

Safety checklist for the OR

The International Healthcare Worker Safety Center at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville reminds infection preventionists to consider the following checklist to injuries and disease transmission in the operating suite.

☐ Are blunt suture needles, stapling devices, adhesive strips or tissue adhesives used whenever clinically feasible in order to reduce the use of sharp suture needles?

☐ Are scalpel blades with safety features used, such as round-tipped scalpel blades and retracting-blade and shielded-blade scalpels?

☐ Are alternative cutting methods used when appropriate, such as blunt electrocautery devices and laser devices?

☐ Is manual tissue retraction avoided by using mechanical retraction devices?

☐ Has all equipment that is unnecessarily sharp been eliminated? (Example, towel clips have been identified as a cause of injury in the operating room, yet blunt towel clips are available that do not cause injury and are adequate for securing surgical towels and drapes. Other examples of devices that do not always need to have sharp points include surgical scissors, surgical wire, and pickups.)

☐ Is double-gloving employed in the surgical setting?

☐ Do circulating nurses, as well as personnel close to the surgical site, wear eye protection such as goggles or faceshields that have a seal above the eyes to prevent fluid from running down into the eyes?

For more information, go to www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/Internet/epinet/. ■