National Patient Safety Goals for Hospitals - Non-Licensed Manual

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Goal 1

*Improve the accuracy of patient identification.*

**NPSG.01.01.01**

*Use at least two patient identifiers when providing care, treatment, and services.*

**Rationale for NPSG.01.01.01**

Wrong-patient errors occur in virtually all stages of diagnosis and treatment. The intent for this goal is two-fold: first, to reliably identify the individual as the person for whom the service or treatment is intended; second, to match the service or treatment to that individual. Acceptable identifiers may be the individual’s name, an assigned identification number, telephone number, or other person-specific identifier.

**Elements of Performance for NPSG.01.01.01**

1. Use at least two patient identifiers when administering medications, blood, or blood components; when collecting blood samples and other specimens for clinical testing; and when providing treatments or procedures. The patient's room number or physical location is not used as an identifier. (See also MM.05.01.09, EPs 8 and 11; NPSG.01.03.01, EP 1)

2. Label containers used for blood and other specimens in the presence of the patient. (See also NPSG.01.03.01, EP 1)

Goal 6

*Reduce the harm associated with clinical alarm systems.*

**NPSG.06.01.01**

*Improve the safety of clinical alarm systems*

**Rationale for NPSG.06.01.01**

Clinical alarm systems are intended to alert caregivers of potential patient problems, but if they are not properly managed, they can compromise patient safety. This is a multifaceted problem. In some situations, individual alarm signals are difficult to detect. At the same time, many patient care areas have numerous alarm signals and the resulting noise and displayed information tends to desensitize staff and cause them to miss or ignore alarm signals or even disable them. Other issues associated with effective clinical alarm system management include too many devices with alarms, default settings that are not at an actionable level, and alarm limits that are too narrow. These issues vary greatly among hospitals and even within different units in a single hospital.
There is general agreement that this is an important safety issue. Universal solutions have yet to be identified, but it is important for a hospital to understand its own situation and to develop a systematic, coordinated approach to clinical alarm system management. Standardization contributes to safe alarm system management, but it is recognized that solutions may have to be customized for specific clinical units, groups of patients, or individual patients. This NPSG focuses on managing clinical alarm systems that have the most direct relationship to patient safety. As alarm system management solutions are identified, this NPSG will be updated to reflect best practices.¹

Elements of Performance for NPSG.06.01.01

1. Leaders establish alarm system safety as a hospital priority.

2. Identify the most important alarm signals to manage based on the following:
   - Input from the medical staff and clinical departments
   - Risk to patients if the alarm signal is not attended to or if it malfunctions
   - Whether specific alarm signals are needed or unnecessarily contribute to alarm noise and alarm fatigue
   - Potential for patient harm based on internal incident history
   - Published best practices and guidelines
     (For more information on managing medical equipment risks, refer to Standard EC.02.04.01.)

3. Establish policies and procedures for managing the alarms identified in EP 2 above that, at a minimum, address the following:
   - Clinical appropriate settings for alarm signals
   - When alarm signals can be disabled
   - When alarm parameters can be changed
   - Who in the organization has the authority to set alarm parameters
   - Who in the organization has the authority to change alarm parameters
   - Who in the organization has the authority to set alarm parameters to “off”
   - Monitoring and responding to alarm signals
   - Checking individual alarm signals for accurate settings, proper operation, and detectability (For more information, refer to Standard EC.02.04.03)

4. Educate staff and licensed independent practitioners about the purpose and proper operation of alarm systems for which they are responsible.

¹ Additional information on alarm safety can be found on the AAMI website http://www.aami.org/htsi/alarms/. Also, the ECRI Institute has identified alarm hazards as one of the top technology hazards for 2013; more information on this hazard list can be found at http://www.ecri.org/Forms/Pages/Alarm_Safety_Resource.aspx.
Goal 7
Reduce the risk of health care–associated infections.

