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Content Expert(s) Emergency Center/Surgical Services/Security	Prior Issue Date 10/07/10	Issue Date 01/25/13	

PURPOSE:

To establish a procedure for handling bullets and foreign bodies resulting from acts of violence so that a legal chain of evidence is maintained.

POLICY:

Bullets/foreign bodies discovered and removed from patients in the operating rooms or Emergency Center following acts of violence, thus constituting legal evidence, will be handled according to a specific protocol. A legal chain of evidence establishes the certainty of origin of a specimen by providing positive identification through signature and records.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

It is the responsibility of the nurse to handle the bullet/foreign body collection once removed from the patient. Each and every person that had custody of the bullet/foreign body, from the time it was removed, must be documented in the medical record.

1. The bullet/foreign body shall be placed in a dry specimen container and labeled with the patient's name and I.D. number.
2. The specimen should not be altered, etched or tampered with.
3. The R.N. / charge nurse will initiate the "Legal Chain of Evidence Collection" form (#1885).
4. To minimize the chain of evidence and handling of the bullet/foreign body, it should be handed directly to an identified member of the police department if present. If no member of the police department is present:
 - a. At Royal Oak and Troy, it is the responsibility of the nurse to take the bullet/foreign body and "Legal Chain of Evidence Collection" form (#1885) to the Emergency Center Security Station to be secured in a locked box, or to contact Security for pick-up of the bullet/foreign body. Security will record the bullet/foreign body on the Security Evidence Collection Log. The Security staff is responsible for custody and subsequent release of the bullet/foreign body to the appropriate police jurisdiction.
 - b. At Grosse Pointe, contact Security for pick-up of the bullet/foreign body. Security will record the bullet/foreign body on the Security Evidence Collection Log. The Security staff is responsible for custody and subsequent release of the bullet/foreign body to the appropriate police jurisdiction
5. The following information must be documented both on the "Legal Chain of Evidence Collection" form (#1885) and the Medical Record:
 - a. The identification of the bullet/foreign body.
 - b. The site from which the bullet/foreign body was removed.

PATIENT CARE – CORPORATE POLICIES

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GENERAL INFORMATION: (Cont'd)

5. Documentation (Cont'd)
 - c. The name of the surgeon / physician who removed the bullet/foreign body.
 - d. The disposition of the bullet/foreign body.
 - e. The name of the security or police officer to whom the evidence is released.
6. In the event the bullet/foreign body is released directly to the police department, the police officer receiving the specimen must sign the "Legal Chain of Evidence" form (# 1885) and the nurse must document the following on the Medical Record:
 - a. Name of police officer
 - b. Badge number
 - c. City of police department
7. If evidence remains in department for 30 days, Security will contact the investigating agency, and try to speak to a higher ranking department member. When evidence has been stored for 60 days and not picked up, contact will again be made to the receiving agency, and an attempt will be made to go to the next higher rank. Thereafter, if attempts are not made to pick up the evidence, it will be considered unclaimed and after another 15 days Security will dispose of it. The results of any and all conversations need to be recorded in the Security Evidence Collection Log

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