

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
OF THE
COMPANY HANDBOOK



“Special Nurses for Special Needs”

My signature below indicates that I have received, read, and understand the “Company Handbook”.

I acknowledge it is my responsibility to abide by all company policies and procedures as set forth in the handbook. I understand I can be terminated at any time for any reason with or without cause. As such, I am an “at will” staff member. I understand that the company reserves the right to change, interpret, withdraw, or add to any of the policies, benefits or terms and conditions at its’ sole discretion and without prior notice. I also acknowledge it is my responsibility to obtain clarification from my supervisor of any points that I do not fully understand.

Signature

Date

Please sign and keep this page of this booklet for your personal reference. A copy of this page should be signed and returned to Specialty Nurses. You can also electronically sign this form online.

**Company Handbook
And
Policy Manual**

Phone: 888-744-1445

Fax: 715-374-2024

Specialty Nurses and Elite Professional Nursing

(When you read Specialty Nurses it includes Elite Professional Nursing)
COMPANY HANDBOOK & POLICY MANUAL

Community Mission

Specialty Nurses and Elite Professional Nursing in partnership with physicians and community-based health agencies provides residents of the northern Midwest with access to high quality, affordable, patient-covered health care services which enhance health, foster healing and recovery, support independence and self-reliance, and generally improve the health status of our patients and communities.

Mission

Specialty Nurses promotes a flexible/casual staffing situation. Our staff is given the opportunity to pick their hours and choose the facilities in which they work. However, if you choose not to work any shifts for a period of sixty days, your employment with us will be discontinued as you have chosen not to work any longer.

Equal Employment Opportunities

Specialty Nurses Equal Employment Opportunity policy is that there will be no discrimination based on race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, gender, disabilities, marital status, or sexual orientation. All staff and applicants will be treated at all times on the basis of their merit. All personnel responsible for the supervision of staff or hiring of new staff will be guided by this policy.

Employment At-Will

The employment relationship between Specialty Nurses/Elite Professional Nursing and our staff is at-will and termination by either party may take place at any time with or without notice and with or without cause. Our company will work hard to place you in temporary assignments as they become available. **Never resign any job you currently hold to work for us.**

SERVICE EXCELLENCE STANDARDS

We shall respect each individual's rights and dignity, provide quality health care, serve with compassion and integrity, and build trust among our health care providers.

What are some of the reasons facilities want to call you back before anyone else?

Maybe it's because:

- You always arrive a little early for your shift.
- You dress the best! First impressions are lasting impressions.
- You introduce yourself to all the staff and patients you meet.
- You do the little things right, such as:

--Washing your hands before and after working with a patient.

--Offering to help a co-worker - they will be the first to help you when you need help in return.

--Asking questions first, then acting.

--Being courteous and respectful to all.

Specialty Nurses Core Values

Any person who has a complaint of sexual harassment at work by anyone, including supervisors, co-workers, physicians, or visitors must bring the problem to the attention of responsible Specialty Nurses officials.

Staff may bring their complaint to their scheduler/management. If the complaint involves someone in the staff member's direct line of command, then you may go to another supervisor with the complaint. Specialty Nurses holds to a **No Tolerance Policy** involving sexual harassment within the work place. Any complaint made from within a contracted facility will be documented and confirmed with facility management. All confirmed complaints will result in instant termination.

Specialty Nurses will retain confidential documentation of all allegations and investigations and will take appropriate corrective action, including disciplinary measures when justified, to remedy all violations of this policy.

BACK INJURY -

Before attempting to lift any object or person, **YOU** and your physician must decide if you will be able to safely lift by yourself. Always ask for help when you need assistance.

TERMINATION –

You may terminate from our company by resignation, dismissal, retirement, disability, death, or self termination.