NPSG.07.01.01
Comply with either the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hand hygiene guidelines or the current World Health Organization (WHO) hand hygiene guidelines.

Rationale for NPSG.07.01.01
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year, millions of people acquire an infection while receiving care, treatment, and services in a health care organization. Consequently, health care-associated infections (HAIs) are a patient safety issue affecting all types of health care organizations. One of the most important ways to address HAIs is by improving the hand hygiene of health care staff. Compliance with the World Health Organization (WHO) or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hand hygiene guidelines will reduce the transmission of infectious agents by staff to patients, thereby decreasing the incidence of HAIs. To ensure compliance with this National Patient Safety Goal, an organization should assess its compliance with the CDC and/or WHO guidelines through a comprehensive program that provides a hand hygiene policy, fosters a culture of hand hygiene, and monitors compliance and provides feedback.

Elements of Performance for NPSG.07.01.01
1. Implement a program that follows categories IA, IB, and IC of either the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the current World Health Organization (WHO) hand hygiene guidelines. (See also IC.01.04.01, EP 5)
2. Set goals for improving compliance with hand hygiene guidelines. (See also IC.03.01.01, EP 3)
3. Improve compliance with hand hygiene guidelines based on established goals.

NPSG.07.03.01
Implement evidence-based practices to prevent health care–associated infections due to multidrug-resistant organisms in acute care hospitals.

Note: This requirement applies to, but is not limited to, epidemiologically important organisms such as methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), clostridium difficile (CDI), vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE), and multidrug-resistant gram-negative bacteria.

Rationale for NPSG.07.03.01
Patients continue to acquire health care–associated infections at an alarming rate. Risks and patient populations, however, differ between hospitals. Therefore, prevention and control strategies must be tailored to the specific needs of each hospital based on its risk assessment. The elements of performance for this requirement are designed to help reduce or prevent health care–associated infections from epidemiologically important multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs).
Note: Hand hygiene, contact precautions, as well as cleaning and disinfecting patient care equipment and the patient’s environment are essential strategies for preventing the spread of health care–associated infections. Hand hygiene is addressed in NPSG.07.01.01. Contact precautions for patients with epidemiologically significant multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs) are covered in IC.02.01.01, EP 3. Cleaning and disinfecting patient care equipment are addressed in IC.02.02.01.

**Elements of Performance for NPSG.07.03.01**

1. Conduct periodic risk assessments (in time frames defined by the hospital) for multidrug-resistant organism acquisition and transmission. (See also IC.01.03.01, EPs 1-5)

2. Based on the results of the risk assessment, educate staff and licensed independent practitioners about health care–associated infections, multidrug-resistant organisms, and prevention strategies at hire and annually thereafter.
   
   Note: The education provided recognizes the diverse roles of staff and licensed independent practitioners and is consistent with their roles within the hospital.

3. Educate patients, and their families as needed, who are infected or colonized with a multidrug-resistant organism about health care–associated infection strategies.

4. Implement a surveillance program for multidrug-resistant organisms based on the risk assessment.
   
   Note: Surveillance may be targeted rather than hospital-wide.

5. Measure and monitor multidrug-resistant organism prevention processes and outcomes, including the following:
   - Multidrug-resistant organism infection rates using evidence-based metrics
   - Compliance with evidence-based guidelines or best practices
   - Evaluation of the education program provided to staff and licensed independent practitioners
   
   Note: Surveillance may be targeted rather than hospital-wide.

6. Provide multidrug-resistant organism process and outcome data to key stakeholders, including leaders, licensed independent practitioners, nursing staff, and other clinicians.

7. Implement policies and practices aimed at reducing the risk of transmitting multidrug-resistant organisms. These policies and practices meet regulatory requirements and are aligned with evidence-based standards (for example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or professional organization guidelines).

8. When indicated by the risk assessment, implement a laboratory-based alert system that identifies new patients with multidrug-resistant organisms.
Note: The alert system may use telephones, faxes, pagers, automated and secure electronic alerts, or a combination of these methods.

