

# Family Orientation Guide

Winter 2011

## Welcome Home!

**This guide will orient you to life in the Fisher House and serve as a reference to back up the check in tour and orientation. Please refer to it often and if you have any questions, contact Management.**

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We invite you to feel at home in Fisher House but also ask guests to remember that this is a home shared in common with others. Just as your home needs rules, so does ours. With an average of 60 families staying each month, it would be chaos if every family operated entirely as they would at home. All decisions about policy, procedure and yes, even where items are stored, rests solely with Management.



While everything in Fisher House will not be *exactly* as you would have it in your home, with a spirit of cooperation and understanding we trust you will be able to share this beautiful place in comfort with our other guests.

We are honored to have you stay with us. Our Veterans, military personnel and their families have given much to this nation. It is our duty, honor and privilege to give something back to you and your family.

## PATIENTS @ FISHER HOUSE

Patients are welcome to visit the Fisher House, provided they have their doctor's permission. Under no circumstances may patients stay overnight at Fisher House, even if they are on a medical pass.

After patient discharge guests who can be home before sundown are asked to check out of Fisher House. If guests are not able to be home by sundown they have 24 hours to check out.

Discharged patients may stay at Fisher House only with the approval of the medical team and Fisher House Management.

## Fisher House Staff

Cecile Bagrow  
Manager  
206.768.5353 Office  
206.288.9862 Blackberry

Lorraine Thomas  
Assistant Manager  
206.277.3950 Office  
206.407.9542 Blackberry

Ray Madayag  
Steven McFadden  
Housekeepers

## Office Hours:

M-F 7:30am to 4:00 pm  
Office is closed on weekends and Federal holidays.

## Safety and Security in Fisher House

Your safety is among our primary concerns. The Fisher House is a private residence. NO ONE is allowed in the house who is not a registered house guests or visiting with a guest. VA Police routinely walk through the facility. Other VA staff have access only on an as-needed basis.

Guest badges must be worn at all times and act as your ID at the hospital.

**NEVER ADMIT ANYONE** to the house who is not known to you. This includes individuals with VA ID badges. All visitors must ring the bell and wait for admittance by a staff member or volunteer. If no staff is on

site, call the **VA Police @ x62899** for assistance. If you ever see anyone in Fisher House who does not belong immediately notify a staff member or call the VA Police.

When calling the VA Police from a cell phone dial **206-764-2899**.

Tightly close exterior doors when coming or going from the house. Do not leave exterior doors ajar for any reason.

Keep your keys with you at all times. If your house or hospital key is lost notify Management staff immediately. Do not store anything of value in your car.

Fisher House is not responsible for lost or stolen articles.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

**In the event of a medical emergency or fire, if you are calling from a house phone, you must first dial '9', then '911'.**

Specific emergency procedures are outlined in the Guest Handbook in your room. The sum of all that information is that if you hear an alarm, assume it is not a drill and leave the building. Evacuate to the Fisher House parking lot and wait for further instruction.

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***“Fisher House is truly a blessing. We’ve met some wonderful people and will cherish the new friendships and the emotional support we all shared”.***

***-Clarisse and Jane***

## Keeping it Clean

Fisher House is a home, not a hotel. Guests are asked to clean up after themselves in the common areas of the house, as well as in their rooms.

Fisher House is not a medical facility but because our guests are back and forth between the hospital and the house certain hygiene practices are expected in order to prevent the spread of illness or infection.

Do not leave out cooked foods longer than 45 minutes. Correctly store all food. Label opened containers and leftovers with the date.

Red cutting boards are for meat and fish; white cutting boards are for other food items.

Wipe counters during and after cooking.

Used utensils should not be shared among guests. **Please do not leave coffee spoons on the counter.**

All dishes, cookware and utensils should be cleaned in the dishwasher.