1. Resignation - Staff planning on resigning should forward a two (2) weeks' notice in writing to our office.
2. Self Termination – Staff are required to stay in contact with their scheduler on a weekly basis, providing the dates and times you are willing to work. Staff who do not contact their scheduler for any thirty (30) day period shall be considered self-terminated. Your date of termination shall be the last day you worked. To return, you need to contact the management who will or will not reinstate your service. Staff are also self-terminated when they allow any of their credentials to expire. Reinstatement may occur when these credentials are received by us.

Commitment to our patients

Specialty Nurses will provide a high quality of health care in a warm, friendly, and caring atmosphere for our patients, residents, their families, and visitors.

Specialty Nurses will work to provide competent, professional medical staff for our patients. These health care professionals will assure a high level of health care delivery to our patients.

Commitment to our medical staff

Specialty Nurses will foster an atmosphere of mutual trust, loyalty, and honesty that recognizes the value of each individual and strives to provide equal opportunities for personal and career growth.

Commitment to our communities

Specialty Nurses has a responsibility to help provide quality health care to the people who live in our community.

Specialty Nurses hours: You will be paid weekly.

Elite Professional Nursing hours: You will be paid every two weeks. When working in a family's home, you may be required to live there over a period of days while caring for the family. For each 24 hour period you are there, you will be paid your full hourly wage for 12 hours (8a-8p) and for the down time you will have 4 hrs hourly rate and 8 hrs at half rate for the night time. Should you work for more than four hours of night time (8p-8a), you will record this work time in the time sheet notebook so you will be paid full rate for those hours worked. You will be paid time and a half when working more than 80 hours in any given two week pay period.

If you suspect elder abuse at any time you should notify your supervisor right away and you may also report this home abuse to the Dept. of Health Services at 715-373-6144. The law protects you when reporting. We must have a zero tolerance for any form of abuse.

TERM OF EVALUATION -

All new health care workers face an evaluation period of ninety (90) days, starting with their first worked shift. After this period the employee will be evaluated on performance and attendance. Evaluations will be given annually.

ABSENCE / ABANDONMENT -

Because of the professional nature of the service we provide, your dependability is required. You can help maintain the respect for all our personnel by being prompt at all times.

1. **Unauthorized absence** - Absence from a shift without authorization from scheduler or management may subject you to cash penalties. More than one (1) unexcused absence subjects you to a ninety (90) day evaluation period where your attendance will be reviewed.

2. **Authorized absence** - Absence from a shift with the required documentation and/or authorization of scheduler/management.

3. **Abandonment** – You may never leave your workplace without approval of the facility and Specialty Nurses. Leaving your patients without this approval will subject you to criminal and civil prosecution and possible loss of license.

NOTE: Absences listed above will not be compensated.

TARDINESS/NO SHOW -

1. The health care facility and patients depend on you. No Show is grounds for termination.

2. Tardiness - all late starts should be called in to the scheduler so that the facility can be contacted. An unexcused tardiness is reason for discipline from the scheduler/management. Staff are to be at their place of work at the start of their shift and remain at work until the end of their shift. Repeated tardiness or leaving early will subject you to disciplinary action or termination. **IF YOU KNOW YOU ARE GOING TO BE TARDY, PLEASE CALL THE FACILITY DIRECTLY IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO CONTACT US IN A TIMELY MANNER.**

SAFETY ORIENTATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

It is the responsibility of our staff to report unsafe conditions or unsafe practices of each facility to the appropriate chain of command.

The organizational and departmental safety programs include, General Safety, Fire Plan, Hazard Communication, Security, Emergency Plans, Equipment and Utility, and Procedures per policy of each facility.

- You are:
 - a. required to understand and practice the safety programs of each facility;
 - b. required to recognize hazards, take precautions to protect yourself and others and report to your immediate supervisor. (Various forms are available at each facility to make a written report of a hazard or incident).
 - c. required to cooperate and participate in safe work practices.