9. When indicated by the risk assessment, implement an alert system that identifies readmitted or transferred patients who are known to be positive for multidrug-resistant organisms.

Note 1: The alert system information may exist in a separate electronic database or may be integrated into the admission system. The alert system may be either manual or electronic or a combination of both.

Note 2: Each hospital may define its own parameters in terms of time and clinical manifestation to determine which re-admitted patients require isolation.

**NPSG.07.05.01**

*Implement evidence-based practices for preventing surgical site infections.*

**Elements of Performance for NPSG.07.05.01**

1. Educate staff and licensed independent practitioners involved in surgical procedures about surgical site infections and the importance of prevention. Education occurs upon hire, annually thereafter, and when involvement in surgical procedures is added to an individual’s job responsibilities.

2. Educate patients, and their families as needed, who are undergoing a surgical procedure about surgical site infection prevention.

3. Implement policies and practices aimed at reducing the risk of surgical site infections. These policies and practices meet regulatory requirements and are aligned with evidence-based guidelines (for example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or professional organization guidelines).

4. As part of the effort to reduce surgical site infections:
   - Conduct periodic risk assessments for surgical site infections in a time frame determined by the hospital.
   - Select surgical site infection measures using best practices or evidence-based guidelines.
   - Monitor compliance with best practices or evidence-based guidelines.
   - Evaluate the effectiveness of prevention efforts.

Note: Surveillance may be targeted to certain procedures based on the hospital’s risk assessment.

5. Measure surgical site infection rates for the first 30 or 90 days following surgical procedures based on National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) procedural codes. The hospital’s measurement strategies follow evidence-based guidelines.
Note 1: Surveillance may be targeted to certain procedures based on the hospital’s risk assessment.

Note 2: The NHSN is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s health care-associated infection tracking system. NHSN provides facilities, states, regions, and the nation with data needed to identify problem areas, measure progress of prevention efforts, and ultimately eliminate health care-associated infections. For more information on NHSN procedural codes, see [http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/CPTcodes/ssi-cpt.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/CPTcodes/ssi-cpt.html).

6. Provide process and outcome (for example, surgical site infection rate) measure results to key stakeholders.

7. Administer antimicrobial agents for prophylaxis for a particular procedure or disease according to methods cited in scientific literature or endorsed by professional organizations.

   Note: A limited number of National Patient Safety Goals contain requirements for practices that reflect current science and medical knowledge. In these cases, the element of performance refers to a practice that is cited in scientific literature or endorsed by professional organizations. This means that the practice used by the hospital must be validated by an authoritative source. The authoritative source may be a study published in a peer-reviewed journal that clearly demonstrates the efficacy of that practice or endorsement of the practice by a professional organization(s) and/or a government agency(ies). It is not acceptable to follow a practice that is not supported by evidence or wide-spread consensus. During the on-site survey, surveyors will explore the source of the practices the hospital follows.**

8. When hair removal is necessary, use a method that is cited in scientific literature or endorsed by professional organizations.

   Note: ** See note above.

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**NPSG.07.06.01**

*Implement evidence-based practices to prevent indwelling catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI).*

Note: This NPSG is not applicable to pediatric populations. Research resulting in evidence-based practices was conducted with adults, and there is not consensus that these practices apply to children.

**Elements of Performance for NPSG.07.06.01**

1. Educate staff and licensed independent practitioners involved in the use of indwelling urinary catheters about CAUTI and the importance of infection prevention.
   - Education occurs upon hire or granting of initial privileges and when involvement in indwelling catheter care is added to an individual’s job responsibilities.
   - Ongoing education and competence assessment occur at intervals established by the organization.
2. Educate patients who will have an indwelling catheter, and their families as needed, on CAUTI prevention and the symptoms of a urinary tract infection.

