

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

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Policy 161 – Care of Refrigerators and Freezers

I. POLICY

It is the policy of Southern Highlands Community Mental Health Center that all refrigerators and freezers are clean, contents properly stored, and the temperature monitored.

II. PROCEDURES

A. CONSUMER FOOD REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER

1. All refrigerators/freezers storing consumer food are to be cleaned weekly using a mixture of 1:10 bleach/water solution and as necessary after any spills.
2. Consumer food refrigerators are only to contain food for patients that has been properly wrapped and dated. Food must be discarded after the expiration date.
3. Food for employees shall not be stored in the consumer food refrigerator.
4. No medications can be stored in a food refrigerator.
5. No specimens can be stored in a food refrigerator.
6. An accurately calibrated thermometer is to be kept in each refrigerator and freezer on the shelf not the door at all times.
7. A cup of ice with a coin on top is to be kept in the freezer at all times. In case of a thaw, the coin would sink into the ice and if refrozen would not be on top, signaling a problem in the freezer.
8. The temperature of the consumer food refrigerator must be maintained at 32 degrees – 40 degrees F. If the daily temperature falls outside this range, adjust the refrigerator control and check again in two hours. If still out of range, contact maintenance to repair refrigerator and move food to another consumer food refrigerator.

9. Freezer temperature must be maintained at negative 4 degrees F – 14 degrees F to prevent the growth of bacteria.
10. Freezer is to be defrosted any time there is a build up of ice.
11. A daily refrigerator log is to be posted and checked daily. At the end of each month, the log is to be filed in the logbook and maintained for one year.

B. MEDICATION REFRIGERATOR

1. All refrigerators storing medications are to be cleaned with 1:10 bleach/water solution as needed and when spills occur.
2. An accurately calibrated thermometer is to be kept on the refrigerator shelf at all times.
3. The temperatures at which medication is stored will be maintained between 36 degrees F and 46 degrees F.
4. The medication refrigerator temperature must be logged daily, and a monthly log sheet kept in a logbook for one year. Any deviation from the normal range must be reported to the contracted pharmacist to determine the deposition of any stored medication. Adjust the refrigerator control and check the temperature in two hours. If not in the range, report to maintenance immediately and move the medication to another approved medication refrigerator.
5. No food or other personal items are to be stored in a medication refrigerator.
6. No specimens are to be stored in a medication refrigerator.
7. No medication is to be stored in the door of the refrigerator.
8. Any medication refrigerator with a freezer section will be defrosted when there is ice buildup in the freezer.
9. Medication refrigerators are to be in a locked room with access limited only to those with the authority to dispense medications.

C. EMPLOYEE USE FOOD REFRIGERATORS

1. Refrigerators are located in areas of Southern Highlands for the use of employees at their will to store food and drinks for their own consumption.
2. It is the responsibility of the employee to check the refrigerator temperature before storing their food. Maintenance should be notified for any temperature out of range (32-40 degrees F) on the calibrated thermometer located on the refrigerator shelf.
3. Housekeeping staff will clean the staff refrigerator monthly with a 1:10 bleach/water solution and discard any outdated food items and containers. Employees are responsible for day-to-day cleaning of spills, etc.
4. No medication or specimens are to be stored in the employee use food refrigerator.