

SHARPS SAFETY

Site Applicability:

Richmond Hospital Operating Room, PACU

Practice Level:

RN

Basic Skill

Policy Statement:

To minimize the risk and consequences of exposure to sharp injuries and blood borne pathogens, operating room personnel involved in surgical procedures will use a Neutral or Hands Free zone, scalpel blade removers, and safety engineered sharp devices.

Need to Know:

WorkSafeBC and VCH recognize that:

Sharps injuries and exposure to blood borne pathogens pose a serious risk to health care workers.

Use of safety engineered sharps devices, in conjunction with use of a Neutral or Hands Free zone and use of scalpel blade removers has been proven effective in reducing the risk of percutaneous exposures to blood and body fluids.

Safety-engineered hollow bore needles or safety-engineered medical sharps may not be clinically appropriate for all procedures or circumstances. The list of documented exceptions is attached.

(still pending)

The Hands Free technique for transferring sharp instruments is a demonstrated work practice for reducing the risk of contamination. It consists of the indirect transfer of instruments between surgeon(s) and other scrubbed personnel so that only one person touches the same sharp item at any time. Items are usually placed in a designated neutral or safe zone, which can be a section of the surgical field or a container, from where they can be retrieved (Stringer, B. et al, 2002)

Practice Guideline:

Safe handling and disposal of all sharps is required in the Peri-operative setting

All needles, blades and other sharps will be disposed of in rigid, puncture-proof containers

No recapping of needles unless the recapping device is specifically designed for single handed use.

Scalpel blades will be applied and removed using an instrument. **Safety scalpel blades will be loaded to the scalpel handle according to manufacturer instructions.**

The rectangular “sharps pan” will be used as the designated “Neutral zone” container. Only 1 sharp instrument will be placed in the container at a time.

The scrub nurse will consult with the surgeon and determine the location of the “Neutral Zone” prior to the commencement of surgery

Only one person accesses this site at a time.

Sharps being passed between the scrub nurse and the surgeon are transferred in this “neutral zone”. (Sharps include scalpels, needles on needle drivers, injection needles, sharp retractors, pins, etc)

Exceptions

There are circumstances where it is not possible to utilize a “Neutral Zone” (i.e. when working under a microscope or when the surgeon cannot allow his visual field to be other than the surgical site) During these situations, the sharp item should be transferred with the dull/safe side leading, with the surgeon returning sharp to the Neutral zone after use.

References:

Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada. (2011) Standards, Guidelines, and Position Statements for Perioperative Registered Nursing Practice.

Stringer, B. Infante-Rivard, C. Hanley, JA. Effectiveness of the hands-free technique in reducing operating theatre injuries. Occupational and Environmental Medicine. 2002 (59) 703-707.

Watt, A, Patkin, M et al. Scalpel safety in the operating room: A systematic review. Surgery

Worksafe BC website. Accessed August 4, 2011
<http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/OHSRegulation/home.asp>

Developed By:

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Endorsed By:

Coastal Area Nursing Practice Advisory Council (CANPAC) Date:

Approved for Posting:

Director of Professional Practice Nursing and Allied Health, Coastal

Date of Review/Revision:

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VCH Safety Engineered Scalpel Exception List-Coastal

Exception Clinical Rationale

Procedure/ Description	Narrow/ Deep Incision	Dissection in small/narrow cavities	No safety equivalent available	#7 or #9 Handle used	Guard obscures line of sight	Loops or microscope required
General Surgeries:						
Procedures using #12 Blade			Yes			
Procedures using #7 handle			Yes			
Procedures using #9 handle			Yes			
Procedures using round handle			Yes			
Hepatobiliary/ Pancreatic Surgery	Yes				Yes	Yes
Neuro-Spinal Surgeries	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes
E.N.T Procedures (e.g. nose/mouth)	Yes	Yes				
DCR Surgery (#12 rib back blade)			Yes			
Shirodkar Suturing	Yes	Yes				
Radical retropubic prostatectomy	Yes	Yes				
Parathyroid / Thyroidectomy		Yes		Yes		
Laparoscopic procedures (deep penetration/ obese patient)	Yes	Yes				
User is left handed			Yes			
Pediatric/Hand/Foot Surgeries:						
Dupuytren's		Yes			Yes	
Carpal Tunnel		Yes			Yes	
CMC arthroplasties		Yes			Yes	
Cleft lip and palate		Yes			Yes	
Preemie/neonatal/small infant	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Foot surgeries	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Maxillary resection	Yes	Yes				
Orthopedic Surgeries:						
Arthroscopies (Knees/Shoulders)	Yes				Yes	
Percutaneous cuts - IM Nails	Yes				Yes	
Procedures on Obese Patients	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Total Knee/ Total Hip (#3 L handle)	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Cardiac Surgeries:						
Aortic cannulation	Yes	Yes				
Aortotomy	Yes	Yes				
Urology/Gyne Surgeries:						
Deep Pelvic dissections	Yes	Yes				
Deep Abdominal dissections	Yes	Yes				
Abdominal Hysterectomies	Yes	Yes				

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