ADULT ABUSE / NEGLECT -

As a healthcare professional you are an advocate for the residents/patients. Issues of neglect or abuse are to follow protocol of each individualized facility. All issues will be handled by the chain of command within the facility. Our staff are required to uphold confidentiality. The law protects you when you report abuse.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT –

It is Specialty Nurses' policy that all staff are responsible for assuring that the workplace is free from sexual harassment. Because of Specialty Nurses' strong disapproval of offensive or inappropriate sexual behavior at work, all staff must avoid any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual.

- a) unwelcome sexual advances;
- b) request for sexual acts or favors;
- c) other verbal or physical conduct of harassing nature.

PAYROLL -

Wages - Each staff person will be notified at the time of hire what his/her wage shall be.

Overtime - Specialty Nurses discourages more than 40 hours worked in a pay period (each week) unless contracted differently with the facility or given approval by management. Elite Professional Nursing payroll is every two weeks and more than 80 hours/2 weeks is paid at time and a half.

Payroll Deductions - All staff will submit a completed W-4 form upon hire. No payment will be made to staff until this information is received by the Payroll Dept. Each check will have State and Federal taxes withheld and the following authorized deductions: FICA (Social Security and Medicare Tax), Professional Liability deduction, and retirement as required by State and Federal law.

Facility Time Sheet - No staff will be compensated for shifts worked unless documented on the Facility Time Sheet and signed off by the Facility Charge Staff. Facility Time Sheets/Sign-In Book are kept at the nurse's station at each facility. If the facility requires other time records, Specialty Nurses staff will conform to their facility policy.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION -

It is your responsibility to notify the scheduler/management of any changes in your name, address, telephone number. For positions which require licensure or registration, a current registration number must be on file with your scheduler/management. Your personnel file is confidential and available for you to review during regular business hours. Information contained in your personnel file will not be released by the scheduler/management to any persons not directly authorized to review the information.

You must be sure to keep current all your credentials for your license, CPR, and other certifications as required for your position (ACLS, TNCC, CALS, PALS, NRP, STABLE, ENPC). Your TB skin test is also required yearly. Also report any continuing education.

ACCIDENTS -

If you are injured while at work, it must be reported immediately to the facility and Specialty Nurses. Follow the facility protocol involving accidents and injuries. Then forward the incident report to your scheduler/manager within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident.

LUNCH/DINNER BREAKS -

Staff are required to take an unpaid thirty (30) minute lunch/dinner break during their shift (8-12 hours) unless pre-approved in writing by the facility charge staff noted on shift form. All other breaks, smoking included, are at the discretion of the facility and local, state, and federal laws.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND CONDUCT -

First impressions happen only once. All staff will be in the required uniforms per policy of each facility and will maintain a neatly groomed and professional appearance, lacking in heavy make-up, perfume, and jewelry.

All staff are temporarily contracted by Specialty Nurses to perform under the policy and procedure of that facility. Any misconduct that is brought to the attention of the scheduler/management will be investigated and evaluated for appropriate action.

Please conduct yourself in a friendly, courteous, and professional manner with everyone whom you come in contact with during your work.

Personal phone calls are prohibited during your shift unless in emergency situations. Phone calls are to be made on breaks only. Abuse of phone privileges will be addressed. Monetary restitution is at the discretion of the facility.

If staff wish to visit friends or relatives who are patients/residents, they are to do so on their own time. All visiting rules apply to you. Use of profane, abusive, or threatening language will not be tolerated and is grounds for termination.

CHEMICAL ABUSE -

Any staff member proven to be under the influence of chemicals within the facility will be terminated. Chemical testing is at the discretion of the facility. Costs for chemical testing are paid for by the staff member being tested.

CONFIDENTIALITY -

Staff are required to keep all wage and other agreements confidential. Personal information will not be divulged with contracted facility staff or Specialty Nurse staff.

HIPAA / PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY –

Specialty Nurses' staff will be held accountable for the compliance of HIPAA while practicing standards of care in contracted Specialty Nurses' facilities. Specialty Nurses' staff will conduct themselves and in a manner so as to protect the confidentiality of patients individually identifiable health information as required by state and federal law. All Specialty Nurses' staff are required to have a HIPAA acknowledgement/quiz on file.