Regular hand washing is essential. Everyone should wash their hands:

- Before and after using the bathroom
- Before and after meals
- Before, during and after cooking
- Before and after interacting with patients and other guests of the house
- After touching your nose, eyes or mouth or after sneezing

- Before and after using the computer
- If your hands are visibly soiled

### Cleaning Tools & Supplies

The kitchen cupboard above the right hand sink contains dishwashing soap (and a first aid kit).

A vacuum and mop are located immediately inside the laundry room; a broom is in the laundry room broom closet.

Basic cleaning supplies are located in the guest rooms for your convenience. Please see one of the housekeepers if you run out.

Extra paper towels & garbage bags are in the laundry room.

## MAIL CALL!

Guests may receive mail @ Fisher House. It should be addressed thusly:

Your name & Room Number  
Fisher House  
1660 S. Columbian Way  
Seattle, WA 98108

Mail is delivered in the afternoon. Outgoing mail may be placed in the box outside the Management office. Staff delivers mail and packages directly to the rooms.



## THE GARDENS

Guests are welcome to water, harvest, weed, pluck and prune in Marianne’s Garden, the first organic garden installed at a Fisher House. Gardening gloves and hand tools are stored in the laundry room.

Relax & refresh in our peaceful Healing Garden.



## PLEASE NOTE:

Smoking is not permitted in the house or within 50 feet of the outside of the house. There is a designated smoking area for Fisher House guests, near the entrance to our parking lot.

Guests may entertain visitors during their stay. Visitors are the responsibility of the guests and bound by the same rules.

No more than 3 individuals are allowed to stay in a guest room. Fisher House staff need to be advised of any over-night guests and badges will be issued to those individuals.

No alcohol or weapons are allowed on federal property, including Fisher House.

## Living Room

Library books are donations. If you are in the midst of a gripping tale when it's time to leave, feel free to take the book with you.

The toys are all donations and children who fall in love with a special friend may take it home with them.

Please return Playstation games & controllers to the drawer after use.

Guests are invited to make a scrapbook page for our "family album" at the craft desk.

The computer is connected to the Internet and a printer.



## GUEST SUITES

Most guest suites have a computer with Internet access. Strict policies govern the use of computers and violations will result in eviction. **Do not** download software to Fisher House computers or rearrange the desktops. Guests assigned a room without a computer may check out a laptop from the Management office.

Dial "9" before making local calls from any house phone. Guest room phone numbers are listed in the Guest Book in your room. Phone numbers may be given out to family, friends or VA staff who may need to contact you.

The Guest Book explains house rules in detail, outlines emergency procedures and offers a listing of nearby services.

## Dining Room

All food and beverage must be consumed in the dining room (or kitchen/family room area).

Serving pieces and tablecloths are stored in the hutch.

Wipe down placemats and table after meals.



No open flames (candles, votives) are allowed in Fisher House. (Birthday candles are excepted; blow them out quick!)

Only water is allowed in guest rooms. Absolutely **no** other food or beverage is allowed outside of the dining room & kitchen/family room.

Climate control in guest rooms is adjustable only within 3 degrees. Guests may request additional bedding if they are too cold at night.

Please do not leave windows open if you are not in your room.

Housekeeping staff picks up trash on a regular basis, during business hours and at the request of Management. Management may also enter rooms as need dictates. Staff will always knock first and announce our presence, then enter the room with our keys if there is no answer.

## Family Room

Wii and Xbox systems are hooked up to the big TV> Games and controllers are in labeled drawers. Please return games to jewel boxes and stow controllers after use.

DVDs and videos may be borrowed for viewing in guest rooms.



If you eat or drink in the family room please clean up after yourself.

Yes, that popcorn machine works and yes, you may use it.

The teddy bear in the room may go home with you.

## CHECKING OUT

During business hours, please turn in your keys to the Management office.

If checking out when staff is unavailable leave keys in guest room. Fill out the form on the front of your check out packet and slide it under the office door. We need to know you have left so that we can prepare the room for the next guest.



## Laundry Room

Laundry soap and fabric softener are provided for guests. (If you prefer another brand you are invited to purchase it for yourself). The machines are high efficiency so you need only fill the detergent dispenser to the first line.

