

# OSHA SAFETY TRAINING

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## **GOAL OF THE VNA CARE SAFETY PROGRAM:**

The goal of our program is to promote safety within the staff and patient environments as well as the safe management of equipment. The program also outlines how we will approach emergencies within the organization and its communities. The oversight of our safety program is assigned to Administrative Services for equipment and facilities, Human Resources for employee safety compliance and the Infection Control Safety Office for patient safety. The responsibility of this safety committee is to assure the safety of the environment for both patients and staff through patient and staff education, fire drills and office inspections.

## **REPORTING/RECORD KEEPING**

### **A. SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S JOB**

1. Report potentially unsafe conditions and equipment to your manager/supervisor who will in turn report it to the appropriate personnel for investigation.
2. Whenever a death or serious injury or illness is associated with a medical device supplied by a vendor occurs, staff is required to complete an incident report and submit to their immediate manager/supervisor. The manager/supervisor will report it to the VP Clinical or the VP Hospice, as appropriate, for investigation/analysis and follow through according to FDA regulation.
3. All staff are encouraged to report safety incidents and hazards, and make recommendations for improvement. An incident report should be completed and sent to the employee's manager.
4. No employee shall be retaliated against for reporting safety hazards or making recommendations.

### **B. EQUIPMENT**

1. Any equipment that malfunctions should be labeled "not-functioning", taken out of service and reported to the employee's manager/supervisor as soon as possible with an explanation of the problem(s) should be noted.
2. Staff are to ensure that the equipment used in the home is safe, operating as intended, and that the patient and family are using the equipment as intended.
3. VNA owned equipment that malfunctions and is used in the provision of care should be labeled "not-functioning" and sent to the Administrative Services Department in the Worcester office for repair or replacement. An explanation of the problem(s) is to be provided when returning the equipment.
4. Staff are to immediately notify the vendor of the malfunctioning equipment which is supplied by the vendor and used in the provision of care.

## **WORKPLACE EMERGENCY PLAN**

### **Disaster Plan/Emergency Plan**

1. It is the policy of the VNA to protect its staff and patients/families in times of emergency situations. It is vital to our mission that we prepare for emergencies with other community resources. The goal is to lessen the severity and impact of the disaster, to be fully prepared for the emergency, and to respond and recover quickly from the disaster with minimal effect on our staff and patients.
2. The purpose of the emergency plan is to provide a written guideline for staff in order to continue effective care to our patients and maintain safety for our staff in the event of an emergency. The Plan will also assist us in coordinating our efforts with our communities. Its success depends on the cooperation of all staff and their knowledge of the plan.

3. There are four phases to the Emergency Plan: *Lessening the Impact; Preparedness; Response; Recovery*

The Emergency Procedure Manual is located at each site on top of the kitchen refrigerator.

The Emergency Fire Evacuation Plan outlines the action to be taken in the event of an emergency to effect a timely evacuation. The Evacuation Plan for each site is posted at the site's designated area. All staff are oriented to the evacuation plan.

**Fire** – See the Fire Safety section of the Emergency Procedure Manual

**Bomb** – See Bomb Threat section of Emergency Procedure Manual

**Hospice Residences** – The Hospice Residence Manager/Residence Caregiver shall be the charge person and shall direct the disaster effort.

## **WORKPLACE SAFETY**

### **A. OFFICE SAFETY**

1. Refer to the general safety guidelines for office personnel [Attachment A].
2. Refer to the general safety guidelines for slips and falls [Attachment B].

### **B. COMMUNITY SAFETY**

1. Refer to the general safety guidelines for visiting personnel [Attachment C].
2. Important reminders:
  - a. Do not enter or stay in any situation that does not seem safe for any reason. (This includes animals, questionable family/friends or hazardous conditions.) Leave and notify your manager/supervisor immediately.
  - b. Stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.
  - c. Send the message that you are calm, confident and know where you are going.

## **FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION IN VNA SITES**

1. Fires are a common cause of serious injury and property damage in the work environment. The VNA has developed a fire safety plan which is designed to prevent fires from happening, reduce injury and property damage should a fire occur, and educate all members in their role in regards to fire safety and prevention.
2. Prevention includes proper storage precautions, electrical safety, and employee responsibility to fire prevention.