Medical records must never be placed in the hands of a patient/resident or anyone else other than those persons specifically charged with a patient/resident's care. Information about patients/residents must never be discussed with other patients/residents, with fellow workers, or with other people outside the facility. Divulging confidential information may result in disciplinary action including termination.

Information to be released to the media must be given only by specifically authorized personnel designated by the administrator. If anyone should ask you for such information, refer them to your department manager or the administrator. It should be noted that confidential information is not limited to patient/resident information but includes other sensitive areas directly related to the facility. See your Specialty Nurses HIPAA Handbook for more information.

HIPAA Non-Compliance - Specialty Nurses' staff will be held accountable for complaints of non-compliance and monetary penalties if incurred. All incidences will be investigated with the supervision of the facility and discipline will be enforced by Specialty Nurses.

HOLIDAYS -

Specialty Nurses are entitled to receive time and one-half pay for these recognized holidays and any others if recognized by the facility in which you work. For Elite Professional the 12 hour day is time and one half, and not the 12 noc unless you work it (have to get up, etc.).

New Years Eve - N
New Years Day - D/PM
Memorial Day - N/D/PM
July 4th - N/D/PM

Labor Day - N/D/PM
Thanksgiving - N/D/PM
Christmas Eve - PM/N
Christmas Day - D/PM

ISSUES -

All staff issues will be brought to the attention of the management.

ETHICAL ISSUES -

Staff representing Specialty Nurses will display honesty, loyalty and professionalism. All staff are required to follow each facility policy involving ethical issues. Specialty Nurses embraces the "do-no-harm" rule of medicine.

NON-COMPETE

All staff are required to hold a Non-Compete with Specialty Nurses. All staff are free to work at any other facility and negotiate a contract with any other entity with the exception of contracted facilities that currently provide services under a Specialty Nurses' contract, unless approval is given in writing. Staff agrees that this shall extend for a period of one (1) year after your last day of work with Specialty Nurses.

Violation of this Non-Compete Agreement. In case of violation of this Non-Compete Agreement by staff, if the violation appears to be an imminent possibility, Staff agrees that any action brought by us to enjoin the violation shall be allowed in the form of a temporary injunction upon an ex parte motion, it being stipulated between parties that any violation of this Agreement, for purposes of obtaining the temporary injunction, shall be considered to cause irreparable damage to us. Staff further agrees to pay all reasonable attorney fees and costs incurred by us in any action taken by our legal counsel to enforce the provisions of this agreement.

Damages. Inasmuch as damages for breach of this Non-Compete Agreement by staff would be speculative in nature, the parties agree that the company remedy in the event of a breach of the terms or provisions of this agreement shall be limited to: (a) injunctive relief; (b) liquidated damages in the amount of five thousand dollars for violation of any term or provision of this agreement, and (c) reasonable attorneys fees and costs incurred by us in the enforcement of this agreement regardless of whether a civil action is commenced.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA) -

FMLA requires covered companies to provide up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job protected leave to “eligible” staff for certain family and medical reasons. Staff are eligible if they have worked for Specialty Nurses for at least one (1) year, and for 1250 hours over the previous twelve (12) months.

Reasons for taking this unpaid leave must be to care for your child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care, to care for spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition that makes you unable to perform the job. Staff should provide a thirty (30) day advance leave notice and medical certification.

FUNERAL LEAVE -

Understandably, staff want time off to attend the funeral of relatives and friends. Notice of absence must be reported to the scheduler/manager in order to provide shift coverage. Specialty Nurses will grant this request as an excused absence.

GARNISHMENTS -

Law compels Specialty Nurses Group to accept legal garnishments or court orders to withhold part of your check in payment of debts.