3. Develop written criteria, using established evidence-based guidelines, for placement of an indwelling urinary catheter.
   - Written criteria are revised as scientific evidence changes.
   - Note: Examples of criteria for placement of an indwelling urinary catheter include the following:
     - Critically ill patients who need accurate urinary output measurements
     - Patients with acute urinary retention or bladder outlet obstruction
     - Patients who require prolonged immobilization (for example, a potentially unstable thoracic or lumbar spine or multiple traumatic injuries such as pelvic fractures)
     - Incontinent patients with an open sacral wound or perineal wounds
     - Perioperative use for selected surgical procedures, such as patients undergoing urologic surgery or other surgery on contiguous structures of the genitourinary tract; patients who will have a prolonged duration of surgery (catheters inserted for this reason should be removed in a post-anesthesia care unit)
     - Patients anticipated to receive large volume infusions or diuretics during surgery
     - Patients needing intraoperative monitoring of urinary output
     - End-of-life care
     - Neurogenic bladder

4. Follow written procedures based on established evidence-based guidelines for inserting and maintaining an indwelling urinary catheter. The procedures address the following:
   - Limiting use and duration
   - Performing hand hygiene prior to catheter insertion or maintenance care
   - Using aseptic techniques for site preparation, equipment, and supplies
   - Securing catheters for unobstructed urine flow and drainage
   - Maintaining the sterility of the urine collection system
   - Replacing the urine collection system when required

5. Measure and monitor catheter-associated urinary tract infection prevention processes and outcomes in high-volume areas by doing the following:
- Selecting measures using evidence-based guidelines or best practices
- Having a consistent method for medical record documentation of indwelling urinary catheter use, insertion, and maintenance
- Monitoring compliance with evidence-based guidelines or best practices
- Evaluating the effectiveness of prevention efforts

Note: Surveillance may be targeted to areas with a high volume of patients using in-dwelling catheters. High-volume areas are identified through the hospital’s risk assessment as required in IC.01.03.01, EP 2.

**Goal 15**

*The hospital identifies safety risks inherent in its patient population.*

**NPSG.15.01.01**

*Identify patients at risk for suicide.*

Note: This requirement applies only to psychiatric hospitals and patients being treated for emotional or behavioral disorders in general hospitals.

**Rationale for NPSG.15.01.01**

Suicide of a patient while in a staffed, round-the-clock care setting is a frequently reported type of sentinel event. Identification of individuals at risk for suicide while under the care of or following discharge from a health care organization is an important step in protecting these at-risk individuals.

**Elements of Performance for NPSG.15.01.01**

1. Conduct a risk assessment that identifies specific patient characteristics and environmental features that may increase or decrease the risk for suicide.
2. Address the patient’s immediate safety needs and most appropriate setting for treatment.
3. When a patient at risk for suicide leaves the care of the hospital, provide suicide prevention information (such as a crisis hotline) to the patient and his or her family.
Introduction to the Universal Protocol for Preventing Wrong Site, Wrong Procedure, and Wrong Surgery™

The Universal Protocol applies to all surgical and nonsurgical invasive procedures. Evidence indicates that procedures that place the patient at the most risk include those that involve general anesthesia or deep sedation, although other procedures may also affect patient safety. Organizations can enhance safety by correctly identifying the patient, the appropriate procedure, and the correct site of the procedure.

The Universal Protocol is based on the following principles:

- Wrong-person, wrong-site, and wrong-procedure surgery can and must be prevented.
- A robust approach using multiple, complementary strategies is necessary to achieve the goal of always conducting the correct procedure on the correct person, at the correct site.
- Active involvement and use of effective methods to improve communication among all members of the procedure team are important for success.
- To the extent possible, the patient and, as needed, the family are involved in the process.
- Consistent implementation of a standardized protocol is most effective in achieving safety.

