maintain the October adjustment date. Employees who take on new responsibilities and have job description changes along with a salary adjustment will be treated as promotions.

Assignment of Duty/Working Hours

Hospital patient care is a 24/7 responsibility. Work must be scheduled to provide care for patients around-the-clock. It is, therefore, the obligation and prerogative of the administration of the hospital to establish work schedules.

Your department head or supervisor, according to the staffing requirements of the department, will determine your schedule. Your supervisor will inform you as to your hours of work, days off, lunch time, rest periods, etc. There may be times when employees are required to work shifts, hours, or in units where they do not normally work, as patient care necessitates.

The responsibility for assigning duties to employees, within the limits of the job descriptions, rests with the supervisors and Department Directors. Employees will be expected to carry out these assignments to the best of their ability with a cooperative and helpful attitude. Assignments may not be changed without the knowledge and permission of the Supervisor responsible.

Attendance

Dependability is one of the most valued characteristics of an effective employee. Employees are expected to report to work as scheduled. If, for any reason, you find it necessary to be absent or late for work, immediately notify your supervisor or the next level manager. This notification should be made by the employee personally as soon as possible or according to departmental policy but prior to scheduled start time for the shift.

In the case of nursing staff, employees are expected to notify the supervisor no less than two hours prior to the beginning of the scheduled shift. Other hospital and clinical employees are expected to notify their managers as per the requirements in the respective departments per the unit manager. Employees are required to discuss unit-specific procedure with their managers. Employees are expected to personally talk to their supervisor, charge nurse or other designee as assigned by the department procedure. Leaving a message is not acceptable.

According to the attendance policy, an absence is defined as any unscheduled time away from work, regardless of the reason.

Tardiness and leaving work early are regarded as absences of short duration. Certain times away from work are not counted as absences. Please check with your supervisor to verify the effect of time away from work.

Absence of three (3) days or more due to illness will require a Doctor's certificate upon return to work.

The following are not counted as absences:

Paid Time Off (PTO scheduled)	Military Leave of Absence	Jury Duty
Educational Time	Regular Days Off	Downtime
Bereavement Leave	Disciplinary Suspension	Family Medical Leave

Supervisors maintain attendance records for all employees. Excessive absence or tardiness can lead to disciplinary action, including termination. Attendance should be improved when absences reach or exceed 3.6 % of scheduled work time. Additionally, attendance needs improvement if 5+ absences occur more during a 12 month period.

Please discuss the attendance policy and proper procedures for scheduling time off with your immediate supervisor.

Penalties

Late Arrival – Early Departure

- Employees who are late for work or who leave work early three (3) times within any 30-day period will receive a written warning. The employee will also be given an unexcused absence.
- Employees who are late for work or who- leave early four (4) times within a 60-day period will be suspended with or without pay for three (3) days. The employee will also be given an unexcused absence.
- Employees who are late for work or who leave work early five (5) times within a 60-day period will be terminated.

Any combination of late arrival or early departure, which produce the requisite number of occurrences, will result in the disciplinary action listed above. Any employee who desires to leave work early must notify their Department Director/supervisor of the reason for the early departure. The reason for the early departure must be of such a nature that it would qualify as an excused absence. Employees who leave work early without permission will be subject to immediate discharge.

Job Abandonment

Any employee who is absent from work for three (3) days without personally contacting the Department Director/Supervisor about their absence will be deemed to have **resigned** their position.

Recruiting and Hiring

It is the policy of the Hospital to hire individuals who are qualified or trainable for the essential functions of the position with or without a reasonable accommodation. All decisions regarding the recruitment, selection, and placement of employees are made on a non-discriminatory basis, in accordance with state and federal law.

Every effort will be made to hire employees for positions which best utilize their abilities and in which they will be able to achieve both personal satisfaction and opportunity for growth. In no event shall the hiring of an employee be considered a contractual relationship between the employee and the Hospital. Unless otherwise provided in writing, such relationship shall be defined as employment "at-will", where either party may dissolve the relationship at any time.

All vacant positions are reported to the HR Department. Human Resources will provide the hiring manager with qualified applicants. If HR determines that the applicant is eligible for employment, the department manager will make an appointment for the interview between the applicant and the hiring department head.

Employer New Hire Reporting Program

In order to comply with state legislation, VVRMC reports newly hired and rehired employees to a State database. This database will allow the State and Federal government to utilize this information to assist in the collection of child support for families. Furthermore, the program hopes to detect and prevent fraud of state benefits.

Employment Classifications

Employment with the Val Verde Regional Medical Center is under one of the following categories:

A REGULAR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE is one who is regularly scheduled for 72 or more hours in a pay period (14 days). Such employees are eligible for most benefits on the first day of the first full month of employment.

A REGULAR PART-TIME EMPLOYEE is one who is regularly scheduled to work less than 72 hours a pay period (14 days). Unless otherwise provided in this manual, such employees are eligible for some benefits including: Worker's Compensation, Social Security, 403(b) Plan (with employer match), life insurance, some LOA's, and any other benefits expressed in the handbook specific to part-time employees.

A POOL/PRN EMPLOYEE is one who is scheduled to cover shifts as needed and they will be required to float to other departments, should the need arise. Unless otherwise provided in this manual, POOL/PRN employees are eligible for Worker's Compensation, 403(b) Plan (without employer match), Employee Assistance Program, and Social Security.

A TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE is one who is hired for a specific period of time, usually less than 90 days, or for the duration of a particular job. Unless otherwise stated in a particular policy, temporary employees are not eligible for any fringe benefits other than Worker's Compensation and Social Security.

ANNIVERSARY DATE: A temporary or Pool/PRN employee who changes to regular full-time or part-time status will receive an adjusted service date to the date full-time or part-time status is obtained. Beginning in October 2006 all employees, for purpose of merit increases, will be changed to an October 1 anniversary date. If a promotion, demotion or other pay increase is made on any date other than October 1, it will be prorated to maintain the October anniversary date.

Employment Selection and Process

It is the policy of VVRMC to adhere to the following guidelines pertaining to employment selection and the employment process. These guidelines will ensure that all potential applicants prior to a final employment decision meet employment criteria. Applicants will be considered for employment based on their ability to perform the job for which they are being considered.

Employment Selection

1. Applications should only be provided to applicants when there are specific posted vacancies or positions to be filled. If not hiring, no application should be provided.
2. All applications are accepted and screened by the Human Resources Department.
3. All applicants must be at least 18 years of age prior to consideration of employment.
4. References must be checked prior to the start of work. References failing to meet facility standards will cause the applicant to be denied employment.
5. Drug screens will be conducted prior to final offer of employment. The medical center will decline to extend a final offer of employment to any applicant with a verified positive test result. Procedures will be used to assure the integrity of the sample being provided and a chain of custody. An offer of employment will be contingent on a negative drug screen result.
6. Criminal background checks will be made on an applicant being considered for a position once a conditional offer of employment has been made. The conviction of a crime may or may not deter the candidate from a position.
7. Division Directors may review selected applications and references after the Department Director/supervisor has conducted interviews.
8. Notification of a job offer will be made by the Human Resources Department.

9. Reasons for non-selection will not be discussed with unsuccessful candidates by supervisors, managers, etc. Refer any inquires to the Human Resources Director. All internal applicants (current VVRMC employees) will be notified by the Healthcare Recruiter of the employment decision.

Employment Process

1. Newly hired employees are required to complete the employment process in the HR Department prior to the first day of work or the first day of Orientation.
2. This process will involve the completion of necessary forms and preliminary instructions with regard to the benefits and responsibilities of employment.

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Licenses

If the law requires that an employee be licensed or registered, they will be asked to present evidence of current licensure or registration at the time of their interview. Human Resources will copy and verify all licenses and certifications upon hire.

Licensed or certified employees must also present proof of a renewed license/certification to the department head during the course of employment. The department manager will maintain current licenses on the respective units. The nursing office will maintain and validate all nursing department licenses/certifications upon renewal and prior to expiration dates.

Licensure/Certifications are the responsibility of the individual employee and not the hospital. Employees are expected to keep licenses and certifications current and ensure that an accurate record is maintained. Employees will not be permitted to work if the required licenses have expired and will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or termination of employment.

All employees who receive a notice of investigation, reprimand, probation, suspension, or other disciplinary action from any licensing agency must immediately notify their supervisor of the action. VVRMC will review each employee's situation and make a decision regarding employment that is in the best interest of the hospital, patients, and employees. The organization reserves the right to terminate the employment of any employee under investigation or receiving any type of disciplinary action from their Licensing Boards.

Orientation

An orientation program is conducted for all newly hired employees. The primary purpose of the orientation program is to acquaint new employees with hospital rules, policies, and procedures. Additional subjects to be covered shall be determined by the Human Resources and/or Staff Development Departments. Supervisors have a vital part in meeting the needs of new employees through unit specific orientation. Feel free to ask them questions at any time.

Competencies and Age Related Competencies

All employees should have a skills or competency evaluation upon initial hire and annually thereafter. These competencies that are evaluated by the manager or other qualified supervisor and indicate that the employee is able to perform the duties for which they were hired. This is required of all regular, contract, and PRN staff.

All employees that provide patient care services are required to complete competencies that are age related. An employee must demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to provide care appropriate to the age of the patient served. This is also an annual requirement and is necessary for all regular, contract and PRN staff.

The competency program at Val Verde Regional Medical Center includes the following components:

1. Licensure (as required)
2. Orientation documentation
3. Credentials documentation
 - a. Skills checklist
 - b. Unit competencies
 - c. Educational records
4. Performance appraisals

Pre-Employment:

The competence of applicants is evaluated through:

- Verification of current license
- Proof of completion of training/certification program for specialized practice
- Reference checks
- Work history
- Employment interview
- Credentials verification (as necessary)

Unit-Specific Orientation

Unit-specific orientation conducted by the Department Director/designee is carried out for all new employees and those employees being cross-trained. The unit preceptor or department director will assess the orientee's unit-specific proficiency as outlined on the unit-specific skills checklist. The unit specific orientation should be completed on the first day the employee is assigned to the unit.