### ***STORAGE PRECAUTION IN VNA SITES***

- Only small quantities of inflammable chemicals should be stored in a room. Make certain that the storage area is well ventilated.
- Do not store flammable liquids in areas exposed to heat and direct sunlight.
- Do not store flammable liquids where their escaping vapors may be exposed to sources of ignition e.g. open flames and electrical circuits.

### ***ELECTRICAL SAFETY IN VNA SITES***

- Do not string electrical cords across the aisle, as this would cause a tripping hazard.
- Report promptly any frayed, broken or overheated electrical cords or equipment to manager/supervisor.
- Do not operate light switches or connect or disconnect equipment where any part of your body is in contact with metal fixtures or is in water.
- Personal fans and heaters used at a VNA site must be approved and tagged for use by Administrative Services. The equipment must be turned off at the end of the employee's shift.

## **EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIRE PREVENTION**

- Report conditions that could result in a fire to immediate manager/supervisor.
- Use only approved electrical connections for equipment.
- Use microwave ovens, toaster ovens and other kitchen equipment according to instructions and only while the employee is present.
- Know the location of fire alarm devices, fire extinguishers, and fire exits.
- Maintain work area in a neat and orderly manner.
- Never store anything in or under a stairwell.

If a fire is discovered, employees are to take the following actions:

- Evacuate anyone in immediate danger.
- Close the door to the room of the fire origin.
- Pull the nearest fire alarm.
- Use fire extinguisher to extinguish the fire if appropriate.
- Notify the fire department by telephone (911 if appropriate).
- Transfer telephones to the answering service, if time permits.
- Close office door and evacuate the building.
- Meet in the designated area outside of the building.

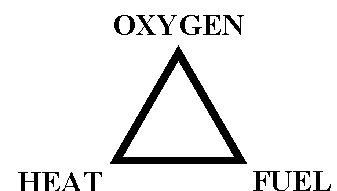
When the fire alarm sounds due to a fire that has been discovered, the required response is to:

- Evacuate through the nearest exit.
- Do not use the elevator.
- Congregate at the pre-designated area for a head count.
- Notify the fire department if anyone is still in the building, if known.
- Not re-enter the building without clearance from the fire department.

Hospice Residences

- Close doors to resident rooms
- Notify Fire Department - 911
- Evacuate building

3. The three elements necessary for a fire are Oxygen, Heat and Fuel.
- a. If you take away one of the elements, you *can* put out the fire.
- b. All VNA extinguishers, with the exception of the one outside the MIS Department in Worcester, which is a *WetMist* extinguisher, are classified A, B, and C, and are appropriate on all class of fires A, B, and C.
4. All extinguishers are operated in a similar (PASS) manner.
- a. Hold the extinguisher upright.
- b. **P**ull the pin. Stand 8 to 10 ft from fire.
- c. **A**im at the base of the fire.
- d. **S**queeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent.
- e. **S**weep at the base of the fire with extinguishing agent.  
If you aim high at the flames, you won't put out the fire.
5. Fire Drills assure that all personnel are trained to perform assigned tasks, are familiar with the location, use and operation of fire fighting equipment, and trained to evaluate the effectiveness of the internal disaster plan. Drills shall be held regularly, at varying times, and are mostly unannounced.



## **BOMB THREAT**

The following is the procedure to be followed in the event of a bomb threat:

1. Receiver of bomb threat needs to:
  - a. Communicate with next closest person in proximity that there is a bomb threat.
  - b. Keep calm.
  - c. Engage caller in conversation as long as possible and pay particular attention to:
    - any and all background noise
    - voice description, age, sex, demeanor, accent and if the caller's voice is familiar
    - callers knowledge of the facility
    - location of the bomb
2. Person closest in proximity to receiver of bomb threat will:
  - a. Call 911 and state "*we have received a bomb threat*".
  - b. Tell senior manager or designee on site.
  - c. Evacuate the building and/or pull fire alarm to evacuate building
  - d. Notify other building tenants, if applicable
3. Person in command (CEO or next available person) will:
  - a. Assign a charge person at the location.
  - b. Follow procedures of Agency Disaster Plan for employee relocation.