The Universal Protocol is implemented most successfully in organizations with a culture that promotes teamwork and where all individuals feel empowered to protect patient safety. An organization should consider its culture when designing processes to meet the Universal Protocol. In some organizations, it may be necessary to be more prescriptive on certain elements of the Universal Protocol or to create processes that are not specifically addressed within these requirements.

Organizations should identify the timing and location of the preprocedure verification and site marking based on what works best for their own unique circumstances. The frequency and scope of the preprocedure verification will depend on the type and complexity of the procedure. The three components of the Universal Protocol are not necessarily presented in chronological order (although the preprocedure verification and site marking precede the final verification in the time-out). Preprocedure verification, site marking, and the time-out procedures should be as consistent as possible throughout the organization.

Note: Site marking is not required when the individual doing the procedure is continuously with the patient from the time of the decision to do the procedure through to the performance of the procedure.

UP.01.01.01
Conduct a preprocedure verification process.
Rationale for UP.01.01.01

Hospitals should always make sure that any procedure is what the patient needs and is performed on the right person. The frequency and scope of the verification process will depend on the type and complexity of the procedure.

The preprocedure verification is an ongoing process of information gathering and confirmation. The purpose of the preprocedure verification process is to make sure that all relevant documents and related information or equipment are:

- Available prior to the start of the procedure
- Correctly identified, labeled, and matched to the patient’s identifiers
- Reviewed and are consistent with the patient’s expectations and with the team’s understanding of the intended patient, procedure, and site.

Preprocedure verification may occur at more than one time and place before the procedure. It is up to the hospital to decide when this information is collected and by which team member, but it is best to do it when the patient can be involved. Possibilities include the following:

- When the procedure is scheduled
- At the time of preadmission testing and assessment
- At the time of admission or entry into the facility for a procedure
- Before the patient leaves the preprocedure area or enters the procedure room

Missing information or discrepancies are addressed before starting the procedure.

Elements of Performance for UP.01.01.01

1. Implement a preprocedure process to verify the correct procedure, for the correct patient, at the correct site.
   Note: The patient is involved in the verification process when possible.

2. Identify the items that must be available for the procedure and use a standardized list to verify their availability. At a minimum, these items include the following:
   - Relevant documentation (for example, history and physical, signed procedure consent form, nursing assessment, and preanesthesia assessment)
   - Labeled diagnostic and radiology test results (for example, radiology images and scans, or pathology and biopsy reports) that are properly displayed
   - Any required blood products, implants, devices, and/or special equipment for the procedure

   Note: The expectation of this element of performance is that the standardized list is available and is used consistently during the preprocedure verification. It is not necessary to document that the standardized list was used for each patient.

3. Match the items that are to be available in the procedure area to the patient.
Introduction to UP.01.02.01

Wrong site surgery should never happen. Yet it is an ongoing problem in health care that compromises patient safety. Marking the procedure site is one way to protect patients; patient safety is enhanced when a consistent marking process is used throughout the hospital. Site marking is done to prevent errors when there is more than one possible location for a procedure. Examples include different limbs, fingers and toes, lesions, level of the spine, and organs. In cases where bilateral structures are removed (such as tonsils or ovaries) the site does not need to be marked.

Responsibility for marking the procedure site is a hotly debated topic. One position is that since the licensed independent practitioner is accountable for the procedure, he or she should mark the site. Another position is that other individuals should be able to mark the site in the interests of work flow and efficiency.

There is no evidence that patient safety is affected by the job function of the individual who marks the site. The incidence of wrong-site surgery is low enough that it is unlikely that valid data on this subject will ever be available. Furthermore, there is no clear consensus in the field on who should mark the site. Rather than remaining silent on the subject of site marking, The Joint Commission sought a solution that supports the purpose of the site mark. The mark is a communication tool about the patient for members of the team. Therefore, the individual who knows the most about the patient should mark the site. In most cases, that will be the person performing the procedure.