Unit-Specific Initial Competencies

All clinical area employees will be required to complete the initial age-specific unit competencies within 90 days of hire. This allows the facility to validate that the employee is competent to perform all duties for which they were hired.

Clinical staff will be required to complete additional annual age specific skills competencies concerning those skills not used on a regular basis. These should be completed no later than May or June of each year and documented with the annual performance reviews.

Completion of 90-day Introductory Period

All new employees and THOSE transferring into new positions have a 90-day introductory period in which to learn their new job. Employees should learn their duties as outlined in their job description and performance standards. Employees are encouraged to ask questions and seek feedback on their progress during this time.

At the conclusion of the 90-day introductory period, the Department Director/supervisor will conduct a performance evaluation of the new employee. The Department Director/supervisor may conclude or extend the introductory period as determined by the 90-day evaluation. Documentation of the evaluation for the 90-day introductory period will be maintained for the length of employment in the personnel file.

The Department Director/supervisor will communicate to the employee all relevant information regarding current competency and performance. Employees are not eligible for merit-based increases after the 90-day evaluation.

Job Descriptions

Each employee at VVRMC has a job description that outlines the essential and primary duties of their particular job. The job descriptions and standards also detail the measurement criteria used to evaluate an employee's performance. Current job descriptions are the basis for our performance evaluation system, since they describe the level of performance necessary to succeed in a job.

All employees should receive a current job description and standards when they begin working at VVRMC, as well as at their annual evaluation time. Employees that transfer to a new position will need to review and sign a job description specific to the new position.

Annual Performance Reviews

Starting in July of 2006, all employee evaluations will be completed in July and August of each year for the twelve-month period ending June 30th of each fiscal year with the annual pay adjustments made in October. As of October 2006, all employee annual evaluations will be prorated based on the employee anniversary date.

Employees will be required to have all annual competencies, TB tests, and any other required documentation completed and submitted to their managers before July 1 of each year. Failure to have all required documentation completed as due, will make the employee ineligible for any pay increases and may result in disciplinary action. Required documentation includes, but is not limited to CPR, re-orientation, age-related/skills competencies, TB testing, etc.

The job performance of each employee shall be evaluated on the basis of experience, training, job description, and the attainment of any previously set objectives and goals. Factors to be considered in the performance appraisal include (but are not limited to): knowledge of the job, quantity and quality of work, promptness in completing assignments, cooperation, initiative, reliability, attendance, judgment, acceptance of responsibility and customer service.

The person directly supervising an employee will be responsible for evaluating their performance. Employees will have an opportunity to see their evaluations during the performance review and sign the evaluation, indicating it has been explained and discussed with the employee. During this review, feel free to discuss your evaluation and your job with your supervisor.

If you have not received a performance review in accordance with the above time frames, it is your responsibility to notify your supervisor and the HR Department (in writing) about this matter. This will help the hospital ensure the appraisal process is administered in a timely manner.

A performance appraisal is not a contract or commitment to provide a salary increase, bonus, or continued employment. Your appraisal is only one of several factors the hospital uses in connection with compensation, bonuses, promotion and retention decisions. Any bonuses offered at any time to any employees are intermittent and not to be construed as a regular occurrence. Many things determine bonus availability, and any such incentives may be changed, revised or withdrawn at any time with or without notice.

Merit increases are awarded to those employees who:

- Perform at an acceptable level
- Meet attendance standards
- Attend mandatory training
- Meet all job competency requirements

Merit increases to the base hourly pay rate, are received unless an employee has reached the maximum of the pay range. In these cases, the merit increase comes in a lump sum payment based on a percentage of the employee's gross pay in prior three months.

Performance reviews with merit eligibility are conducted for full-time and part-time employees (that work at least 500 hours per year) after one year of continuous service in the same job. PRN employees are reviewed for performance each year but are ineligible for merit-base increases. Employees are not eligible to receive an increase at the 90-day performance review.

Employees that transfer from one position to another will have an evaluation completed by the manager losing the employee.

All the performance evaluations are kept in the employee files in Human Resources. Any questions regarding performance evaluation/merit eligibility dates should be directed to your supervisor or Human Resources.

The Department Director/Supervisor

The Department Director/Supervisor assures all required competencies have been satisfactorily completed.

An employee rehired within one (1) year or transferring to another department must display current competency in the areas not previously granted or those additional competencies determined by the Department Director/supervisor.

Training of Supervisory and Management Staff

It is the responsibility of the Administrator/Division Director to ensure that an evaluation of supervisor and management competencies is carried out at the appropriate level. This evaluation will be upon completion of the 90-day introductory period and annually thereafter.

Any identified deficiencies in knowledge or skills related to supervisory or management responsibilities are documented in the individual's personnel file. The Staff Development Department may assist the individual develop a personal education plan to address identified deficiencies and/or meet specific goals and objectives as requested by the Division Manager.

Continuing Education

VVRMC offers CPR, PALS, and ACLS, as well as other educational opportunities for continuing education. Contact Staff Development for further information.

CPR Certification

It is the policy of Val Verde Regional Medical Center that clinical hospital employees, including contract service employees, maintain a current CPR certification. Employees who allow their CPR certification to expire have 30 days to renew the certification. Failure to obtain renewals within the 30 days will result in suspension without pay until certification is obtained. New employees should obtain CPR within 2 weeks of hire.

Non-clinical hospital employees will be encouraged to maintain a current CPR certification although it will not be mandatory. It is the responsibility of the employee and department manager to ensure current CPR certification is maintained. Employees must attend a VVRMC CPR class or present a copy of a current certification issued by an approved agency to the Staff Development Department.

Confidentiality

All information regarding patients is strictly confidential. VVRMC will follow all Federal and State confidentiality requirements including HIPAA.

Any violation of patient/hospital confidentiality or release of medical information by an employee, without authorization, may result in immediate dismissal. Medical records may not be removed from the hospital except by court order or subpoena.

Employees having questions concerning confidentiality requirements should contact their Supervisor, Department Manager or Administration.

Confidentiality of Pay Rates

Employees' pay rates are considered highly personal and confidential. Questions regarding your pay rate should be directed to your supervisor or Human Resources. Discussion of personal pay rates is inappropriate and may result in disciplinary action.

Conflicts of Interest

It is the policy of VVRMC to prohibit employees from engaging in any activity, practice, or act which conflicts with the interests of the hospital or its patients. Situations which create a conflict of loyalty, or even give the appearance of such a conflict, must be avoided unless approved by the Chief Executive Officer. It is not feasible to specify all possibilities which may give rise to a conflict of interest. The following, however, illustrates certain types of more serious potential conflicts:

1. Involvement, directly or indirectly, in outside commercial interests which could influence the decisions or actions of an employee and the performance of his job.
2. Acceptance by an employee or family member of gifts, entertainment or favors which go beyond common courtesies usually associated with accepted business practice and which could place the employee under obligation to a vendor or other persons seeking to do business with the company.
3. Maintenance of an interest by an employee or family member in a business with which the company is about to have dealings. It is the employee's responsibility to disclose such an interest to his immediate supervisor so that the company's business decision can be made by an individual with no self-interest in the matter.

4. Performance of work, even part-time, by an employee of the company/hospital in any other commercial enterprise.
5. Maintenance by an employee or family member of an ownership interest, directly or indirectly, in any vendor, which supplies goods or services to the company.
6. Use of company employees, material, equipment or other company property for personal purposes.
7. Using or revealing confidential information concerning the company outside of the hospital environment, or using confidential or "insider" information obtained as a result of employment with the Company for personal gain.

Any employee intentionally violating this policy is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal, and, if appropriate, the company may seek to recover any improperly gotten gains and/or encourage prosecution for any possible criminal offenses.

Expectations/Teamwork Policies

Expectations / Teamwork Guidelines

In any business where many people work together, some specific rules and regulations are necessary to define acceptable conduct and to promote the smooth function of the business as a whole.

The purpose of the following rules is to ensure safety and fairness for all employees. These work rules are not intended to be "all inclusive". Additional expectations may be communicated during the course of employment.

At VVRMC, we feel the great majority of employees strive to make positive contributions and will abide by the rules when they are known. For this reason, we have specified acts of misconduct which, if committed, will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Specific acts include, but are not limited to:

1. Falsification of time and attendance, personnel records or any hospital record.
2. Repeated tardiness or absence. Absence without proper notification to the supervisor or without satisfactory reason.
3. Inattention to duties, loafing, or wasting time during work hours.
4. Smoking on hospital premises except in approved smoking areas.
5. Gambling, participating in lotteries or any other game of chance for money on the hospital premises at any time.
6. Solicitation, collecting money, or circulating petitions at any time without express permission of the management.
7. Bringing onto the hospital premises, using, having in one's possession or being under the influence while on duty any of the following: alcohol, unlawful drugs, firearms, unauthorized prescription drugs, or controlled substances.
8. Abuse or waste of hospital equipment, supplies, or other property.
9. Creating or contributing to unhealthy or unsanitary conditions.
10. Violation of safety rules or common safety practices.
11. Horseplay, disorderly conduct, or use of abusive language or profanity on the hospital premises or while on duty off hospital premises.
12. Fighting, agitating a fight, or attempting bodily harm to another person.
13. Insubordination.
14. Refusal of an employee to follow instructions or perform designated work normally required of an employee.
15. Neglect of duty or failure to meet a reasonable measure of efficiency, productivity, or quality.
16. Failure to be at work at the start of the shift, end of the break or lunch period or failure to remain at a work station up to the start of the break, lunch period, or the end of the shift.
17. Theft or dishonesty.

18. Creating a condition hazardous to a patient, fellow employee, or others.
19. Leaving the premises during working hours without your supervisor's permission.
20. Destroying or defacing hospital property or any other property which is not your own.
21. Visiting in other departments during the working hours without permission or interfering with other employees' work.
22. Creating or contributing to a negative work environment as it relates to illegal discrimination and/or sexual harassment.
23. Unauthorized use of hospital telephones or other equipment.
24. Misuse of confidential information.
25. Refusal or failure to follow proper universal precautions or use appropriate personal protective equipment as determined by the exposure control plan.
26. Violation of Customer Service Standards.
27. Violation of Principles of Privacy and Confidentiality.
28. Violation of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) policies and procedures.
29. Failure to cooperate in a hospital conducted investigation.
30. Sleeping on the job.
31. Any activity that reflects negatively on the facility or any part of the organization.

