

Boston Public Health Commission
Homeless Services
Policy and Procedure

Subject: Protocol for Serving Transgender Guests
Date: Revised January, 2006

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this protocol is to assist staff in providing service to transgender individuals in a manner consistent with Boston Public Health Commission Homeless Services Policy and Procedures.

II. DEFINITIONS

The definitions below may be helpful when discussing transgenderism and transgender health and shall mean the following when used in this guideline.

- A. Gender identity means the internal experience of one's gender.
- B. Gender presentation means how a person demonstrates his or her experience of gender, often through attire, including hair and make-up, and mannerisms.
- C. Transgender individual means a person whose gender identity is different than her or his birth sex.
- D. Transgender woman means a male to female or MTF individual.
- E. Transgender man means a female to male or FTM individual.
- F. Transsexual means a transgender individual who describes him or herself as transsexual, particularly if he or she has altered his or her body with hormones and/or surgery.
- G. Birth sex or biological sex means one's physical body at birth, often categorized as male, female, or intersexed.
- H. Intersexed means a combination of male & female genitalia and/or reproductive anatomy. This term is generally used to refer to infants.
- I. Lower surgery means surgical alteration of one's genitals.
- J. Upper surgery means surgical alteration of one's chest/breasts.
- K. Sexual reassignment surgery means surgery to make one's anatomy and gender identity congruent.

III. ACCOMODATIONS

A. Intake and Screening

When possible, a transgender guest, as any guest with access concerns, should be encouraged to see a case manager and triaged to a Boston Health Care For The Homeless medical staff for a medical intake as they enter the shelter.

B. Accommodations

- 1. The Operations Coordinator will discuss accommodations with a transgender guest as they enter the shelter. This should be done in consultation with medical and case management staff when possible.

2. For the purpose of accommodations, the gender identity of a guest should be determined through conversation, rather than through a physical exam.
3. The Operations Coordinator will make decisions about sleeping assignments, shower, and bathroom facilities in consultation with the medical and case management staff when possible.
4. Decisions and rationale about sleeping assignments shower, and bathroom facilities must be documented in an email to the Site Operations Administrator and, if appropriate, placed in the clients case management file.
5. Transgender men and transgender women needing accommodations shall stay at Woods Mullen Shelter. Guests should be accommodated according to their gender identity and use the corresponding facilities to the fullest extent possible given safety considerations.

TOILET OPTIONS	
Transgender women	Transgender men
Women's restroom	Men's restroom
Lobby restroom	Lobby restroom
SHOWER OPTIONS	
Transgender women	Transgender men
Women's showers – regular hours	Lobby restroom shower
A private shower in the women's showers may be arranged during daytime hours	A private shower in the women's showers may be arranged during daytime hours
Lobby restroom shower	The men's communal shower may be used regular hours by men who have had upper and lower surgery
SLEEPING ASSIGNMENT OPTIONS	
Transgender women	Transgender men
Women's dormitory -- beds near front desk	Men's dormitory -- beds near the front desk
Women's dormitory	Men's dormitory
A portable bed or cot in the <i>designated access space</i> , in cases of unusual concern about the safety of a transgender guest	A portable bed or cot in the <i>designated access space</i> , in cases of unusual concern about the safety of a transgender guest

6. Transgender men and transgender women may be asked, like any other client, to comply with the dress code, however guests may not be asked to dress in a manner inconsistent with their gender identity. (For example, a transgender man will not be asked to dress like a woman.)
7. Due to facility limitations at Long Island Shelter, when possible transgender guests will be accommodated on a case by case basis.
8. The Operations Coordinator should communicate accommodations arrangements to staff on the following shift.
9. Accommodations are contingent upon availability as with all guests, pursuant to Section III. B of the Boston Public Health Commission's Shelter Rules And Procedures.

D. Late Arrivals

1. A transgender guest should be triaged to the Operations Coordinator as with any guest with access concerns.
2. The Operations Coordinator will make decisions about accommodations.

3. The Operations Coordinator will document the outcomes of these decisions in the general log and email Site Operations Administrator decisions and rationale about sleeping assignments, shower, and bathroom facilities.
4. For the purpose of accommodations, the gender identity of the guest should be determined through conversation, rather than through a physical exam.
5. As any late-arriving guest with access concerns, a transgender guest arriving after nurses have departed for the day should be encouraged to see staff from Boston Health Care For the Homeless and Case Management the next day.