Infant Security Processes – OU Medical System

In addition to this overview of the security process, please review in total the following policies:

OUMC Policy Infant Security 15-56
OUMC Policy Infant/Pediatric Abduction 15-08

Infant Security

The birth of a baby is a joyous occasion for parents and families. To ensure the joyous event is not disrupted, infant security is of the utmost importance at OU Medical System. Infant abduction deterrence is a whole system approach including not only training/education for staff, families and visitors, but also includes many facility and equipment measures.

Since 1991, the National Center of Missing & Exploited Children reports that there are on average 11 infant abductions each year. An infant abduction is a tragedy for everyone – the infant, parents, staff and medical center. In order to prevent such an occurrence, security measures must be in place and staff must be ever vigilant. Therefore it is a part of the hospital policy that:

1. Training for all hospital employees will be completed within the first seven days of hire.
2. Staff who will be working directly with/caring for newborns will receive additional training before or during their first shift to the patient care area.

Definitions:

Perinatal Units-Labor and Delivery, OB Special Care, Mom Baby and Baby Care Area
Neonatal Units-NICU East, West, North, and South
Parent:* Biological mother and father of the infant. Father as indicated on the birth certificate or identified by the mother.
Guardian: Person(s) with court appointed custody of the infant.
Guest: Person(s) over the age of 18 identified on the Guest Form by the parent(s).
Visitor: Person(s) over the age of 16 accompanied by a parent.
Sibling: Brother(s) or sister(s) of the infant under the age of 16. Must present an up to date immunization record (upon entrance to the Neonatal Units).

*Adoptive parents are considered guests (if named on the guest list) or visitors (accompanied by the mother or the custodial agency) until court ordered guardianship is obtained.
**What You Should Know To Prevent An Infant Abduction!**

What safety measures are currently used (or will be coming soon) to prevent an infant abduction?

- Distinctive badges for perinatal and neonatal unit staff, including agency and traveling nurses
- Distinctive badges for hospital-privileged Perinatal and Neonatal physicians and Advanced Practice Clinicians
- Perinatal and Neonatal unique scrubs that are easy to distinguish from a distance
- Limited access to perinatal and neonatal care units using card swipe access
- Hospital employees presenting on the units must wear a hospital-issued photo ID badge
- Students, contracted staff and non-healthcare service providers presenting on the units will wear accompanying school/company ID badge and a temporary unit-issued badge
- All visitors will be greeted upon entry and validated to be on the care area
- Random Security Checks
- “Code Pink” and Infant Security Plans
- Staff vigilance and prompt action
- Newborn foot-prints and photographs
- Application of mother/father/baby bands and use of Electronic Infant Security Devices
- Mothers/primary caregivers provide the hospital an “approved” guest list

**How are infants transported in the facility?**

- Infants are **only** transported in bassinets – never hand carried unless in the mother’s arms while riding in a wheelchair or carrier
- Infants are **always** discharged accompanied by a nurse

**What are your responsibilities in maintaining Infant Security?**

- Wear your name badge at all times when on duty – **badge compliance will be strictly enforced**
- Make sure others do not enter with you as you open/enter through a secure door
- Be alert to unusual behavior
- Report ANY suspicious individuals to police/security
- Stop and question any suspicious individuals carrying an infant bag, package, backpack, etc...
  - “May I help you?” is the most effective means of stopping and later identifying a potential abductor
- Call for “Code Pink” immediately if you are unable to stop and question a suspicious person. Dial 14911 on the downtown campus and 444 on the Edmond campus
- Keep a suspicious individual in sight while assuring your own safety

**Prevention is the best defense against infant abductions.**

**Maintain your vigilance at all times.**
Now you are asking, what does a suspicious person look like?

It is someone who may exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- Makes repeated visits “just to see” the babies
- Takes uniforms, scrubs, or other means of hospital identification as well as stethoscopes, pagers, etc...
- Loiters on the floors where the perinatal and neonatal units are located and around the doors
- Asks questions about the floor plans, location of nursery, procedures, etc.
  - For example – “Where do the stairwells lead?” or “Do babies stay with mother at all times?”
- Carries a large package from the care area (e.g. gym bag), particularly if the person is “cradling” or “talking” to the bag
- Carries an infant in a corridor instead of a bassinet
- Walks out of the hospital with an infant rather than riding in a wheelchair with a staff member or volunteer escort

The Abductor – Profile from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children:

- Is usually female of “childbearing” age (range now 12 to 53) and often overweight.
- Is most likely compulsive; most often relies on manipulation, lying, and deception.
- Frequently indicates she has lost a baby or is incapable of having one.
- Is often married or cohabitating; companion’s desire for a child or the abductor’s desire to provide her companion with “his” child may be the motivation for the abduction.
- Usually lives in the community where the abduction takes place.
- Frequently initially visits nursery and maternity units at more than one healthcare facility prior to the abduction; asks detailed questions about procedures and the maternity floor layout; frequently uses a fire-exit stairwell for her escape; and may also try to abduct from the home setting.
- Usually plans the abduction, but does not necessarily target a specific infant; frequently seizes any opportunity present.
- Frequently impersonates a nurse or other allied healthcare personnel.
- Often becomes familiar with healthcare staff members, staff members work routines, and victim parents.
- Demonstrates a capability to provide “good” care to the baby once the abduction occurs.

There is no guarantee an infant abductor will fit this description.  This is only a profile.  An infant abductor can be of ANY sex, age, or description including..  a hospital employee.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important topic!