Disciplinary Action

The primary purpose of disciplinary action is to modify behavior to assure conformance with work standards, policies, and procedures of VVRMC. There are various forms of discipline, each recognized by the organization as equitable and proper in certain situations. (Please also refer to the Performance Improvement Plan)

The administration of discipline by a supervisor may include all of the forms or may include only one depending on the gravity of the offense. Some policy violations may result in written warnings whereas; other violations may result in immediate termination of employment based on the severity or gravity of the infraction. Various forms of disciplinary action that may be taken are verbal or written warnings, probation, final warning, suspension, and termination.

Verbal Counseling

If an employee fails to meet the organization's standards of performance or professional conduct in any way, the supervisor may counsel verbally. Verbal warnings need to be documented and signed by the employee and supervisor/manager and are submitted to the employee's personnel file.

Written Conference

Failure to follow policy, procedure and rules or failure to meet job standards can result in a written conference, which will include definition of the problem and action to be taken to correct the problem. Written conferences are signed by the supervisor and the employee and placed in the employee's personnel file. By signing the form, the employee is acknowledging that they have talked with their supervisor and received a copy of the conference form. Employees are encouraged to write their response to the conference in the space provided on the form.

Final Warning and/or Suspension

If performance problems or behavior are serious and not improving, the supervisor may issue a final warning, indicating that the situation will lead to termination if not corrected. The supervisor may suspend an employee for serious infractions or performance problems.

Temporary Suspension

At times, an employee may be suspended pending a thorough investigation of an incident and a decision on the employee's continued employment. This allows supervisors to act promptly in a serious situation and conduct a thorough investigation and review of the facts. After a decision is made as to further action or termination, the supervisor will meet with the employee to communicate their decision.

Dismissal

In cases where progressive discipline is used to solve a problem, the employee is expected to improve identified problem behaviors. If such behaviors continue past a final warning, termination will result.

Each employee's disciplinary action is confidential between the employee, supervisor, and others on a need-to-know basis.

Termination

VVRMC retains its legal right as an "at will" employer.

Generally, VVRMC uses progressive discipline for problems, which can be corrected by the employee. The process may begin at any step based on the severity of the infraction.

In cases where VVRMC elects to use progressive discipline to solve a problem, the employee is expected to improve identified problem areas. If behavior continues past a final warning, termination will likely result.

VVRMC may elect immediate termination depending upon applicable circumstances. Just as employees are free to terminate their employment for any reason, VVRMC likewise retains the right to terminate employees for any reason it deems necessary or appropriate. Nothing contained in these policies and nothing said or done by any employee of the facility, other than a duly authorized and signed written agreement by the CEO of VVRMC, is effective to limit this right of "at-will" employment in any way.

Termination during the 90-day orientation period because an employee is not capable of performing the work is not considered disciplinary action and will not be noted as such in the personnel file.

Dismissal, discipline, and suspension should always be coordinated with the Human Resources Director prior to accomplishment.

Performance Improvement (PI)

On occasion, managers may request that an employee complete a Performance Improvement plan. This may be in response to poor performance, disciplinary action, a poor score on a 90-day or annual evaluation or any other reason deemed appropriate by the supervising manager.

The performance improvement plan will provide the employee with directions concerning the performance which needs improvement, the time frame allowed for the improvement, the help to be provided by the manager / supervisor in assisting the employee to improve performance. Failure to meet required expectations will have consequences outlined in the PI plan. Consequences may include termination of employment (as the facility disciplinary action process may start at any step in the process) based on the infraction or behavior. The plan should be reviewed and signed by the manager/supervisor and employee.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Val Verde Regional Medical Center is committed to providing a drug-free, safe working environment, which protects employees, patients, visitors, medical staff, and hospital property ensuring satisfactory job performance and appropriate behavior. In accordance with this commitment, VVRMC conducts pre-employment drug screening and will not hire applicants who test positive.

Grievance Procedure

VVRMC strives to be fair with all employees however, the hospital acknowledges that in any organization problems arise which cannot be solved quickly and easily. For this reason, you may use the hospital grievance procedure if you have a problem that your supervisor has not solved to your satisfaction.

You have the responsibility to contact Human Resources if you have such a problem. Human Resources can provide advice to help you talk informally to your supervisor to attempt conflict resolution. If you wish, Human Resources will help you file a formal grievance.

Employees may file an Employee Grievance Statement Form after 90 days of employment with VVRMC. A grievance must be filed within five working days of the occurrence or condition which caused the problem or it may be deemed waived by the organization. Please feel free to ask for help from Human Resources.

Additional Policies

Meals / Breaks

Depending upon your workplace needs, a 30-minute or 1 hour lunch break is provided without pay in each full shift scheduled. In addition, employees are allowed two 15-minute rest periods in each full shift if the department's workflow permits. It will be necessary for you to consult with your supervisor regarding workflow and scheduling. All breaks must be scheduled through your supervisor/manager. Failure to follow the approved break schedule as determined by the manager and or failure to notify the manager upon leaving the unit may result in disciplinary action. Breaks are not cumulative.

Bulletin Boards

The official VVRMC bulletin boards are centrally located. Notices of events or changes which may affect individuals, departments, or the entire hospital will be posted there. It is the employee's responsibility to check these boards for important notices and current events. Only approved material may be posted on these bulletin boards.

Additional bulletin boards may be in each department and at each nurse's station. The Department Director/supervisor having jurisdiction controls these. All material to be posted must be approved by the appropriate Department Director/supervisor and must be hospital related.

Employees or outside organizations are not authorized to post on any hospital bulletin boards or any other locations at the hospital. Only authorized hospital information is allowed.

Cafeteria

To accommodate employees and visitors, VVRMC has provided a cafeteria. Vending machines are also available in a conveniently located area. Meals may be brought to VVRMC, but they must be eaten in the cafeteria or employee lounge. Employees may also use their time badge to have meals payroll deducted.

Food and drinks provided on the units are for patient use and are not to be consumed by employees. Leftover patient food or drink is to be returned to the Dietary Department.

Call Duty and Callback Assignment

To provide continuous service in necessary situations, employees in some departments are assigned call duty. Employee's on-call must be accessible by telephone or pager and must be available to return to their job within 30 minutes. Non-exempt employees would then be eligible for call back pay.

Chain of Command / Open Door Policy

Although we try to create and maintain good working conditions and relationships, problems and/or complaints may arise from time to time. We want these to be settled promptly and satisfactorily to all concerned.

If you have a problem or complaint, go first to your Department Director/supervisor. They are normally in the best position to help you work out a solution. If you are dissatisfied with the response from the Department or feel you cannot talk with your Division Director about the problem, contact the Human Resources Director.

The facility CEO is also available to hear your issues, although they may request that you discuss your issue with your Manager and Division Director first. We want you to be happy with your job here and have a way to express any and all concerns.

Any employee who, in good faith, makes their complaint known to management will be given full and fair consideration and will not be subject to retaliation. Employees are encouraged to utilize the Grievance Process in these situations.

Change of Employee Information

In order to assist the hospital in keeping its records current, employees are required to report any change in address, telephone number, or other personal data to the Human Resources Department. For insurance and taxation purposes, any change in marital status or number of dependents must also be reported.

Any changes must be in writing with forms available in HR. Employees that move are encouraged to send a change of address as any changes from former employees will need to be in writing with the employee's Social Security number. This may prevent a delay in any tax forms getting to the new location.

Cleanliness

In order to create and maintain the best possible image, all facilities must be kept clean and orderly. Please help by picking up small items of trash, keeping your work area tidy and reporting any unclean conditions to your supervisor or environmental services.

Complaint Procedure for All Forms of Harassment

Any employee who believes that the actions or words of a supervisor or fellow employee constitute unwelcome harassment has a responsibility to promptly report the offense as soon as possible to their supervisor. If the employee believes it would be inappropriate to discuss the matter with their supervisor, they may bypass the supervisor and report it directly to the department head or Human Resources Director.

All complaints of harassment shall be investigated promptly and in an impartial and confidential manner by the supervisor and/or Human Resources Director. An employee's complaint will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. If an employee is not satisfied with the handling of a complaint or the action taken by the supervisor, the employee should bring the complaint to the attention of the Human Resources Director. In all cases, the employee will be advised of the supervisor's and/or Human Resources Director's findings and conclusion.

Any employee, supervisor, or manager who, after appropriate investigation, is found to have engaged in the harassment of another employee will be subject to prompt corrective action, up to and including termination.

Corporate Compliance

VVRMC has a Corporate Compliance Program. This is a voluntary program intended to help all employees be mindful of applicable laws, rules, and regulations that we must meet.

Employees are expected to know the rules and regulations that apply to their area of work. When employees believe, in good faith, that something may be out of compliance with applicable Federal or State laws, they should report them by calling the toll free hotline (1-866-835-3314). Employees may report anonymously and are not penalized in any way for reporting compliance issues. Employees may also contact the hospital Compliance Officer at 1-830-703-1717 or the Corporate Compliance Officer directly at 972-943-6400. Confidentiality will be maintained, to the extent possible under the circumstances.

Courtesy Discount

All full-time and part-time employees, employee's spouse, and eligible dependents are entitled to a 100% discount on the portion of hospital charges not paid by Val Verde Regional Medical Center (VVRMC) group health insurance. Employees, employee's spouse, and eligible dependents must be enrolled in VVRMC group health insurance to be eligible for the 100% discount.

Employees, employee's spouse, and eligible dependents that do not have insurance will be entitled to a 50% discount on his/her account balance.

If a health insurance carrier other than VVRMC's group health insurance insures employee, their spouse, and/or eligible dependent, the patient will not be eligible for a discount on their account balance.

Credits to accounts will not be issued due to a courtesy discount. Eligibility for any courtesy discount and authority to construe the terms of this policy is vested in the sole discretion of the hospital Administrator. This policy as well as any other facility policy may be changed or withdrawn at any time with or without notice.

