

Royal Alexandra Hospital Weapons Detection System

Frequently Asked Questions

The Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) Emergency Department (ED) will be trialing a two-year trial of a weapons detection system to help enhance safety for workers, patients, and families. We are grateful for the generosity of the RAH Foundation and their donors for supporting the trial. The addition of an artificial intelligence (AI) weapons detection system will enhance existing safety screening processes at the hospital.

What is a weapons detection system?

These types of systems use technologies like AI and advanced sensors to identify potential weapons, distinguishing them from everyday items and alerting security personnel. These systems detect items based on shape, size and/or density to locate possible items of concern.

They also indicate where the item is on a person. If the system detects a concerning item on you or in your bag, Protective Services will speak with you about secondary screening.

Is this weapons detection systems safe?

This technology does not use harmful radiation; it is safe for pregnant individuals and those with pacemakers or medical implants, and will not affect phones, medical devices, or personal data. It is designed to enhance safety while allowing people to move through screening quickly and respectfully.

Why is the Royal Alex trialing a weapons detection system?

Since 2021, patients and visitors entering the RAH ED entrance have been able to voluntarily secure prohibited items after a verbal screening process. This initiative has helped reduce the number of weapons and prohibited items entering the hospital; however, there are still prohibited items entering the RAH ED.

This pilot aims to reduce instances of patients carrying weapons or items that could be used as weapons, increasing safety and security at the facility.

What will happen when I arrive at the RAH ED entrance?

Patients and visitors to the RAH ED will be asked to go through the weapons detection system, which is similar to walk-through screening systems at concert or sports venues.

If the system detects an item of concern on your body or in your bag, Protective Services will speak with you about a secondary screening. You will be able to voluntarily secure prohibited items with Protective Services, who will keep these items safe and return them to you when you leave, or you can find an alternate place to secure these items (e.g. in your car, or with a family member or friend not entering the RAH ED).

Do RAH ED patients have to go through the weapons detection system?

All patients entering the RAH ED shall be requested to voluntarily undergo primary weapons screening prior to triage.

Patients seeking care who refuse primary weapons screening, or compliance shall be connected to Health Link by Protective Services to speak with a nurse regarding the acuity and urgency of their care needs. They may also be referred to virtual physician through Health Link, or an on-site health care professional should care needs warrant. This consultation should occur while the person remains on site within sight of Protective Services.

Patients who refuse to participate in any primary or secondary screening will be assigned a Protective Services overwatch while in the department.

Do visitors or designated family/support persons of RAH ED patients have to go through the weapons detection system?

Visitors or designated family/support person of the person requiring emergency care shall still be subject to primary weapons screening by going through the weapons detection system. Those who refuse screening shall not be permitted access to the ED unless:

- the patient requiring emergency care is a minor
- the patient requires communication support from the designated family/support person
- the care team has in their discretion determined that the designated family/support person needs to be present with the person seeking emergency care.

Individuals who refuse to participate in any primary or secondary screening, but meet one of the exceptions, will be assigned a Protective Services escort while in the department.

Have questions?

If you have questions or concerns, please ask an ED staff member to speak to an RAH ED manager, RAH site manager, or contact Patient Relations at 1-855-550-2555.