Please do not leave laundry unattended; if you start a load, stick around until it is completed. Clean lint traps after using dryer.

Do not use dryer sheets as they can damage the machines.

Guests may **not** do patient laundry in Fisher House.

"I can't say enough about how wonderful Fisher House is! The comfort I received here—both emotionally and physically—made this time easier and allowed me to concentrate on my husband's health and nothing else".

- Julie

## The Kitchen: The Heart of the Home

Guests are responsible for their own meals while staying at Fisher House. From time to time volunteer groups provide meals. We always announce these events in advance. Check the chalk board on the counter for important house updates!

Please observe the following kitchen policies:

Clean up after yourself when preparing meals. Wipe counters and rinse sponges. Do not leave dirty dishes in the sink or on countertops. (Including coffee spoons!).

All dishes and cookware are run through the dishwasher. If a washer is full of dirty dishes, please start it. If a load is done, please take a few minutes to unload it.

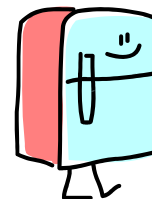
Basic pantry items are available for guests in the kitchen cupboards and drawers. The 3rd fridge (labeled "House") and the freezer in the laundry room also contain food for all. We cannot accommodate every taste or dietary need so if you require specific brands or items you will need to purchase them for yourself. And while we try to keep basic food stocks on hand, any number of factors can affect what is available at any time. Guests are

welcome to purchase groceries for the house as a donation. Donation forms for tax purposes are available from Management.



Food in the house is for the guests of Fisher House. If you are entertaining visitors or regularly making meals for your patient it is expected that you provide the groceries for yourself.

Guests are assigned a cubby in the kitchen island for their own dried goods. (If your assigned cubby is locked please use the one located below it). Guests also have a basket in one of the first two fridges for storing perishables. Anything that does not fit in your basket should be labeled with your **NAME** and stored elsewhere in that assigned fridge. Anything not labeled (or that says "House") is for the use of all guests.



**Do not** reorganize, stack or remove empty fridge baskets to make more room for your food. You never know when a new guest will be arriving and need access to that basket.

Please remember that you are sharing fridge space with other families. If you have more food than can be stored in your basket it's time to eat it up or fling it.

Staff conduct a weekly "fling" of all fridges and freezers to keep them clean and organized. Food past its prime, unlabeled or marked with only a room number will be tossed with impunity. We do not go through guest baskets during these flings but ask guests to check the contents of their baskets regularly to help keep the fridges fresh and roomy.

***"Amazing! This one gesture from a family years ago is a gift that will keep on giving for generations. What a present to all the VA families touched by the Fishers. Thank you so much".***

***-Nancy***

## Taking Care of the Caretakers

While at Fisher House it is important that you remember to take care of yourself. The stress of caring for a loved one in the hospital takes a physical and emotional toll on the caregiver. Remember to eat well, drink lots of water and get adequate sleep. We provide other opportunities for you to recharge your batteries and take care of YOU!

### Exercise

We don't have a gym at Fisher House but we do have the next best thing: Wii Fit. Create your Mii avatar and then

choose from a menu of fitness options, from balance games to cardio work-outs.

The Wii is hooked up to the big TV in the family room.

### Massage

Complimentary chair massage is offered to guests on an alternating schedule. Check the family calendar for details. Massages are offered courtesy of licensed massage therapists through Touch of Relief.

### Wellness Hour

On (most) Wednesdays, from 4-5pm, join us in the family room while our own personal trainer guides us through breathing and stretching exercises. This is a great way to relieve stress and learn tricks to help you manage that stress even after you leave Fisher House.



“I can't say enough about how wonderful Fisher House is! The comfort I received here—both emotionally and physically—made this time easier and allowed me to concentrate on my husband's health and nothing else”.