Employee Assistance Program

Val Verde Regional Medical Center provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist all employees and their immediate family when they need help and support in solving personal problems that affect their personal lives and job performance. Immediate family is defined as any member of the employee's immediate family residing at the employee's home address.

Highly qualified professionals are specially trained to help people identify their problems and locate whatever assistance may be appropriate. Any problem can be brought to the EAP including, but not limited to: marital and financial difficulties, legal concerns, behavioral or emotional problems, and alcohol or other drug-related problems. Employees may contact Human Resources for a brochure or call the EAP number directly at 1-800-397-8989.

Employee Records

The Human Resources Department will maintain a personnel file on all employees.

The employee personnel file will include, at a minimum, the following information:

1. Reference evaluations to justify employment
2. Performance evaluations
3. Payroll information

4. Disciplinary action documentation
5. Initial License verifications

Access to personnel records will be limited to employees of the Human Resources Department, the employee's Department Director, the hospital Administrator, and the employee, except as required by State or Federal law.

Human Resources personnel are the only individuals authorized to release reference information on current and former employees. Written request must be submitted for reference verification. Reference information will not exceed dates of employment and position held.

Employee health examinations and any additional employee health information will be kept in a separate employee medical file in the Human Resources Department.

Employees are required to notify Human Resources as soon as possible of any changes in name, address, phone number, and emergency contact information. Employees must complete and sign a Personnel Action Form and return it to Human Resources. These forms are available in Human Resources.

Employees may request to view their files in writing with a 3-day advance notice. Some copies may also be made at a nominal charge.

Employment Verification

Employment verifications that involve name, hire date, position, FTE status and year-to-date wages for the current year are provided free for all employees. Detailed hours and wages by pay period or for previous years will need to be provided by the employee. Therefore, keep copies of all annual W-2 forms and bi-weekly paycheck stubs. However, if this is not done, the information can be provided for a \$25.00 processing fee. All requests should be submitted to Human Resources 10 days before the due date.

Ethics

All persons who work at VVRMC share the responsibility of observing the code of ethics that regulates the activities of both Doctors and Paramedical personnel. In general, the following applies to all hospital employees.

Doctors alone have the training and legal right to diagnose and treat illnesses and injuries. All information concerning patients or hospital business must be held in strict confidentiality and must not be discussed with people in or out of the Medical Center. Employees are not to burden patients, other employees, or medical staff with their problems. See Board of Directors By Laws – Ethics Committee for further information.

Examinations

All applicants who have accepted a position will be required to undergo a physical examination. Thereafter, the Hospital reserves the right to require an employee to submit to a physical or mental examination at any time as a condition of continued employment.

Such examinations may be required whenever VVRMC has reason to believe an employee's physical or mental status adversely affect the employee's ability to perform essential functions of the employee's job or cause the employee to present a danger to self or others. All requests for such examinations will be submitted to Human Resources prior to any employee notification or request.

Annual basic laboratory testing and Mammography will be completed for full time, part-time and PRN employees at no cost to the employee. This will include contracted departments as well. Employees will be allowed to have the testing one time per year and it will be provided in the months of May and June of each year. Employees may pick up an authorization from Human Resources. Failure to complete the lab or mammogram in May or June will require the employee to wait until the next May or June.

Exit Interviews

When you resign your position at VVRMC, you are encouraged to provide comments and suggestions. Arranging for an Exit Interview with Human Resources will allow us the opportunity to discuss your reasons for leaving and hear any suggestions you may have. Your comments are confidential and appreciated.

Fleet Policy and Procedures

VHASW Community Health Corporation, (CHC) and Val Verde Regional Medical Center (VVRMC) are committed to employee safety both in the workplace and while employees are driving on hospital business. Together they have established a driving policy to protect employees and the public and to control the escalating costs of automobile insurance. Through this policy, CHC and VVRMC establish the standards under which driving privileges are granted and withdrawn.

Employees are prohibited from using mobile phones while operating a motor vehicle on hospital business. Employees are prohibited from smoking in the hospital vehicles at any time. The same “business only” telephone usage applies to employees in company vehicles, as do the policies concerning the use of private or facility phones while on the job.

Division Managers and Department Managers are responsible to see that any employee working in their management areas have received a copy, read and understand the Fleet Policy and Procedure. Each employee falling under the guidelines of the Fleet policy should read and sign a copy of the Fleet Policy to be placed in their personnel file.

Driving records will be checked annually on all employees driving facility vehicles or driving on the facility’s behalf.

Gift Shop / Auxiliary

The VVRMC Auxiliary operates the Hospital Gift Shop, which benefits the patients, visitors and staff. Please offer your appreciation to this outstanding group of volunteers by supporting and taking advantage of their services.

Immigration Reform and Control Act

Upon hiring, all employees must complete the I-9 employment eligibility verification form. Failure to complete the form or provide acceptable documentation within required time frames will result in the withdrawal of any offer of employment.

Language

All employees must be able to speak and understand the English language to the extent required for receiving directions and performing their duties. Speaking other languages may exclude your co-workers; use common sense and courtesy in this regard.

Legal Matters

All Legal requests should be referred to Administration and or Risk Management. No written statement concerning an accident or event within the Medical Center may be given to any person who is not connected with the Medical Center, unless the Administrator gives prior authorization. Further, any requests for information should be referred to Administration.

Mail

The Medical Center is not equipped to handle your personal mail. You are asked to make provisions to have personal mail delivered at your home or resident address.

Media Inquiries

All inquiries from newspaper, radio and television reporters, patients, or any persons concerning VVRMC, its operations, and patients must be referred to Administration and/or Public Relations. Employees are not authorized to speak for Val Verde Regional Medical Center.

Name Badges

Following employment, each employee will be issued a name badge showing the employee's name and job title. Name badges are to be worn at all times while on duty to ensure proper employee identification. Employees may be sent home to retrieve a badge or required to purchase a new badge if the current badge is lost or no longer available. The initial name badge is provided at no cost. There will be a small fee to replace an employee name badge. Employees need to pay this fee at the business office and bring their receipt to HR for a new badge.

All employees, management firms, or contractors who are not employees of VVRMC, and who work in the facility on a daily basis, will be issued a name badge by the Human Resources Department and will abide by this policy as if they were employees of VVRMC.

Name badges are to be worn as close to eye level as possible and uncovered. Upon termination from the facility, name badges need to be submitted to Human Resources.

Outside Employment

The hospital recognizes the right of its employees to spend their non-working time away from the job as they please. It does, however, require that activities away from the job not compromise the hospital's interests or adversely affect the employee's job performance.

Outside employment will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours. If outside employment causes or contributes to any of these situations, the outside employment must be discontinued and, if necessary, normal disciplinary procedures will be followed, up to and including termination.

Overtime

As required by federal law, overtime payment of time and one-half will be paid to employees primarily performing non-exempt work. Non-exempt or hourly employees are paid overtime on the basis of a 40-hour work week, receiving overtime premium for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in each week. Some employees' overtime is paid for more than 80 hours worked each 14-day period. Please check with your supervisor or Human Resources if you are unsure of your overtime status.

Employees primarily in executive, administrative and/or professional positions as defined by applicable federal law, may be paid on a salaried basis and may be exempt from payment of overtime premium.

All overtime must be assigned and approved in advance by your supervisor. Failure to obtain proper authorization may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. VVRMC reserves the right to assign overtime as necessary for adequate patient care and good business practice.

Pay Check Distribution/ Direct Deposit

The regular payday for VVRMC is every other Wednesday. Managers may pick up paychecks and stubs starting at 8:30 am each payday. Pay periods are 14 days in length.

For convenient banking, Direct Deposit is available by completing a Direct Deposit form. These forms are available in Human Resources. Employees are encouraged to use this direct deposit benefit.

Payday

Each pay period covers two weeks. Payday is on the Wednesday following the end of a pay period. A paycheck will not be released to anyone other than the employee to whom it is written without written permission of the employee.

Parking

It is the policy of VVRMC that all employees, including contract employees, desiring to park personal vehicles on hospital premises park only in areas designated for employees parking.

Parking lots are provided for employees at the side and rear of the hospital. Parking spaces immediately in front of VVRMC are provided for patients and visitors only. Employees parking in unauthorized areas may be towed at the owner's expense, without notice. Parking areas are subject to change, if you have questions contact your manager or Human Resources.

Personal Appearance / Dress Code

Patients and the public expect a professional appearance and VVRMC requires a such in the workplace. Department managers shall determine if clothing is appropriate and professional with hospital Administration having the final authority.

The following are some of the guidelines of our dress code policy:

- Scrubs should be in good condition and approved by the Chief Nursing Officer.
- Clothing must be of an appropriate size.
- No article of clothing shall have any written messages, characterizations, pictures, advertisements or any other sayings. The hospital reserves the right to make a determination concerning the appropriateness of any attire.
- Dress/skirt length must be appropriate for a business setting.
- Any color of jeans, shorts, Capri pants, stretch pants or leggings, T-shirts, party or evening wear apparel, too short skirts/dresses, and unauthorized hats or caps are not allowed.
- Any pull over shirts must have collars. Jeans are allowed only on Fridays for non-clinical staff. No article of clothing should be in need of repair or have holes, be unsightly or in need of cleaning.
- Rubber soled athletic shoes must be predominantly white or black and in good condition. Open-toed sandals or shoes are not allowed in areas deemed inappropriate or unsafe. Appropriate hose or socks must be worn.
- Jewelry must be conservative.
- Little or no perfume / aftershave should be worn.
- Artificial nails are not allowed in clinical areas.
- Personal pagers and cell phones may not be audible while on duty and are not authorized for use during work hours.

Please contact your supervisor about your dress code. Your manager will determine if your appearance and dress is appropriate and professional for the work setting and department. If you are dressed inappropriately for the position and or unit your manager may require that you clock out and go home to change.

Political Activities

Although VVRMC encourages all employees to take an active interest and participate whenever possible in political affairs, said activities may not be conducted on hospital premises or during work time. You must not identify yourself as a representative of VVRMC in any political activity or involvement, or in any letter to a newspaper, radio, or television station.

