



Jersey City Medical Center

Department of Patient Care Services

POLICY: Scalpel Safety in the Operating Room/L&D Departments		DEVELOPED BY: Perioperative Services	
POLICY COMMITTEE: Janice Kozzi MSN, RN, CNL Policy Committee Chair <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		APPROVED BY: Rita Smith, DNP, RN CNO, Senior Vice President Patient Care Services Cheryl Owens, MSN CNOR RN Director of Perioperative Services Perioperative Services	
Effective Date: May 2004	Revised Date: Jan 2012	Reviewed Date:	

Distribution: Surgical Services, Labor and Delivery, Infection Control

Reference:

College of Surgeons Committee on Perioperative Care. Statement on sharps safety. *Bull Am Coll Surg.* 2007; 92(10):34-37. American College of Surgeons.
http://www.facs.org/fellows_info/statements/st-58.html. Accessed January 19, 2012.

AORN Guidance statement: sharps injury prevention in the perioperative setting. In: *Standards and Recommended Practices*. Denver, CO: AORN, Inc; 2011:639-644

Approvals:

Professional Practice	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Nursing Education	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Critical Care	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Dept	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

Peri-Op	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Trauma	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Maternal Child Health	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Behavioral Health	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Cardiac Cath Lab	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Interventional Radiology	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Med Exec	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Pharmacy/ P&T	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Pathology/Blood Bank	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide guidelines to help prevent sharps injury and exposure to blood pathogens for all workers in the perioperative setting.

POLICY:

- A. The team will adopt and incorporate safe habits into daily work activities when preparing and using sharp devices.
- B. The scalpel will be placed in an emesis basin, or other protective container, by the surgical scrub nurse/technician, and the entire basin will be passed to the surgeon.
- C. The surgeon will retrieve the scalpel from the sterile container and proceed with the incision.
- D. The scalpel will be returned to the emesis basin or other protective container when not in use.
- E. Focus attention on the intent of the action when working with sharp items, and minimize rushing and distractions while applying safety techniques during critical moments. Inspect the surgical field for adequate lighting and space to perform the procedure. Organize the work area so that the sharps are always pointed away from staff members.
- F. Establish a separate area to place a reusable sharp for safe handling during the procedure.
- G. Include identification of the **neutral zone** in the preoperative briefing.

During the procedure:

- 1. Wear two pairs of gloves (i.e., double gloving).
- 2. Monitor gloves for punctures.
- 3. Encourage the use of blunt suture needles.
- 4. Use the neutral zone or hands-free technique for passing sharp items, whenever possible or practical, instead of passing hand-to-hand.

5. Give verbal notification when passing a sharp device.
6. Keep visual contact with the procedure site and the sharp device.
7. Take steps to control the location of the sharp device.
8. Be aware of other staff members in the area when handling a sharp device.
9. Keep track of and account for all sharp items throughout the procedure.
10. Contain used sharps on the sterile field in a designated, disposable, puncture-resistant sharps container, and replace it as necessary.
11. Check to be sure that the disposable, puncture-resistant needle container is securely closed before handling it off the field.
12. Load suture needles using the suture packet to assist in mounting the suture needle in the needle holder, and use the appropriate instrument to adjust and unload the needle.
13. Remove the needle from the suture before tying, or use "control-release" sutures that allow the needle to be removed with a straight pull on the needle holder.
14. Activate the safety feature of a safety engineered device immediately after use according to manufacturer's instructions.
15. Keep hands away from the surgical site when sharps items are in use (e.g., suturing, cutting).
16. Use one-handed or blunt instrument-assisted suturing techniques to avoid finger contact with the suture needle or tissue being sutured.
17. Provide a barrier between the hands and the needle after use.
18. Use gloves and an instrument to pick up sharp items (e.g., suture needles, hypodermic needles, scalpel blades) that have fallen on the floor.

Notes for Post –Procedure:

19. Inspect the surgical setup used during the procedure for sharps.
20. Transport reusable sharps in a closed, secure container to the designated clean-up area.
21. Inspect the sharps container for overfilling before discarding disposable sharps in it.
22. Make sure the sharps container is large enough to accommodate the entire device.
23. Avoid bringing hands close to the opening if a sharps container.
24. Do not place hands or fingers into a container to dispose of a device.
25. Keep hands behind the sharp tip when disposing.