

# Quality and Safety Dispatch

Time Out



Clinic Network  
UW Medicine  
VALLEY  
MEDICAL CENTER

November 2024

## Time-Out Updates Starting January 1, 2025

### New Fire Safety Requirements

- For procedures involving heat-producing equipment (e.g., cautery, fiberoptic light sources, lasers), fire safety considerations must now be discussed and documented during the time-out process.
- The Universal Protocol SmartPhrase and Time-Out flowsheet will guide the Licensed Practitioner (LP) or designated staff to perform a fire risk assessment before starting procedures.

### Background

A Root Cause Analysis (RCA) by the Patient Safety Team, in partnership with clinical and operational leaders, identified improvements to help the Clinic Network (CN) meet compliance with The Joint Commission (TJC) Standard EC.02.03.01.

Under this standard, the CN must:

- Regularly assess potential fire hazards during operative or invasive procedures.
- Create documented fire prevention and response protocols, including safety precautions for flammable germicides and antiseptics.

### Where to Find Guidance

For the latest information on time-outs and fire risk assessments:

1. Visit the [Patient Safety Committee SharePoint](#):
  - Go to "Shared Documents"
  - Click on "Time Out"
2. Refer to the [Clinic Network Policy: Procedure Fire Safety](#) for detailed guidance.

### How to Discuss Fire Safety

All procedure team members must participate in the fire safety review. Key discussion points include:

- **Risk Factors:** Alcohol-based prep, patient oxygen use, etc.
- **Safety Measures:**
  - Allow prep to fully dry before draping.
  - Ensure prep area is dry before draping.
  - Have water available for fire suppression.
  - Use the lowest possible Electrical Surgical Unit (ESU) settings.
  - Use wet sponges as appropriate.

### Additional Safety Tips

- Review the location of the nearest fire extinguisher.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all heat-producing equipment.

### Summary

**Prior to Jan 2025:** Continue to conduct and document time out per our current process

**Starting January 1, 2025:**

1. Fire Risk Assessment needs to be conducted prior to procedures.
2. Fire Risk Assessment needs to be documented on EPIC through Flowsheet or Smart Phrase.
3. Please complete *the VMC Timeout training 2025 training* on Percipio

**Questions** about this Quality & Safety Dispatch: Email David Kim at: [David\\_kim@valleymed.org](mailto:David_kim@valleymed.org)