Promotions and Transfers

Whenever possible, new and vacant positions will be filled from within the Hospital by promoting qualified employees. Vacancies will be posted by Human Resources. Anyone interested in applying for an open position must do so promptly. If there are no employees within the organization qualified to fill a vacancy, the best-qualified applicant will be hired.

VVRMC reserves the right to transfer its employees from one job or department to another according to need (staffing requirements, employee's inability to meet job requirements, scheduling, lack of work, position deleted, etc.).

Reduction in Force (RIF)

VVRMC reserves the right to reduce the workforce because of low patient census, departmental reorganizations, changing technology, or any other legitimate business reasons. The Administration will notify the departments of the number of positions needing to be eliminated or reduced. On a departmental basis, and within job classification, employees will be considered for layoff in the following order:

1. Introductory period employees;
2. Documented poor performers;
3. By seniority;

"Documented Poor Performance" includes any of the following: employees with low performance evaluations, employees with current disciplinary warnings and counseling in their file, or employees on a performance improvement program.

There are no recall rights and employees involved in a RIF are encouraged to apply for other open positions for which they feel they may be qualified to perform.

Re-Employment

Former employees who resigned in good standing may be considered for re-employment. Former employees who left without adequate notice or discharged for misconduct will not be considered for re-employment.

Former employees desiring employment with VVRMC need to submit an application and go through the candidate process.

References

All requests for information about current or former employees must be referred to the Human Resources Department. No information will be supplied over the telephone. The Human Resources Department will respond only to written requests for information. As a general rule, the Human Resources Department will supply only the following information to prospective employers; dates of employment and position held. Employees who release information contrary to this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Shift Differential

To compensate non-exempt employees for working second and third shifts, a differential may be paid. Refer to your Department Manager or Human Resources for these amounts.

Solicitation

To avoid disruption of health care operations or disturbance of patients, the following rules apply to solicitation and distribution on hospital property:

Persons not employed by VVRMC may not solicit or distribute literature on hospital property at any time, or for any purpose. All vendors or merchandise sales representatives must be directly referred to Materials Management prior to visiting any department.

Employees of VVRMC may not solicit during working hours for any purpose. Work hours includes the work time of both the employee doing the solicitation and the employee to whom the soliciting is directed, but does not include their break times or meal periods.

Employees may not solicit at any time for any purpose in immediate patient care areas. These include patient rooms, operating rooms, places where patients receive treatment (i.e. Radiology, Physical Therapy, etc.), or in any other area that would cause disruption of health care operations or disturbance of patients, families, and visitors. Employees may not distribute literature in work areas at any time, for any purpose.

Staff Rights

It is the policy of Val Verde Regional Medical Center that its employees provide care and treatment to patients without regard to an individual's nationality, race, creed, religion, sexuality, gender, disability, or ability to pay as outlined in the hospital's mission statement. Employees who are requested to perform job duties (according to the job description) to which they object due to cultural values, ethics, or religious convictions, will be respected in every way possible.

All employees are expected to give appropriate care to patients in accordance to the above stated policy. However, should an employee perceive that an aspect of patient care would be against the religious, ethical or cultural values of the employee it is the responsibility of the employee to:

1. Immediately inform their supervisor or department manager.
2. Immediately submit in writing a request not to participate in the aspect(s) of care.
 - a. Identify specifically the aspects of care or treatment in which the employee perceives conflict.
 - b. Detail the cultural, ethical or religious reason(s) they cannot participate.
 - c. The supervisor/department manager and division director will evaluate and if valid, make necessary adjustments. Every effort will be made to resolve such problems to the mutual advantage of the hospital and the employee.
 - d. Adjustments may include substitution of other personnel, reassignment of duties, temporary rescheduling, or transfer until the situation of a perceived conflict is no longer an issue. These adjustments will be made so that the employee's non-participation in treatment or aspect of care due to the employee's cultural values, ethics, or religious beliefs will not negatively affect patient care. Under no circumstance will patient care be jeopardized.
 - e. If relief is not immediately available, such employee(s) will be expected to complete the duty assigned and then bring the matter to the attention of the Department Manager or Division Director.

Technology / Computers / Internet

By opening e-mail, sending or receiving information, logging on to the Internet, or using any of VVRMC's software, the employee agrees to, and understands that, this technology has been provided by the hospital at its own expense, and it is VVRMC's private property.

This technology is another tool for employee use in business transactions or business communication. Therefore, the employee understands that they are not to use company-provided technology for personal, private, or non-business matters or to communicate such matters.

The employee agrees that they will not communicate anything that might be construed as harassment or offensive to others based on race, sex, disability, age, religion, or national origin. The employee will not use the Internet or e-mail to solicit business for a non-work related venture or for any personal cause, including political or religious issues.

Val Verde Regional Medical Center will regularly review, audit, and may download e-mail messages and may monitor Internet access. By using this media, the employee shall agree to waive any privacy they may have in these communications. If an employee is found to have created or sent abusive or inappropriate e-mail or participated in non-work related activities with the Internet, such as chat rooms, or downloaded abusive or inappropriate matters from the Internet, the employee will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

An employee cannot print, display, download, or send any sexually explicit images, messages, cartoons, or jokes. If an employee receives these from another person, they must immediately advise the sender that they are not permitted to receive such information and not to send it again. If the employee needs assistance in responding to situations such as that described above, they must contact their supervisor. If an employee is found to have printed, displayed, downloaded, or sent any sexually explicit images, messages, cartoons, or jokes, the employee will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

An employee has no right to privacy with respect to the company's software, e-mail, or Internet access. Simply because an employee has a password does not mean that they have any right of privacy in e-mail, Internet access, or software. The employee cannot use unauthorized or secret passwords. All passwords must be shared with management. Violation of this provision will subject an employee to discipline, up to and including termination.

E-mail is an extension of Val Verde Regional Medical Center. E-mail messages can be traced to the center even after they have been "deleted". Val Verde Regional Medical Center may be required to produce e-mail messages if litigation develops.

Employees shall not use programs that require a large amount of bandwidth such as, but not limited to instant messenger, downloads of mp3 files, streaming audio (online radio stations), streaming video, webshots, chat rooms, Bonsai Buddy, Gator or the like.

Time and Attendance

Never clock in or out for anyone. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken for all employees involved.

Do not begin work until the designated time to start your shift. Do not work past the end of your shift without your supervisor's approval.

Time Device

Employees who are covered by the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act are given an identification badge. This badge must be used to clock in when the employee starts work and clocked out when the employee leaves work for any reason other than work related. Employees are expected to clock out during breaks and meal periods, if taken outside of facility premises. Clocking out would be appropriate if taking a break in the parking lots, but not in the patio areas. However, it is required for the employee to tell the manager if the breaks are taken in an outside patio area, if the employee is leaving the building or taking a break in the parking lots.

Each employee must punch his or her own time device. Anyone found punching another person's time device, asking another person to punch his or her time device, or in any way falsifying his or her or another employee's time device will be subjected to dismissal.

In case of sickness, the employees must call their Department Director/supervisor, who will be responsible for making the time entry. In the case of paid time off, the Department Director/supervisor will also be responsible for the employee's time entry. Employees should not clock in more than seven (7) minutes prior to the start of their shift. Employees are expected to clock out and at the end of their shift. "Hours worked" do not include absences due to paid time off or other nonproductive time. There will be no pyramiding of overtime.

Tips and Gifts

Acceptance of money and gifts from a patient or persons with whom VVRMC does business are not permitted. Under no circumstances should an employee approach a patient for the purpose of selling, asking for donations, or solicitation of any kind.

Visitors for Employees

Due to the nature of hospital work, employees on duty are not allowed to receive visitors. Agents, collectors, friends, visitors, etc., wishing to see employees are to be referred to the Human Resources Department.

Visitors for Patients

Employees are asked to remember that visitors to VVRMC are frequently upset and unfamiliar with hospital regulations. Every effort should be made to help them find their way in the building and to courteously explain the various regulations whenever necessary.

Voting

Voting is encouraged as an act of good citizenship. Normally, polls are open a sufficient length of time to permit voting before or after working hours. Should this not be the case, employees may arrange with their Department Director/Supervisor for the time off, not to exceed an appropriate length of time in order to vote.

Witnessing Wills and Other Documents

You are not permitted or required to serve as a witness to a Will, or other similar legal documents, while on duty at VVRMC. Anyone requesting assistance in the preparation of a Will, etc. should be directed to call Administration.

Work Week

The established work week for VVRMC starts with the first shift on Monday and ends with the completion of the third shift the following Sunday. Work hours within the work week are scheduled individually within each area.

Some employees work an 8/80 schedule and will need to check with their supervisor or Human Resources for details concerning these schedules.

Workplace and/or Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of VVRMC to provide an environment that is free from any type of harassment including sexual harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature are illegal under federal and state laws. An employee who feels that they have been subject to sexual harassment should file a complaint as soon as possible after the occurrence of the incident, inform the harasser their conduct is offensive and must stop, and report the incident immediately to their supervisor and/or Human Resources. All complaints will be investigated promptly and in a confidential manner.

VVRMC will not tolerate work place sexual harassment or any other type of harassment. Such conduct is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

It is the policy of VVRMC to promote a productive work environment. We will not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance, creating an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

The hospital prohibits any form of retaliation against employees for bringing authentic complaints or providing information about harassment.

Safety

All employees will be required to attend safety training upon hire and annually thereafter. Lift training will be required and competence will be evaluated for employees required to do lifting.

We, as employees, are directly responsible for the safety and protection of co-workers and patients; thus, we must perform our duties carefully, using every effort and precaution in handling supplies and equipment. We can keep our Medical Center safe for patients, visitors and ourselves by:

1. Observing all safety rules and regulations;
2. Reporting to your Department Director or supervisor any unsafe conditions or lack of safety equipment which you observe;
3. Reporting accidents promptly to your Department Director/Supervisor, who will report the accident to the HR Department on the proper accident report form.