- Julie

## Other Notes & Tidbits of Useful Information

Important keys hang around the neck of Pierre the Pig, who lives on the kitchen island. One is for the shed where the trash bin lives. Guests are responsible for taking out house trash on weekends. The other key is for the lock on the BBQ. Guests should unlock and move the grill, making sure that when in use it is well away from all doors and overhangs to Fisher House. Lock it up again when you are done grilling.

Children are the sole responsibility of their parent/guardian. Children under 16 years of age may not be left unattended in the house at any time.

The only animals allowed in Fisher House are certified service animals, trained to perform specific tasks for their

owner. The service animal must belong to the registered guest at Fisher House. Patient service animals cannot be accommodated. Animals must have registration papers and current vaccination records and must be crated at night. Service animals are not allowed on the furniture and must be fed and watered outside on the patio. Guests are responsible for cleaning up and disposing properly of animal waste outside the house. Comfort animals are not permitted to stay at Fisher House.

No tax dollars went into the building of this Fisher House. The Fisher House Foundation relies on private donations to do their work on behalf of Veteran and military families.

The VA Puget Sound Fisher House is supported by a 501

(c)(3) non-profit, “The Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House”. Appropriated funds from Congress pay for the salaries of staff and upkeep of the house. 100% of all donations received through the non-profit go directly to support the ongoing work and programs of VA Puget Sound Fisher House.

No gift is too small because every gift goes a long way toward helping the approximately 60 families per month who come to stay at Fisher House.

### PUGET SOUND FISHER HOUSE ON THE WEB!

#### Website:

[www.fisherhousevaps.org](http://www.fisherhousevaps.org)

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#### Facebook:

Join the group “Friends of VA Puget Sound Fisher House” to stay connected to other guests and keep up on the on-going news of VA Puget Sound Fisher House.

# VA Puget Sound Fisher House

## Guest Services

### Copier

VA Puget Sound Fisher House has a copy machine that guests may use. Please see the Management office for assistance.

### Fax

Guests may receive and send faxes from VA Puget Sound Fisher House. The fax number is:

206-277-1415

### TRANSPORTATION

Fisher House is not able to provide transportation for guests however there are some options for getting around:

### Ride Sharing

Sign up on the board in the laundry room if you either need a ride somewhere or have a car and are available to help out a guest who does

not.

### Cabs

The Guest Handbook in your room has a listing of local cab companies. When giving directions to the dispatcher you want to tell them that you are at the VA Hospital at 1660 S. Columbian Way, at the Fisher House and add that Fisher House is across the street from the Radiation Building. (The cabbies know that location but not all of them know about Fisher House). Make sure you are out in front waiting after you place the call.

### Public Transportation

Three Metro bus lines come directly to the medical center: #s 60, 36 and 39. More information about routes and times can be found at [www.tripplanner.kingcounty.gov](http://www.tripplanner.kingcounty.gov)

VA Puget Sound Fisher House is only 1 mile from the Beacon

Hill light rail station. The line runs north to downtown Seattle and south to Sea-Tac International Airport. For more information on light rail service go to [www.soundtransit.org](http://www.soundtransit.org).

### Parking

The lot directly behind the house is designated parking for guests of Fisher House. If you have a vehicle make sure it is registered with the Management office and that you are displaying a Fisher House parking permit. If your stay extends beyond the time of the original permit we will issue you a new one. Only one parking space is available per family.

1660 S. Columbian Way  
Seattle, WA 98108  
Phone: 206.277.3950  
Fax: 206.277.1415

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

The five digit extension may be used from any hospital (or Fisher House) phone.

VA Police x62899  
(206-764-2899)

### Fisher House Phones:

Management office: x63950  
(206) 277-3950  
Kitchen x42348  
(206) 768-2348  
Family Room x42346  
(206) 7682346  
Living Room x42344  
(206) 768-4344



*One last thing....*

*If you have any questions or concerns during your stay please bring them to the attention of Cecile (Manager) or Lorraine (Assistant Manager). We're the ones in the little tiny hats.*