## **HAZARD COMMUNICATION**

The VNA recognizes its responsibility in providing a safe and healthy work environment for its employees and in ensuring that employees can perform their jobs effectively without endangering their health or the health of others. The Hazard Communication Standard (**HazCom**) provides for training of employees and labeling of hazardous material as well as providing Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

### **A. PROTECT YOURSELF**

1. Read all hazard warnings before using a product.
2. Follow the guidelines as stated on the label or on the MSDS.
3. If there is no label, or the label is torn or unreadable, do not use the product, report it to your manager/supervisor for additional assistance.
4. Ask your manager/supervisor if you are unsure of how to use the product.

### **B. MSDS**

The MSDS are written materials that have been developed by the manufacturer about the physical and chemical properties of a substance that may be a health hazard. Health hazards may have short or long term affects on an exposed person. As the VNA receives hazardous substances, employees will be informed to refer to the MSDS manual for up-dates through their manager/supervisor.

1. The VNA makes available MSDS for each hazardous chemical used in the workplace. Excluded are those chemicals commonly available, used in the same manner as a normal consumer would use, and which use results in a duration and frequency of exposure not greater than exposures experienced by the normal consumer.
2. The MSDS are kept in a binder on top of the refrigerator at each VNA location.
3. The MSDS contains all the information needed to keep employees safe. When reviewing the MSDS notebook pay attention to the following information:

1. Storage of materials
2. Handling procedures
3. Special precautions for exposure and spills
4. Emergency care

## **ERGONOMICS**

### **A. BODY MECHANICS**

1. Ergonomics is the science of arranging the environment to fit the person. It involves looking at the workstation, the tools, the motions of the work performed, worker's physical capabilities and limitations, and environmental conditions. The goal is to design and control the factors involved so employees may perform their job efficiently and safely. Ergonomics fits the workstation to the worker.
2. Some types of tasks or work conditions which may affect employees include:
  - Regular repetitive tasks
  - Forceful exertions
  - Cold temperatures
  - Poor body mechanics
  - Restrictive workstations
  - Awkward postures
  - Lifting heavy or awkward objects
  - Twisting motions
3. Ergonomic hazards can cause a variety of disorders and illnesses which can be broken into two groups:
  - a. Cumulative Trauma Disorders - These are tendon disorders. They usually occur at or near the joints where the tendon rubs against the ligaments and bones.
  - b. Back Disorders - Back disorders may be caused by heavy, awkward, overexerted lifting, twisting, reaching, bending, and/or remaining in one position for an extended period of time.
4. Staff needs to recognize symptoms of cumulative trauma and back disorders and report them to their immediate manager/supervisor.
5. Controlling ergonomic hazards:
  - a. Engineering Controls – The redesign of tools, workstations, or equipment.
  - b. Administrative Controls – Used to reduce the duration, frequency and severity of exposure to ergonomic stressors.
  - c. Medical Management – Helps to identify and treat symptoms early.
  - d. Good Work Practice Controls – Include proper work techniques, training, conditioning, monitoring and feedback.

### **B. LIFTING TECHNIQUES**

1. Whether you are administering patient care or performing tasks in the office, proper body mechanics must be used at all times.
2. The basic rules of good lifting are:
  - a. Always use the proper lifting technique.
  - b. Never attempt to lift or push on an object that you feel is too heavy; you must contact your manager/supervisor when help is needed to move a heavy object.
  - c. Think about the lift before you begin.
  - d. Bend your knees, keep your back straight and lift with your legs.
  - e. Bend your knees when picking objects up from the floor.
  - f. Don't be too proud to ask for help with heavy or awkward loads.
  - g. Avoid twisting your back to reach for objects.
  - h. Transport loads in carts whenever possible.

## **WORK PLACE VIOLENCE**

The VNA is committed to ensuring the highest standard of safety for all employees, customers, contractors, and visitors. The VNA will make every effort to prevent violent incidents from occurring in the work place.

Threat of Violence – a communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm toward any person or property. Threats of violence toward another person may be verbal or non-verbal. These threats may include heated gestures of any nature or aggressive language that implies a desire to harm an individual, an individual's personal property, or Network property. Menacing or physically intimidating behavior such as consistently following an individual is also considered a threat of violence.

Act of violence – exercise of physical force against another person, damaging an individuals' personal property, or damaging VNA property.