Back Safety for Employees

When lifting:

- Restore the hollow in your lower back before the lift
- Keep the lower back bowed in while bending down
- Test the load - stand close to object with feet apart, one slightly in front of the other
- Keep back bowed in as you lift
- Always turn with your feet, never twist
- Keep back bowed in as you put the object down

- Restore the hollow
- Ask for help if load is too big or heavy

Elevators

Elevators should speed our daily routines, but they are sometimes crowded. You can ease the occasional congestion by using the stairs when possible. Staff members should avoid using the visitor elevators when possible. Upon entering an occupied elevator, wait for passengers to step out before you enter. Be courteous to allow patients and visitors access to elevators even if you have to wait.

Emergency Codes

- Emergency Number for Fire.....444
- To call Overhead.....Dial 80, and make announcement
- Code Red.....Fire
- Code Blue.....Cardiac/Respiratory Emergency
- Code Pink.....Infant Abduction
- Code Green.....Security Event
- Code White.....Bomb Threat
- Code 3.....Telemetry Needs Checked
- Code Yellow.....Trauma Patient
- Code Black.....Disaster Response
- Code Decon.....Decon Team Needed
- Code Helper.....Difficult Delivery
- Code Orange.....Hazardous Material Release
- Doctor Mock.....Practice Code Blue
- Code Survey.....Surveyor or Inspector in the Building

Exposure Control Plan

A copy of the hospital Exposure Control Plan is given to all new employees in general orientation.

It is the policy of VVRMC that blood and body fluid standard precautions are implemented for every patient cared for in this organization. These precautions are referred to as Standard Body Substance Precaution.

All employees who care directly for patients, as well as those who handle contaminated equipment and supplies, shall receive mandatory education concerning:

- * The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- * Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)
- * Hepatitis C virus (HBC)

Personal Protective Equipment is provided to employees at no cost including gloves, gowns, masks, eye protection, face shields, shoe covers, lab coats (where applicable), etc.

Certain immunizations, such as Hepatitis B, are provided free to employees. All new employees meet with the infection control nurse during new employee orientation and these immunizations and other testing are discussed and performed. If you have any questions about immunizations or other testing, please contact your supervisor or Human Resources.

Fire and Disasters

Anticipating the needs in emergency situations, VVRMC has developed both a fire and a disaster plan. You will be responsible for learning specific responsibilities of the department in which you work. Fire prevention is one of utmost importance at VVRMC. The safety of our patients is always our first consideration especially in the case of a fire.

Fires are one of the most destructive disasters that could occur at VVRMC; therefore, everyone must remain alert, aware of the possibility of a fire and constantly be prepared with a disaster plan.

To report a fire in the hospital, you should call 444 on the hospital phones. There are fire alarm pull boxes on the walls in all hospital hallways. In case of fire, you should pull the fire alarm if that is quicker/convenient than using the telephone.

Learn where the fire extinguishers are when you go into a new department or facility. Even if you are not proficient in the use of the fire extinguisher, bring it to the fire **after you have sounded the alarm or called for help.**

Each unit of VVRMC has a fire and evacuation route plan. You should know how to get to the nearest exit (other than an elevator).

Each area has a Fire and Disaster Manual containing procedures to be followed in emergency situations. All employees are expected to participate in drills. If a fire or other disaster should occur in the hospital, each department has a specific responsibility to effectively control the situation. Please be sure you have reviewed these procedures with your supervisor.

In Case of Fire

RACE

Acronym used in the event of a fire.

R-Rescue	Move any patients, guests or other staff to an area away from the fire location.
A-Alarm	Call PBX by dialing "444" and provide location, type of fire, extent of fire, your name and extension or activate the alarm system.
C-Confine	Confine the fire; close all doors around the fire.
E-Extinguish	Use available fire extinguishers if your safety and that of others can be assumed.

Personal Electrical Equipment

Any personal electrical equipment introduced into VVRMC by patients, physicians, visitors, or employees will be examined by Plant Operations. This examination determines if the electrical device is in compliance with electrical, fire, and safety codes, and to ensure the device does not represent a safety or fire hazard or adversely affect hospital equipment.

Packages

All packages carried in or out of VVRMC are subject to inspection by a supervisor and/or a security officer. To avoid any misunderstanding, provide written authorization from your supervisor for any articles and/or equipment, which you have been asked to take from or return to VVRMC.

Safety Questions and Answers

Where is the department Call-Back Roster?

This varies according to department. Ask your supervisor.

What are MSDS sheets and where are they kept?

Material Safety Data Sheets - they provide information on hazardous materials within a department.

What do you do if you receive a bomb threat?

Gather information from the caller about where the bomb is, when it will go off, and listen for background noises. Alert security or the person in charge, seal off and search the area.

Searches

The hospital may search all hospital property and employee's personal property, which has been brought onto hospital grounds. Normally, a search will only be carried out when the hospital has reason to believe that an employee has violated hospital policy. Failure to cooperate immediately with a search request by authorized personnel will be considered a violation of this policy and will be grounds for disciplinary action.

Security

It is the hospital's policy to make reasonable efforts to safeguard everyone and everything associated with VVRMC. Uniformed security personnel are employed to assist in this work.

Likewise, every employee should be quick to report any suspicious person or circumstance to their Department Director/supervisor, security guard or directly to the Administration.

Employees can also help by observing the rules and regulations of the various departments with regard to the proper security of hospital property. Always wear your name badge, report suspicious people or activity, and secure your valuables and your patient's valuables. You may even request security to walk you to your car at night.

The hospital cannot be responsible for loss or damage to the personal property of employees, patients, or others using the facility premises.

The hospital Security Officer is authorized to question employees and inspect employee briefcases, containers, purses, lockers, and automobiles parked on hospital premises in order to check the presence of stolen hospital property or illegal drugs. Failure to cooperate with an investigation may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Smoking and Related Products

It is the Policy of Val Verde Regional Medical Center to maintain a smoke and tobacco-free environment for the employees, patients, visitors, and medical staff members. No smoking or other use of tobacco products (including, but not limited to, pipes, cigars, snuff, or chewing tobacco) is permitted in any part of the building including the Warehouse, Maintenance, Laundry building, the loading dock and in vehicles owned, leased, or rented by the Medical Center by either the public, patients, employees, contract employees or medical staff.

All personnel who wish to smoke must use the following designated smoking areas:

- ★ Main courtyard by second station
- ★ New courtyard by second station
- ★ EMS/Lab courtyard
- ★ Old main entrance (for visitors only)
- ★ Persons may smoke outside the hospital building at their choice away from any entrance (acceptable distance is approximately 50 feet).

The smoking receptacles located at all entrances of the Medical Center are there to extinguish cigarettes before walking into the building and not considered a smoking area.

Weapons Prohibited

It is against the law to bring firearms or other weapons onto VVRMC premises. Employees who violate this policy or engage in violence of any type on hospital grounds will be subject to termination. If you suspect anyone of carrying a firearm on VVRMC premises, please contact security immediately.

Workplace Violence

VVRMC is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace and strictly prohibits any person on VVRMC premises from behaving in a violent or threatening manner. As part of a proactive approach to workplace violence, VVRMC reserves the right to deal with any behavior that suggests a propensity towards violence.

Workplace violence includes:

1. Threats of any kind;
2. Defacing property;
3. Intimidation;
4. Excessive arguing or swearing;
5. Demonstrated pattern of refusing to follow VVRMC policies;
6. Bringing weapons of any kind onto VVRMC property.

Reporting:

Any employee observing or who becomes aware of such behavior is to notify the building security staff immediately and document the occurrence.

Any employee having a restraining order in effect or involved in a potentially violent non-work related situation is to notify the Human Resources Director.

All reports of employee incidents of assault, abusive or threatening behavior should be documented. Human Resources is to be notified.

All reports of workplace violence will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. If the aggressive behavior identified is that of an employee, disciplinary action up to and including termination may occur.

If this violent behavior is not that of an employee, all appropriate corrective actions will be taken to prevent a reoccurrence. These actions may include:

- ◆ Notifying law enforcement agencies;
- ◆ Taking legal action against offender;
- ◆ Further controlling access in and out of the workplace.

Telephones & Communication Devices

Proper Use of Communication Devices

In order to maintain efficient business communications, the following guidelines are not all-inclusive and are to be followed:

- Do not forward any non-business related e-mail or chain letters.
- Before any e-mail is addressed to all users, you must get administrative approval.
- Personal beepers must not be audible or visible. Pagers must be answered on designated breaks only.
- Use of cellular phones is strictly prohibited except in designated areas.
- No personal mail should be received through the hospital mail service. Outgoing personal mail should be placed in the U.S. post office mailboxes.
- Fax machines should be used for VVRMC business purposes only.
- Computers/Internet are for business use only and should not be used for personal reasons

Personal phone calls are not permitted. Employees should instruct relatives, friends, or creditors not to contact them at VVRMC except in an emergency. Employees will be contacted for emergency calls through the Human Resources Department. Non-emergency calls will not be forwarded to individuals and messages will not be taken.

There is a public telephone located in the front entrance for personal use during break or lunch periods.

Personal cell phones and pager use should not interfere with an employee's duties and use should be limited to breaks and only in break areas. Employees that abuse this policy are subject to disciplinary action including termination of employment.

Telephone Courtesy

All employees should answer promptly all incoming calls. Courtesy and full attention should be given to the calling party, realizing that this manner conveys the image of the individual and VVRMC.

Some things to keep in mind are:

- **When answering, give the department and your name.**
- **Do not keep the caller waiting and avoid unnecessary transfers.**

- Be courteous and interested, put a smile in your voice.

Questions concerning operation of the facility phone system should be directed to your supervisor.

Additional Benefits

Leave of Absence

General:

If an employee is required to be absent from work for a full work week (5 consecutive work days) or more due to medical reasons, personal reasons, jury duty and/or other reasons acceptable to the hospital, a leave of absence (LOA) may be granted. The leave may be with pay and benefits, without pay and benefits, or a combination of both, depending upon the circumstances. In order for a leave to be granted, the employee should make their request in writing at least ten (10) work days prior to the absence, except in emergency situations or otherwise noted. The HR Department must approve the LOA. In the event of an emergency, contact your supervisor and they will complete the form for you; you will be asked to sign it as soon as possible and a copy will be given to you. Leave request forms are available from the HR Department.