GIFTS AND GRATUITIES -

You must neither solicit nor accept any gift, tip, or gratuity from any patient/resident, visitor, business firm, or any other organization or person for any service rendered by you while on duty. If gifts or gratuities are forwarded by mail or personally delivered to you at your home or another facility, you are expected to report the matter to your scheduler/management.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS -

States require criminal background checks to be completed on all individuals who provide direct patient/resident contact services in licensed facilities. Prior to hire, a background study will be done - and annually - throughout employment.

LICENSES -

You are required to have a license to perform your job and you are personally responsible for securing the license, keeping it up to date, and providing your scheduler/management with a copy of your current license or registration. Failure to maintain a valid license or certification for any reason will subject employee to involuntary termination. You will be removed from the roster, and facilities will be notified. No shifts will be made available until all credentials are valid. This is necessary because in the case of license expiration or invalidity Specialty Nurses will not be held liable.

IMMUNIZATIONS -

All staff will provide to Specialty Nurses a copy of MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), Hep B, and Mantoux (TB). All staff are required to provide a copy of Mantoux (TB) annually. Some facilities require an annual flu shot which you may have to have to work there.

BLOODBORNE DISEASES -

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has determined that health care professionals face a significant health risk as the result of occupational exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials because they may contain bloodborne pathogens.

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms such as viruses or bacteria that are carried in the blood and can cause disease in people. There are many different bloodborne pathogens including malaria, syphilis, babesiosis, leptospirosis, arboviral infections, hepatitis C, relapsing fever and brucellosis. *Hepatitis B (HBV)* and *the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)* are the two diseases specifically addressed by the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard.

This hazard can be minimized or eliminated using a combination of engineering and work practice controls, personal protective clothing and equipment, training, medical surveillance, hepatitis B vaccination, signs and labels, and other provisions. It is important to know which blood borne pathogens you may be exposed to at work.

The three (3) rules of prevention for HIV and HBV:

1. Consider all residents potentially infective.
2. Assume all blood and other body fluids and tissues with visible blood (covered by Universal Precautions) are contaminated with HIV and HBV.
3. Assume all used needles and other sharps are contaminated.

INSERVICE TRAINING -

All staff are required to submit to Specialty Nurses on a yearly basis, the necessary CEU documentation needed in order to maintain nursing licensure. All CNA's/TMA's are required to meet the twelve (12) hour in-service requirement yearly and to submit all documentation to Specialty Nurses. In-services are required to maintain JCAHO, federal and state standards.

INSURANCE -

Worker's Compensation Insurance - Every staff person is covered for any injury or illness through Specialty Nurses at a facility. However, a report of any injury or illness must be submitted to the scheduler/management within twenty-four (24) hours. Report all injuries immediately to your supervisor at the facility and to Specialty Nurses/Elite Professional Nursing. (See "Accidents" section)

INSPECTION AND SEARCH -

Stealing property of any employee, patient, resident, or facility will be cause for dismissal. Per each facility policy, they reserve the right to inspect and search any person under the suspicion of theft.

Defacing, damaging, or destroying any facilities' property or the property of others is not tolerated and will be grounds for dismissal.

JURY DUTY -

Occasionally, staff are subpoenaed for jury duty. Any staff called for jury duty must notify the scheduler/management in advance in order to provide full coverage for confirmed shifts.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE -

Staff desiring a leave of absence are encouraged to contact the scheduler/management.

ORIENTATION –

Orientation is at the discretion of each facility per policy and procedure. All staff will orientate as required by each facility.

SHIFT SCHEDULING -

All staff will be contacted by their scheduler with all available shifts. All shift confirmations must go through your scheduler. All shifts are documented for payroll purposes. Record your work time on the Facility Time Sheets located at the facility where you are working. These sheets are used for payroll purposes. Unconfirmed shifts may result in delayed compensation. While we place you to work at various facilities, you are employed by us (Specialty Nurses/Elite Professional Nursing) and as such we pay your wages, and pay all required federal and state contributions as required by law.