Recognizing the complexities of the work processes supporting invasive procedures, The Joint Commission believes that delegation of site marking to another individual is acceptable in limited situations as long as the individual is familiar with the patient and involved in the procedure. These include:

- Individuals who are permitted through a postgraduate education program to participate in the procedure
- A licensed individual who performs duties requiring collaborative or supervisory agreements with a licensed independent practitioner. These individuals include advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and physician assistants (PAs).

The licensed independent practitioner remains fully accountable for all aspects of the procedure even when site marking is delegated.

Elements of Performance for UP.01.02.01

1. Identify those procedures that require marking of the incision or insertion site. At a minimum, sites are marked when there is more than one possible location for the procedure and when performing the procedure in a different location would negatively affect quality or safety. Note: For spinal procedures, in addition to preoperative skin marking of the general spinal region, special intraoperative imaging techniques may be used for locating and marking the exact vertebral level.
2. Mark the procedure site before the procedure is performed and, if possible, with the patient involved.
3. The procedure site is marked by a licensed independent practitioner who is ultimately accountable for the procedure and will be present when the procedure is performed. In limited circumstances, the licensed independent practitioner may delegate sitemarking to an individual who is permitted by the organization to participate in the procedure and has the following qualifications:

- An individual in a medical postgraduate education program who is being supervised by the licensed independent practitioner performing the procedure; who is familiar with the patient; and who will be present when the procedure is performed

- A licensed individual who performs duties requiring a collaborative agreement or supervisory agreement with the licensed independent practitioner performing the procedure (that is, an advanced practice registered nurse (A.P.R.N.) or physician assistant (P.A.)); who is familiar with the patient; and who will be present when the procedure is performed.

Note: The hospital's leaders define the limited circumstances (if any) in which site marking may be delegated to an individual meeting these qualifications.

4. The method of marking the site and the type of mark is unambiguous and is used consistently throughout the hospital.

Note: The mark is made at or near the procedure site and is sufficiently permanent to be visible after skin preparation and draping. Adhesive markers are not the sole means of marking the site.

5. A written, alternative process is in place for patients who refuse site marking or when it is technically or anatomically impossible or impractical to mark the site (for example, mucosal surfaces or perineum).

Note: Examples of other situations that involve alternative processes include:

- Minimal access procedures treating a lateraled internal organ, whether percutaneous or through a natural orifice

- Teeth

- Premature infants, for whom the mark may cause a permanent tattoo

**UP.01.03.01**

*A time-out is performed before the procedure.*

**Rationale for UP.01.03.01**

The purpose of the time-out is to conduct a final assessment that the correct patient, site, and procedure are identified. This requirement focuses on those minimum features of the time-out. Some believe that it is important to conduct the time-out before anesthesia for several reasons, including involvement of the patient. A hospital may conduct the time-out before anesthesia or may add another time-out at that time. During a timeout, activities are suspended to the extent possible so that team members can focus on active confirmation of the patient, site, and procedure.
A designated member of the team initiates the time-out and it includes active communication among all relevant members of the procedure team. The procedure is not started until all questions or concerns are resolved. The time-out is most effective when it is conducted consistently across the hospital.

**Elements of Performance for UP.01.03.01**

1. Conduct a time-out immediately before starting the invasive procedure or making the incision.
2. The time-out has the following characteristics:
   - It is standardized, as defined by the hospital.
   - It is initiated by a designated member of the team.
   - It involves the immediate members of the procedure team, including the individual performing the procedure, the anesthesia providers, the circulating nurse, the operating room technician, and other active participants who will be participating in the procedure from the beginning.
3. When two or more procedures are being performed on the same patient, and the person performing the procedure changes, perform a time-out before each procedure is initiated.
4. During the time-out, the team members agree, at a minimum, on the following:
   - Correct patient identity
   - The correct site
   - The procedure to be done
5. Document the completion of the time-out.

   Note: The hospital determines the amount and type of documentation.