All LOA's granted by the hospital shall be without loss of service credit, but an employee's length of service will not continue to accumulate during the leave. Thus, a LOA interrupts the timetable for accumulating any employee benefits. This timetable resumes when the employee returns to work. For example, upon the employee's return from a LOA, the employee will be eligible to earn vacation appropriate to his service date, but he does not earn any vacation days during the time he is on LOA.

An employee who does not return to work on the first regular working day following the end of the LOA period shall be considered to have resigned their position with the facility.

A single LOA cannot exceed ninety (90) calendar days. If additional time is needed, additional leave must be requested prior to the end of the expiration of the initial leave of absence. The maximum allowable leave, including extensions, shall not extend beyond six (6) months in a year, except in those instances required by law.

Unless otherwise required by law, every effort will be made to place an employee returning from a leave of absence in the same job or in a job comparable to that which the employee held before leaving. However, the hospital may offer the returning employee any job within the Hospital for which they are qualified. If such position is offered to the returning employee and the employee fails to accept such offer, he will be considered as having voluntarily quit his employment with the hospital. If no such position is available upon the employee's return from a leave of absence, the employment relationship will be terminated.

An employee is not eligible to take a leave of absence until they have successfully completed their 90-day introductory period.

There are six categories of leave that the Hospital may grant:

- (1) Educational Leave
- (2) Jury Duty
- (3) Medical Leave
- (4) Bereavement Leave
- (5) Military Leave
- (6) Personal Leave
- (7) Family and Medical Leave

Educational Leave: Full-time employees who have been employed at least twelve (12) months may be considered for an educational leave. Positions are not protected under this leave.

Jury Duty: An employee who receives notice of jury duty must notify their Department Director/supervisor as soon as possible in order to enable VVRMC to cover the employee's position. **Regular full time employees who have completed their 90-day introductory period will be eligible for jury pay. Absences greater than fifteen (15) working days caused by jury duty service will be without pay.** You should present the jury summons to your supervisor immediately after you receive it to arrange jury duty leave. Written proof of service will be required for payment of jury duty leave pay. PRN, part time and contract employees are not eligible for jury pay.

Medical Leave:

We recognize that an employee will occasionally need additional time off because of major illnesses/injuries and/or major medical conditions including, but not limited to, pregnancy. Therefore, a LOA with pay and/or without pay may be granted to regular, full-time employees for a reason acceptable by the hospital for the periods specified above. As indicated above, no LOA (including paid sick leave) may be for a period in excess of ninety (90) calendar days, with one ninety (90) day extension, for a maximum allowable leave of six months within a year. Unless an employee is on a Family Medical Leave, their position is not protected.

Bereavement Leave:

In the event of a death in the immediate family, regular full-time employees will be allowed a LOA with pay, not to exceed 24 hours. For purposes of this policy, immediate family is defined as a parent, spouse, sibling, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, or guardian. Your Department Director/supervisor must be notified immediately of the forthcoming absence so that proper schedule arrangements can be made.

Military Leave:

A LOA for service in the Armed Forces or National Guard, or for attendance at regular annual military encampment or cruise, and the terms of re-employment, shall be governed by the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act of 1994 and other applicable laws. Such leave is granted upon written application (Request for Leave of Absence form) and presentation of appropriate military orders.

Personal Leave:

We recognize that occasionally an employee will need additional time off that is not covered by one of the other LOA's. Therefore, a LOA without pay and/or benefits may be granted to a regular full-time employee who has completed at least one (1) full calendar year of service with the hospital for a reason acceptable to the hospital, for a period generally not to exceed a total of thirty (30) calendar days within a year. If taken in conjunction with a previously granted leave, a separate leave request form must be completed, submitted, and approved. As noted above, in no event will any combination of leaves be greater than six (6) months within a year. Under this leave, the position is not protected.

Family and Medical Leave:

The Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") provides eligible employees up to 12 weeks of leave per year under certain limited circumstances. This leave may be taken in conjunction with paid sick leave and the other types of leave previously described. However, it cannot be used in addition to these other leaves in order to create more than six months of leave within a year.

An employee of the hospital may use this leave if that employee has been employed for 12 full months and has worked a minimum of 1,250 hours during the 12-month period preceding the FMLA leave request. While on this leave, the employee shall pay their usual portion of insurance premiums. Failure to make premium payments can cause loss of coverage. Upon the employee's return to work from an FMLA leave, the employee will be placed in their previous position or one that is genuinely equivalent.

This leave will only be granted if requested 30 days in advance or as soon as possible under the circumstances and only under the following conditions: (1) you have a serious health condition; (2) birth, adoption or placement of a foster child in your home; (3) to care for a seriously ill child, spouse or parent. Certification of a serious health condition may be required or a second opinion may also be requested. FMLA leave may be taken on an intermittent basis if the leave is necessitated by the employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a child, spouse, or parent.

If the employee is unable to return to work at the end of these 12 weeks, he/she will be entitled to use the remaining balance of the hospital's regular medical or personal leave policy. However, the standard terms of those leaves will apply including the possibility that the employee's previous position may be filled during the absence.

The substantive provisions of this policy will be regulated by the terms of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Please contact HR for additional information.

Any employee needing any type of leave will need to notify their supervisor and complete the appropriate forms in HR. Employees out on FMLA may utilize paid benefits of PTO and or EIB depending on the circumstances and within the guidelines established under the respective policies concerning PTO and EIB. The use of EIB is only for the illness or injury of the employee and not to be used for others or family members. PTO may be used for family members while the employee is on FMLA. Contact Human Resources for additional information.

LVN to RN/Education Assistance Programs

VVRMC recognizes the value of continuing education and development of employee skills and will therefore, at times, offer assistance/tuition programs. Contact Human Resources for information concerning current programs.

Medical/Dental/Life and other Insurance Benefits

VVRMC offers employees a variety of benefits including medical insurance. For eligibility and additional information contact Human Resources. All new hired employees will be given information upon hire concerning all facility benefits and Insurance.

Paid Time Off (PTO), Extended Illness Bank (EIB)

The Paid Time Off (PTO)/Extended Illness Bank (EIB) program combines the employee benefit package of authorized paid time off into two banks.

- 1. PTO Bank:* The PTO bank combines vacation hours, holiday hours and a portion of sick leave hours. PTO makes a predetermined number of days available to employees each year through biweekly accruals. These accruals are dependent upon employment status and length of service. Accrual of PTO hours begins on the first pay period of employment. PTO cannot be used until the employee has successfully completed 90 days of employment. PTO hours may be used at the discretion of the employee contingent upon proper approval. All PTO hours are paid at the employee's base rate. Accumulated PTO hours are payable upon proper notice of resignation and fulfillment of resignation notice.
- 2. EIB Bank:* The EIB contains the remainder of the sick leave hours. These restricted hours are for personal illness. Your EIB shall be used after an absence of two consecutive scheduled work shifts (this is referred to as "waiting period"). Any employee out for 3 or more days will be required to submit a Return to Work authorization from a Licensed Physician. Any absence other than personal illness is not covered by EIB. Accrual of EIB hours begins on the first pay period of employment. EIB cannot be used until the employee has successfully completed 90 days of employment.
- 3. Eligible Employees:* All regular full-time employees are covered under this program. Part time, temporary, PRN and pool employees are ineligible for PTO and EIB.
- 4. Maximum PTO/EIB Accrual:* PTO is accrued each pay period based upon status and length of service however, PTO will stop accruing when maximum annual accrual has been reached (see accrual chart below). EIB will stop accruing when the maximum annual has been reached (see accrual chart below). If the PTO and the EIB banks reach the maximum amount, accrual will cease until hours are once again below the maximum.

ACCRUAL CHART

Paid Time Off (PTO)

Years of Service	PTO Days	PTO Hours	Accrued Hours per Pay Period	Max. Accrued Hours
1-5	24	192	7.39	272
5-10	29	232	8.92	312
10+	34	272	10.46	352

Extended Illness Bank (EIB)*

EIB Days	EIB Hours	Accrued Hours per Pay Period	Max. Accrued Hours
7	56	2.15	5.28

*EIB accrual rate is not based upon years of service

5. *PTO Approval and Scheduling:* The operational needs of the department are key in determining approval of PTO request. Approving, denying, and scheduling PTO request are the responsibility of the department managers or their designee. Written request for use of PTO must be submitted at least 14 days in advance or according to the department's scheduling policy and prior to the posting of the unit schedule.
6. *Cash-In of PTO Hours:* Employees may sell back or "cash-in" unused PTO hours at 100% of base rate. PTO "cash-ins" are limited to twice per calendar year (January – December). The "cash-in" checks will be paid the second payday of the month. A minimum of 8 hours must be "cashed-in." Employees must retain a balance of 40 hours in their PTO bank to be eligible. There is no "cash-in" alternative for EIB hours and no donation of EIB or PTO hours.

II. PTO GUIDELINES

1. Request for scheduled time off must be made at least 14 days in advance or according to your department's scheduling policy, prior to the posting of the unit schedule, utilizing the appropriate form. Requests are considered and approved according to the needs of the department and hours are deducted from the employee's PTO bank. VVRMC may require reasonable proof of an emergency request for use of PTO (any request submitted with less than a 14 day notice).
2. Bereavement (funeral leave) and Jury Duty are covered under other personnel policies.
3. During periods of low census, managers may ask employees to take a day off (Flex) and employees may use PTO hours or take the time off without pay.
4. When work areas are closed due to a holiday or low census, managers or their designee may schedule accrued PTO hours on the date designated by VVRMC as a holiday or the employee may choose to take the time off without pay. The Department Director or their designee will schedule staff according to department needs. If employees do not have PTO hours and the department is closed, they will receive time off without pay.
5. PTO hours accrued up to the current pay period are available for employee use.
6. Employees are required to take a minimum of one (1) hour of PTO when requesting use of their PTO time.
7. Regular work time and PTO will not be pre-scheduled in excess of authorized weekly hours.
8. All PTO hours are paid at the employee's base rate without shift differential or premium pay and are considered as non-productive hours.