### **Reporting Methods:**

1. Prompt and accurate reporting of all violent incidents must be reported to the employee's manager/supervisor who will notify the Human Resources Department. If any violence by an employee is displayed in the workplace or threats of violence, that employee will be subject to actions under the disciplinary process.
2. Employees should be aware of possible warning signs that a co-worker may be in trouble. These may include verbal threats, loud outbursts, increase stress in the workplace, bringing weapons on Network property to show co-workers, overt signs of depression and/or substance abuse, withdrawal signs, romantic obsession with a co-worker, employee's expression of fear toward another employee or increase in tardiness, illness time or requests to leave early.
3. All reports will be investigated and information will be kept confidential except where there is a need to know in order to effectuate a solution to the problem.

The VNA will not tolerate employees, volunteers, visitors, students, or independent contractors being in possession of any weapons, including weapons transported in employee vehicles, inside the workplace or in the parking area. In addition, when working outside the VNA's premises, employees are prohibited from carrying or transporting weapons while conducting VNA business. Weapons include guns, knives, explosives and other potential weapons.

*See attachment D.*

## **OFFICE SAFETY**

1. Entrances and exits shall be kept unblocked, well lighted, and unlocked during work hours.
2. Aisles must be kept clear at all times.
3. Work areas should be maintained in a neat, orderly manner; trash and refuse are to be thrown in proper waste containers.
4. All spills should be wiped up promptly.
5. Pencils, paper clips and rubber bands that have fallen to the floor must be picked up.
6. All employees must wear sturdy shoes with proper soles and heels. Rubber-soled shoes are preferable for safety reasons.
7. Employees must wear shoes at all times while conducting agency business.
8. Do not use your desk or chair in place of a ladder.
9. Open all doors slowly in case someone is behind the door.
10. Sit properly in your chair to avoid tipping backwards.
11. Loose clothing must not be worn around mechanical equipment.
12. Dress properly for the job you are expected to do.
13. Wear proper eye protection if required.
14. Use equipment only after you have been trained to do so.
15. Equipment must be kept in good condition, and the correct instruments must be used for each job.
16. Report electrical problems to your manager/supervisor. Never attempt to make electrical repairs yourself.
17. Do not tamper with electrical or mechanical equipment.
18. All electrical or mechanical equipment must be shut down when it becomes necessary to make repairs or adjustments.
19. Storage of files and supplies should be in such a manner as to preclude damage to the supplies or injury to personnel when moving them from storage. Heaviest items should be stored closest to the floor and lightweight items stored overhead.
20. All cords running into walk areas must be taped down or inserted through rubber protectors to preclude them from becoming tripping hazards.
21. Desk and file drawers must be closed when not in use. Use care when opening and closing drawers to avoid pinching your fingers.

22. Do not open more than one filing cabinet drawer at a time.
23. All electrical equipment should be plugged into the appropriate wall receptacles or into an extension of only one cord of similar size and capacity.
24. Unplug cords by grasping the plug, not the cord.
25. Individual heaters at work areas must be approved and tagged by Administrative Services and should be kept clear of combustible materials such as drapes or waste from wastebaskets. Newer heaters which are equipped with tip-over switches should be used.
26. Appliances such as coffee pots and microwaves should be kept in working order and inspected for signs of wear, heat or fraying cords.
27. Equipment such as scissors, staplers, etc., should be used for their intended purposes only and should not be misused as hammers, pry bars, screwdrivers etc. Misuse can cause damage to the equipment and injury to the user.
28. Limit papers in a hole punch or stapler so the punch or stapler operates without forcing it.
29. Keep the handle on the paper cutter in the *down* position when not in use.
30. Equipment and supplies must always be stored in a careful manner.
31. Cleaning supplies should be stored away from edible items on kitchen shelves.
32. Cleaning solvents and flammable liquids should be stored in appropriate containers.
33. Solutions that may be poisonous or not intended for consumption should be kept in well labeled containers.

**SLIPS AND FALLS**

1. Unnecessary and excessive haste is the cause of many accidents. Exercise caution at all times. Walk, don't run!
2. All injuries, no matter how slight, must be reported at once to your immediate supervisor. The supervisor notifies Human Resources.
3. 'Horse Play' on VNA property or where VNA business is conducted is prohibited.
4. Report spills too large for you to clean up to Administrative Services.
5. When on the stairway, use the handrail and exercise caution.
6. When handling hazardous materials, follow prescribed safety procedures and use required safety equipment.

**SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR HOME VISITS**

1. Do not carry large sums of money.
2. Do not wear expensive jewelry.
3. Do not take purse/wallet into the patient's home; keep it locked in the trunk of your car, not in the public's view. Have some change and your ID with you.
4. VNA issued equipment must be locked in truck of vehicle or covered with a blanket so it is not in sight.
5. Do not enter a building that appears vacant or unsafe. If you feel unsafe making a visit, go to a safe location and notify your supervisor.
6. Do not take chances with pets. Ask the family to put the pet in another room for the duration of the visit.
7. Do not give your home telephone, cell phone, beeper number, or your home address to patients.
8. Caution when using a patient phone to call another patient as the first number will come up on the second's caller ID. Use \*67 to block the call.
9. Make sure that you understand directions to the patient's home.
10. Use well-traveled streets; avoid dark deserted places, alleys, vacant lots, parks and unsafe short cuts. Stay on main thoroughfares. Avoid walking where there are shrubs and tall hedges.
11. Carry your car keys in hand for accessibility as well as a means of protecting yourself.
12. Plan visits in high-risk areas for morning or early afternoon.
13. Look before entering an elevator. If concerned, do not enter. Exit the elevator if you are uncomfortable. Wait for another elevator. Do not use the stairs. Stand next to the control panels by the emergency button and press the floor number yourself. Do not ask others to press the number for you. Do not push the stop button.

14. In the home, if you have fears about your safety, if people in the home are impaired by a substance, or there are weapons or drugs evident, do what is necessary for the patient, if you can, and then leave. If you feel that you need to leave immediately, do so, and notify your supervisor.
15. If a car pulls up beside you, stay more than an arm's length away. Don't become involved in a long conversation.
16. If a car is following you while you are walking, cross the street and walk in the opposite direction. If the car persists, record the license number and call the police from the nearest open business.
17. If groups of people who look threatening are standing around, take evasive action.
18. If someone is following you on foot while you are walking, enter a business establishment.
19. If you are lost: (a) accept verbal directions, do not follow the individual (b) call the office; or (c) ask a police officer, firefighter, letter carrier, business owner, or gas station attendant to assist you.
20. If someone is about to threaten you, **scream loudly: "FIRE!"**
21. If a purse-snatcher threatens you, **do not resist**. Give him or her your purse or wallet.
22. If someone accosts you with a weapon, **do not resist**.
23. Notify your supervisor immediately of any unusual incidents.

#### **WHEN DRIVING .....**

1. Always check the back seat and floor of your car before getting in.
2. Drive with your doors locked and windows partially rolled up. Do not make it easy for someone to reach in and open your door.
3. Park in well-lighted parking areas and near to the building you are visiting. Note where you have parked so you can walk directly to the car. Lock your car doors.
4. If your car is surrounded by loiters, approach with caution and ask them to leave, or return to the patient's home and call 911.
5. When pulled up at a stoplight, keep your car in gear. If someone approaches your car while you are stopped, keep your hand on the horn.
6. If you think a car is following you while you are driving, drive to the nearest police station or business district. Don't drive home; they may follow you. Try to make a mental note of the color and make of the car. If you see the license plate, try to remember the number.
7. Don't pull over if the car behind you flashes its lights. If it is the police, they will have a siren and flashing red or blue light on top of the car.
8. Make sure you have at least a quarter tank of gas at all times.
9. Don't put your name and address on your key chain.

### **If you have car trouble or see another driver in trouble ...**

If your car breaks down on the highway or turnpike, pull over to the side of the road and put on your flashers. Keep your doors locked, windows up, and stay in the car. Wait for the police.

If a person stops to help you, open the window just a crack. Ask them to call for assistance. Don't get out of the car or let him/her try to fix it.

Road flares should be kept in your glove compartment or trunk in the event of car trouble at night. Light one or two, and place them on the ground behind your car.

