



## New FastPass System To Keep Track of Nighttime Visitors

**T**ampa General will begin a new “after-hours visitor management system” next month that will help Security keep track of nighttime visitors.

The system will be put into action every night from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. when TGH’s main doors are locked. During those hours, the only entrances into the hospital are at the Emergency Care Center and the East Pavilion near MacDonald’s.

Using a new computer technology called FastPass, Security staff posted at those entrances will take visitors’ pictures and then provide them with badges that identify them and their destinations, says Safety and Security Director Paul Ford.

“When a visitor comes in, we’ll ask them where they’re going and whom they’re visiting. Then we’ll take their picture and get a copy of their driver’s license or other identification,” Paul says.

Within about 10 seconds, the hospital’s new FastPass computer system will spit

out a paper stick-on badge containing the visitor’s picture, destination, and the date.

The Security officer will also verify through the Merlin system that the patient cited by the visitor is actually in the hospital, says Security Supervisor Tony Venezia.

Patients taken to the Emergency Care Center will not be badged, but people accompanying them will receive badges, Tony says.

“While the patient is being checked in Triage, we’ll take the visitor to get the pass made and then reunite them in the Triage area,” he says.

The badges will be disposable, so its wearers can just throw them away when leaving the hospital.

The program’s main goal is to prevent unauthorized people from coming into the hospital at night and hanging out in the waiting rooms or wandering through the building, Paul says.

“With this program, everybody in the building at night should have either an employee badge or a visitor’s badge. If they don’t have a badge, or they’re not where they’re supposed to be, somebody should call Security,” Paul says.

The program will be used only at night. During the day, the sheer volume of visitors and the number of open doors into the building would make implementation extremely difficult.

The system will keep a database of visitors, allowing Security to identify visitors who have caused problems in the past and deny them entry. It can also download pictures from the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office Website of wanted criminals, so Security can watch for them.

Executive Vice President Deana Nelson says FastPass should make everyone in the hospital feel safer.

“I’m pleased to see the new system because I think it will provide an increased level of security and safety for our staff and patients after hours,” Deana says. “In an



**A visitor’s FastPass with his photo, name, destination, and the date. The passes will be given to visitors coming to TGH between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.**

organization as large and complex as TGH, security is always important, and I applaud our Safety and Security Department for taking another step to improve upon our current systems.”

The FastPass system is so new that only a few hospitals nationwide have implemented it. In Florida, Tampa General will be just the second hospital to install it. Memorial Health Care System in West Palm Beach was the first in the state to adopt the system, but Tony and Paul predict that most hospitals will implement it in the near future.

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