9. Employees who change to non-accrual status (temporary, pool or part time) will be paid all accrued PTO hours at the time of their status change.
10. Employees who fail to give an adequate resignation notice will not be paid accrued PTO hours and forfeit all PTO hours accrued. PTO may not be used in lieu of working out the resignation notice. Employees terminated will be ineligible for payment of accrued PTO hours.
11. PTO hours will not be paid from the time the resignation notice is received and final working day.
12. PTO days can only be paid through use of days off or payment received through the "Cash-in" program.
13. If an employee is on a medical leave of absence and EIB hours are exhausted, PTO hours will be paid if available.
14. Employees will be required to utilize all accrued EIB and PTO hours during a Family and Medical Leave of Absence. The use of EIB will be only for the illness or injury of the employee.
15. Employees on a LOA will not accrue PTO hours.

III. EIB GUIDELINES

EIB is a companion benefit to PTO. It affords employees paid leave due to extended illness.

1. EIB commences after 2 consecutive scheduled work shifts not to exceed 24 work hours of absence ("waiting period") due to the disabling condition of the employee. Available PTO will be used to cover this "waiting period". If there is no PTO available, the employee will have time off without pay until EIB takes effect.
2. Employees who are ill for three or more days must submit a physician's release certifying ability to return to work. For any absence, a department Director/supervisor may request that the employee produce a physician's statement documenting their absence. This may also be required prior to the employee returning to work.
3. Employees who return to work from EIB and suffer a recurrence or relapse within 48 hours of the return to work, will be eligible for immediate reinstatement of EIB. Should this occur, employees will not have to satisfy the "waiting period". A physician's release will be required to confirm employee's ability to return to work, regardless of the number of days missed on a relapse.
4. EIB absence will be in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act.
5. EIB hours accrued up to the current pay period are available for employees use, provided they fall within the guidelines of the policy.
6. Accrual of EIB will cease when an employee changes to a non-accrual status (temporary, pool, or part-time). Accrued EIB hours will be forfeited upon status change or termination of employment for any reason.
7. All EIB hours are paid without shift differentials or premium pay and are considered non-productive hours.
8. EIB hours are not available for "cash-in" or donation to other employees.
9. EIB may not be used in lieu of working out the resignation notice nor are EIB hours available for use from the time of notice of resignation or during the notice period.
10. Employees terminated will be ineligible for payment of accrued EIB hours.

11. Employees on a Leave of Absence will not accrue EIB hours.
12. Accumulated EIB hours will not be paid upon termination of employment for any reason. EIB hours are not considered a termination benefit.
13. EIB will not be paid in the event of an illness if the employee fails to personally notify their immediate supervisor or designee as per the facility or department policy. If an employee cannot come to work they are to personally notify their supervisor each day of the absence, otherwise they are ineligible to use EIB or PTO. If an employee is physically unable to make the call, the Division Manager may allow the payment of EIB based on the presentation of the facts to the Division Manager from the Department Manager (Ex: If the employee is in the hospital and physically unable to make the call).
14. If an employee is on a medical LOA and EIB hours are exhausted, PTO hours will be paid if available and are within the guidelines of the policy.
15. Employees will be required to utilize all accrued EIB and PTO hours during a Family and Medical LOA.
16. Unscheduled absences (with or without the use of benefit pay) cannot be tolerated. Any abuse of unscheduled absences will subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Holidays and Holiday Pay

Val Verde Regional Medical Center will recognize specific holidays throughout the year. The recognition of these holidays indicates that all hospital areas able to close on these days will do so. Hospital Administration may elect to flex staffing as necessary at any time, and on specific holidays or the days before or after a respective holiday. Employees may utilize available PTO on such flex days or holidays.

1. The following Holidays will be recognized VVRMC Holidays: Christmas Day, New Years Day, Thanksgiving Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and Memorial Day.
2. Employees at VVRMC are on a PTO system for time off, therefore employees may request any day or holiday off by submission of a request at least 14 days prior to the date desired, provided the unit schedule has not yet been posted. The department manager may approve or deny the request based on departmental needs.
3. Any hospital employee working on Christmas Day, New Years Day or Thanksgiving Day will receive time and a half pay for working these days. The extra pay is for working the actual holiday and not the day before or the day after. Employees will be paid for the entire shift or hours worked when the shift begins on the holiday. No other holidays will be eligible for holiday pay or time and a half.

Example: Christmas falls on a Sunday, employees working that Sunday will receive the time and a half; employees working on the Saturday before or the Monday after will not receive the time and a half pay. Night shift employees will receive the time and a half pay for working the actual holiday and not the eve of the holiday.

Employees who are already in an overtime situation will not receive additional pay for these holidays as they would already be receiving overtime pay. Managers should try to schedule staff so this situation does not arise.

Performance Recognition Program

It is the policy of the Val Verde Regional Medical Center to recognize the commitment and contributions of employees who have reached their maximum hourly rate or whose hourly rate is \$0.01 - \$0.16 below the maximum of the pay grade and are therefore not eligible for a full or partial merit-based increase on their performance evaluation by receiving a Performance Recognition Award.

Performance Recognition Program guidelines are as follows:

1. Employees who have reached the maximum hourly rate in their pay grade are eligible for the Performance Recognition Program.
2. Employees whose hourly rate is \$0.01 - \$0.16 below the maximum hourly rate in his/her pay grade are eligible for a prorated Performance Recognition Award. The employee's hourly rate will be increased to the maximum of the pay grade and they will also receive a prorated Performance Recognition Award.
3. Employees must be rated at the "meet performance criteria" level or above to qualify for the program.
4. The award will be an annualized amount up to 4% of the mid-point of their pay grade for non-managers and up to 3% of the midpoint of their pay grade for managers, based on their performance evaluation and based on a formula calculated by the HR Department.
5. The effective date for the Performance Recognition Award is the first day of the pay period following the Performance Appraisal due date.
6. Administration and interpretation of the Performance Recognition Program is subject to the sole discretion of the Hospital Administrator.

Recruitment Incentives

It is the policy of the Val Verde Regional Medical Center to offer a \$1000 incentive to any current employee who recruits a licensed, registered, or certified professional to work fulltime for the Val Verde Regional Medical Center for at least twelve (12) months. Under this program, the recruiting employee will receive a \$500.00 recruitment incentive upon the first day of employment of the recruited employee. Another \$500.00 incentive will be paid after the recruited professional has completed twelve (12) months of continuous full-time employment at the Val Verde Regional Medical Center. To be eligible for this incentive, referring employee's name must be disclosed on the potential employee's application **when it is submitted**. Administration and interpretation of this program is subject to the sole discretion of the Hospital Administrator. This offer may be changed or withdrawn at any time with or without notice.

State Board Examination RN's & LVN's

Employees will be paid their regularly scheduled rate for those days their professional license examination is administered. This time off will be granted regardless of whether the three (3) month introductory period has been completed. Pay will be granted only on days the examination is administered and the employee otherwise would have been scheduled to work.

Travel Reimbursement

Employees will be reimbursed by VVRMC for reasonable and legitimate expenses incurred while attending professional meetings or while on Medical Center business, provided approval has been granted by the Department and Division Managers.

Appropriate funding should have been included in the departmental budget for the year. Expense reports should be completed and submitted within 30 days of the incurred expense. Expenses not submitted in a timely manner will be denied. For additional information on expense reports, talk to the Department Manager in your respective area.

Employees who have not reconciled a previous travel reimbursement will not be eligible for further authorizations until all previous reconciliations have been completed.

Wellness Program

VVRMC has an agreement with Amistad Health & Fitness to offer hospital employees a discounted membership for participating in their fitness/wellness programs. Contact the HR Department for more information. The gym in VVRMC's Rehab Department is available at no cost for employee use during normal working hours.

Worker's Compensation

VVRMC maintains a worker's compensation insurance policy for the benefit of its employees in accordance with the Worker's Compensation Law of the State of Texas. An employee who desires to retain the right to recover damages for personal injuries or death shall notify VVRMC no later than the fifth day after the date on which the employee began employment.

An employee who sustains a work-related injury must notify their Department Director/supervisor immediately. Failure to report the injury may jeopardize your claim for benefits. The employee is to report the injury immediately to their unit manager, the unit manager will complete the investigation report and submit both to Human Resources within 24 hours of the injury (deaths will be reported immediately).

The first seven (7) days of an employee's absence due to a qualified on-the-job illness or injury are not covered by Worker's Compensation. This period will be paid at the employees primary shift rate as "Time Off". Employees may use their PTO to cover this first 7 days of time off. After the initial seven (7) day waiting period, weekly Worker's Compensation will be paid as required by law. Accrued PTO/EIB hours will not be paid in addition to or as a supplement to Worker's Compensation.

401(k)/403(b) Plans

Val Verde Regional Medical Center provides employees the opportunity to participate in the 401(k)/403(b) plans. This is an excellent hospital sponsored benefit and additional information may be obtained from Human Resources.

Employee Acknowledgment / Consent

I have received a copy of the Val Verde Regional Medical Center Employee Policy Handbook and accept the terms stated therein. I understand that the handbook is not a contract of employment, expressed or implied, and that VVRMC retains the right to review, amend, change or discontinue the policies and benefits discussed in the handbook at any time, with or without notice.

I understand and agree that my employment is on an "at-will" basis. This means that either VVRMC or I can terminate the employment relationship at any time and for any reason. I also understand that no exceptions to this policy will be recognized unless contained in a separate written agreement signed by the Administrator of VVRMC and me. I understand and agree that any verbal representations to the contrary are invalid and will not be relied upon.

As a condition of employment, I understand, agree, and consent to give blood, urine, and other samples, upon request, to the Val Verde Regional Medical Center Administration or to the Val Verde Regional Medical Center Security for the purpose of drug or alcohol testing.

I further understand and agree that the Val Verde Regional Medical Center has a policy to do what is necessary to safeguard all employees, patients, and visitors. As a further condition of my employment, I authorize and consent to the Val Verde Regional Medical Center's Security Officer to search my person and my property, upon request, in order to check for the presence of stolen Medical Center property, illegal drugs, weapons, or other items.

Date

Employee's Signature

Print Name