### **ATTACHMENT D**

## **SIMPLE STEPS TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFE**

It's important to understand that violence comes in many forms. Race or ethnicities are not indicators or predictors of violent tendencies. Often people become violent when they feel they have no other option available. To be safe, all patients and families should be evaluated based on the following predictors:

- People who have used violence in the past.
- Stressful environments such as an overwhelmed caregiver who becomes rough with the patient.
- Unpredictability can create a stressful environment. For example someone who abuses substances can present a dangerous situation for a staff member.
- Younger people tend to use physical violence and elderly people tend to use verbal violence.

Verbal violence is as devastating as physical violence. It's also more assessable because it can occur on the telephone. Managers, supervisors and office staff often experience this type of assault. It needs to be responded to just as quickly as physical confrontation.

It is important for home care workers to be aware of their environment at all times. Our policy states "no person is expected to enter a home or building when his or her personal safety is threatened. Should you find yourself in a home where people are physically or verbally assaulting each other or you, immediately leave the home and report to your manager or supervisor." However, if someone in the house is still at risk, call the police before calling the office. All staff should review Policy on Field Safety.

As you go on your first visit to a home, it's important to invest time in your personal safety by:

- Driving around the block to check out environmental clues.
- Being careful not to walk through crowds or staying on an elevator with others you feel uncomfortable with.
- Looking for potentially dangerous weapons such as guns, knives, animals, and objects that can be thrown or made into assault weapons.

Visiting staff need to pay attention to the body language of anyone in the home, not just the patient. You should also be aware of your body language and how others might interpret it.

Although anger is a normal reaction and feeling, rage goes beyond that and encompasses everything. For example, if you arrive late for a visit, the enraged client may not only be angry you are late, but also may harbor long repressed feelings, thoughts of hostility, and thoughts that can affect your interactions.

You can tell if a person is becoming enraged (which goes beyond anger) because they will show any of the following signs:

- Their face/neck become red and flushed
- The veins on their neck or forehead are “popping out”
- Clenching or clenching and unclenching their hand or jaw
- If sitting, their knees might start bouncing up and down
- If standing, their feelings become more out of control as they begin to pace

When a person is about to verbally or physically assault you, rationalization is no longer an option. This is *not* the time to talk to the person about why they are unreasonable. At this point they are unable to listen or respond to anything you say or do. Leave immediately.

If you sense an assault:

- Always stay closest to the door and don’t let anything block your way.
- Pay attention to your own body language.
- Stay at the same eye level but don’t make eye contact with a person in a rage. Direct eye contact can be very threatening and may escalate the situation. However, staying at eye level communicates a respectful attention. Therefore, if they sit, you sit. If they stand, you stand.
- Keep at least three to four feet away from the person. If the person starts waving their arms (even without the intention of hitting you) you have enough distance to avoid blows.
- Do *not* cross your arms or put your hands in your pockets. This may convey a message of hostility or the feeling you do not care. Keep your arms relaxed and loose at your sides or adopt a stance with one arm resting across the other to leave your hands available to deflect blows or thrown objects.
- Be aware of your voice. Your voice should become clear and almost monotone. Yelling may escalate the situation.
- Convey respect. This is not the time to make a joke or minimize the situation. Even though you want to yell or scream, adopt a respectful and calm demeanor.
- Assume a body stance. As the potential victim, you need to stand with your feet spread hip-width apart and at a slight angle to the enraged person. Envision a “T” position. Point your front foot toward the person and your back foot perpendicular behind it. This will help maintain your balance if you are hit or shoved.
- Once you have left the house, do *not* go back to retrieve bags or other items left behind. Walking back into the house may make the person’s potential to become angrier. Nothing is more valuable than your life. Ask the police to retrieve your belongings.

Remember: The adrenaline rush will last at least 1 hour. The enraged person may appear calm after 15 minutes, but he or she can easily flare up again because of the adrenaline coursing throughout the body. Once out of the situation and in your car, your adrenaline rush will last one hour and can affect how you drive. Find a spot where you may calm down before deciding on your next step.

In the event you are verbally or physically assaulted, you should talk with your manager or supervisor and others whose support you might find helpful. Talking about what happened and how you feel about it can prevent emotional, physical, or cognitive problems related to the incident.

You may want to consider the following tips:

- Lock up your personal belongings, preferably in the trunk or out of sight in your vehicle.
- Pins of a political or religious nature can offend and potentially escalate someone’s rage.