The Top 30 Patient Safety Policies and Procedures

Edited by Diana Arendt, RN, MSN, CCRN
and Hilde Hithe, RN, BSN

Foreword by Robert Marder, MD
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Chapter One

Management
PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and general codes of safe work practices. To ensure a safe occupational and patient care environment by establishing standards for safety awareness and work practices for staff and physicians.

SCOPE

This is an organizationwide policy and applies to all services and care settings in the organization.

POLICY

1. All employees, licensed independent practitioners, and allied health professionals will complete an annual safety educational program.

2. General safety:
   a. Be familiar with machinery and equipment used.
   b. Know what to do in case of an emergency.
   c. Fatigue may be a causal factor of accidents. Use break times appropriately and know your limitations.
   d. Be knowledgeable about the infection control program.
e. Report any injury to your supervisor.

f. Wear appropriate clothing and closed-toe shoes.

g. Report unsafe conditions, including defective or broken equipment.

h. Do not run in the facility.

i. Share your ideas about safe practices.

3. Prevent accidents when moving equipment or patients:
   a. Lifting—
      (1) if it appears to be too much to handle alone, ask for help
      (2) look over and above the object to be lifted; make sure it is not too awkward to lift
      (3) stand close to the object with feet apart for balance
      (4) bend knees and keep back as straight as possible
      (5) get a good grip and keep weight close to your body
      (6) lift gradually, straighten knees, and stand up; use leg muscles
   b. Pushing and pulling—
      (1) avoid twisting your body; change direction by moving your feet
      (2) do not change grip while carrying the load
      (3) face the spot on which the load will rest

4. Prevent falls:
   a. Report slip/trip hazards to the environmental health and safety or engineering departments or use the hospital hot line
   b. Push wheeled vehicles
c. Use a stepladder or nonwheeled step stool for out-of-reach items

d. Watch your step while walking

e. Use handrails for support when going up or down stairs

f. Keep hallways clear of clutter (items must be moveable and to one side of the hallway)

g. Walk at a safe speed

h. Wear nonskid-soled shoes

i. Never leave articles on stairs

5. Know how to prevent fires:

   a. Adhere to nonsmoking rules and remind others to do the same

   b. Inspect your work area frequently; report faulty wiring

   c. Use extra caution around gas, flammable, and oxygen equipment

6. Know the various types of fire extinguishers and how to operate them:

   a. Class A for wood, paper, and textile

   b. Class B for flammable liquids and gas

   c. Class C for electrical fires

   d. ABC for all types of fires

   e. To operate a fire extinguisher, use “PASS”—pull, aim, squeeze, and sweep

7. Know what to do in case of a fire:

   a. In case of a fire, use “RACE”—relocate, alarm, confine, and extinguish

   b. Know your evacuation plan

   c. Know where to report
d. Know where the pull alarm boxes are located

e. Know where the fire extinguishers are located

8. Know how to prevent electrical accidents:

a. Inspect cords and plugs; ensure that they are intact

b. Keep cords away from rough, sharp, hot, or greasy surfaces

c. Make sure that equipment with three-prong plugs is grounded

d. If a machine overheats, smokes, or sparks, unplug it and call the engineering department

e. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are in or near a wet spot or if your hands are wet

9. Know how to prevent equipment accidents:

a. Know how to correctly operate any machine that you use

b. Turn equipment off and use lock-out features, when possible, whenever equipment is not being used

c. Watch clothing; loose sleeves, hair, belts, ties, jewelry, and identification badge chains are dangerous around machines with moving parts

d. Be sure that mechanical guards are in place when operating machines

e. Wear personal protective equipment if the job requires it (e.g., safety glasses, ear plugs, gloves, etc.)

f. Unplug and remove malfunctioning equipment used on patients; tag it with a red repair sign and move it to the dirty utility area

10. Storage of equipment:

a. Large bulk items should be stored on bottom shelves

b. All containers in the department must be labeled, showing the manufacturer’s instructions for use and disposal, as applicable
c. Store items at least 18 inches from sprinkler heads

d. Do not store boxes or patient care equipment directly on the floor

11. Liquid spills:
   a. Wipe up spills immediately; when handling hazardous materials, handle per the appropriate material safety data sheet information.

   b. Spills on clothes or on the body should be flushed with water immediately. If a spill involves a caustic agent, healthcare attention should be sought from the employee health or emergency department.

12. Glassware:

   a. All used glassware and pieces with evidence of cracks or chips will be discarded in puncture-proof sharps containers

13. Drugs, chemicals, and reagents:

   a. Toxic chemicals will be maintained in small quantities. All containers must be permanently labeled to display the name of the chemical and storage directions.

   b. All personnel in departments where biohazardous materials are stored must be able to identify the chemicals, be knowledgeable regarding the preparation and handling of the chemicals, and know how to protect themselves in the event of spillage or exposure to the chemicals.

14. Office safety:

   a. Keep desk and file drawers closed when unattended

   b. Be prepared for a natural disaster:

      (1) Remove plants and heavy items from overhead

      (2) Secure electronic items
(3) Keep a flashlight and batteries readily available

(4) Keep tennis shoes and a change of casual clothes available in case they are needed

(5) Know escape routes from the work area

c. Keep floors clear
d. Use a safety ladder for reaching high places—do not stand on chairs or boxes
e. Use caution when handling knives, scissors, letter openers, staples, or other sharp instruments
f. Secure filing cabinets and shelving to the wall
g. Report broken or sharp furniture to the manager
h. Practice ergonomically correct use of chairs, keyboards, phones, and other office equipment; contact the physical medicine department for an ergonomic review of workspaces

REFERENCES

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, State Health Department, Occupational Safety and Health Administration
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