

ST. MARY'S GENERAL HOSPITAL
KITCHENER, ONTARIO

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Title: **Telephone and Verbal Orders Policy**
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Policy Statement:

All regulated health professionals will follow Accreditation Canada standards in the giving and receiving of verbal and telephone orders; as outlined below:

Verbal Orders:

Verbal orders **are accepted only in emergency situations** (such as a code situation) or where the authorized prescriber cannot document his/her orders, such as in the operating room. If the authorized prescriber is present on the unit he/she must write the order in the patient's chart or enter the order into the Computerized Order Entry (COE) system.

Telephone Orders:

Telephone orders are only accepted in situations where the authorized prescriber is not present on the unit and does not have access to Computer Order Entry or a fax machine. In this situation, the order is required for patient care and a delay in treatment would not be in the best interest of the patient.

Fax:

FAX transmission of orders is accepted as a preferable alternative to telephone orders. Please refer to the Faxing of Personal Health Information policy for more information.

Electronic Mail (Email):

Electronic mail (e-mail) transmission of orders **is not accepted** under any circumstance since this is not a secure method of transmitting information.

Audits:

Semiannual audits will be completed rotating at random through all clinical areas. Audit results will be reviewed at the Medication Safety Committee and at the Patient Safety and Quality Management Committee.

Purpose:

To ensure a comprehensive policy is in place and fully implemented that specifies when telephone and verbal orders for medications are acceptable and how they are to be transcribed. This includes a process to ensure that medication orders are transcribed accurately and a process to ensure that compliance with the policies and procedures regarding medication orders is regularly monitored, and improvements are made as needed.

Scope:

All inpatient and outpatient units.

Definitions:

Authorized Prescriber:

Registered Nurses in the Extended Class, Dentists, Chiropractors, Midwives and Physicians registered in the province of Ontario and granted prescribing privileges at St. Mary's General Hospital.

Read Back:

The process of reading back verbatim a verbal order or telephone order that has been written down, to verify accuracy and prevent error.

Receiver:

Refers to regulated health professionals (legislated under the Regulated Health Professions Act of Ontario) who accepts a telephone or verbal order in accordance with their scope of practice. Students may not take verbal or telephone orders

Telephone or verbal orders from a prescriber may be received by the following regulated health professionals, with the described limitations:

- Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurses may receive telephone or verbal orders as per the College of Nurses Practice Standard for Medication
- Pharmacists may receive telephone or verbal orders for medications and total parenteral nutrition (TPN), including orders for medication or TPN-related monitoring
- Respiratory therapists may receive telephone or verbal orders pertaining to ventilator, oxygen or aerosol therapy, including orders for respiratory-related monitoring
- Registered Dietitians may receive telephone or verbal orders pertaining to oral nutrition, enteral nutrition, TPN and changes in NPO status, as well as orders for monitoring and evaluation of the above.
- Speech language pathologists may receive telephone or verbal orders pertaining to swallowing assessments, diet texture changes and changes in NPO status.
- Occupational therapists and physiotherapists may receive telephone or verbal orders to proceed with treatment/interventions that are defined within their scope of practice
- Midwives may receive telephone or verbal orders pertaining to their scope of practice
- Medical Radiation Technologists may receive telephone or verbal orders for procedures and processes as defined by their scope of practice

Telephone Order:

An order given via a telephone conversation between the person authorized to give the order and the person authorized to receive the order.

Verbal Order:

An order given during face-to-face communication between the person authorized to give the order and the person authorized to receive the order.

Procedure/Process:

All regulated health professionals receiving a telephone or verbal order will complete the following steps:

1. Request the authorized prescriber to write the order if present on the unit.
 - a. Examples of standardized scripts that staff may use for verbal orders in non-emergency situations are:
 - i. "Would you mind writing (I need you to write) your order please. This is a best practice standard for patient safety."
 - ii. "My college states that I cannot accept verbal orders. Can you please write that down?"
2. Confirm the patient's name, with spelling if there are similar names on the unit.
3. Immediately record the order in the patient chart under Orders for Treatment; including the date and time the order was obtained.
4. For medication orders, include the generic name of the drug, dosage, route and frequency.
5. If a medication is ordered, assess if the medication is appropriate for the patient in the particular situation.

6. For "As needed" (PRN) orders, include the rationale for use (e.g. "for pain").
7. Read back the verbal or telephone order to the prescriber in its entirety, and confirm the accuracy with the prescriber.
8. Identify all verbal orders with a "verbal order" and telephone orders with a "telephone order" followed by the name of the authorized prescriber.
9. The next time the prescriber is available on that nursing unit, they are to co-sign the verbal or telephone order and verify that their order was transcribed correctly.

For a faxed order, the receiver will retain the faxed order, label with the patient's hospital information and add to the patient's chart.

Documentation/Record Log:

Appendix A – Telephone and Verbal Order Audit Tool

Instructions:

- Orders from the past 7 days from 5 patient charts on each of 5 different units will be reviewed during each audit. (25 total charts reviewed)
- If it is determined that a verbal order has been given in a non-emergency situation a copy of the order will be taken and attached to the audit slip. The copy of the order and the audit slip will then be provided to the Director of Pharmacy for follow up with the Prescriber and also to the Clinical Unit Manager for follow up with the Receiver.
- Results of the audit will be reported to the Medication Safety Committee and Patient Safety and Quality Management Committee.

Definitions:

Telephone Order:

An order given via a telephone conversation between the authorized prescriber and the receiver (person authorized to receive the order).

Verbal Order:

An order given during face to face communication between the authorized prescriber and receiver (person authorized to receive the order).

Patient (MRN):		Date:	
Time order written:			
	Yes	No	
Was the order a telephone order?			
Was the order a verbal order?			
Was the verbal order provided in a non-emergency situation?			

Prescriber:	
Receiver:	

See Also:

- Medication Administration Policy.
- Pharmacy Standard Operating Procedures.
- St. Mary's General Hospital Framework for Approval of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Origin: Department of Pharmacy

Date Approved: Medication Safety Committee April 29, 2019; PSQMC April 30, 2019; Medication and Therapeutics Committee May 1, 2019

Dates Revised: April 5, 2019

Responsibility: Director of Pharmacy

References:

- Accreditation Canada, Qmentum Required Organizational Practices 2018 Handbook
 - Grand River Hospital Policy CLN-O-40 Orders-Receiving and Communicating Telephone and Verbal Orders
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