

Communication-Is it Necessarily Vital with Vendors?

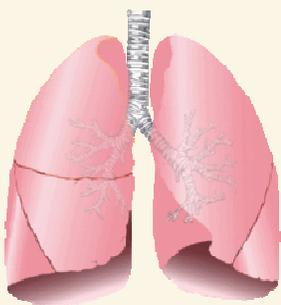
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NCAHCSP Board of Directors

Objectives

- Define Communication and why it is necessary in healthcare
- Discuss what role the vendor plays when communicating with SPD.

You've just finished breaking down 10 dirty case carts within the decontamination room, and all of a sudden here comes in this tall gentleman dressed in a bunny suit with 10 crates of instruments. You're in a state of dismay. You just finished decontaminating the last portion of instruments that came off the dumbwaiter, and you have 30 minutes until the end of your shift. Suddenly, the vendor glares at you and states, "I need these instruments processed like yesterday because Dr. Rosen-Needle has an anterior/posterior fusion starting within the next hour". Still in dismay, you glance at your washers, and notice that they are all filled to capacity with the last loads of instruments you cleaned and decontaminated. You can feel your temperature reaching boiling point. What nerve this guy has, with his demands that you get all twenty instrument sets processed ASAP without appropriately relaying any communicating earlier. Not only have you been bombarded with 30 instrument trays that are needed stat, but you have less than 30 minutes left in your shift, and you've been slammed all day. Does this scenario sound familiar to anyone? Would you have been so furious with the vendor if you were properly notified?



Communication is a tool we use that transfers information from one point

to the other. There are several forms of communication that include: verbal, non-verbal, visual, and written. Verbal communication is a form of spoken, radio prompted, and/or any other form of media communicated through sound. Self-confidence as well as knowledge of what is being communicated plays an integral role in whether our verbal communication is good communication. Non-verbal communication can be expressed by the way we use facial expressions and/or body gestures to send out messages. Sign-language is another way a person can express themselves non-verbally. The shape and/or form of our facial expressions and body gestures can insinuate a positive or negative form of communication. Written communication can come in the form of an email, letter, memos, reports, or articles just to name a few. A certain positive or negative tone can also be communicated through written components. Using an exclamation mark or all bold letters can indicate an urgency or angry tone. Visual communication can come in various forms including: displays of posters, photography, charts, and/or signs. When communicating the sender submits a message through a specific channel to a receiver(s), who then encodes the message that was communicated to them. If the receiver doesn't process the message appropriately a barrier can form resulting in the initial message being misconstrued. Communication is vital in the healthcare setting. Within the central processing department communication is deemed critical, and necessary for over-all patient safety.

Everyone including outside vendors must do their part when communicat-

ing their needs to the central processing department. A vendor is most known as an outside representative or supplier that is offering some sort of product and/or equipment for sale. In healthcare there are numerous vendors for several different departments within medical facilities that offer products for certain critical/non-critical, illnesses, surgical procedures, patient-support, pharmaceutical care, and more. Most often vendors within the central processing department are suppliers of surgical instrumentation that can be used for various surgical procedures including, but not limited to:

- Total joint arthroplasty
- Spinal fusions
- Femoral fractures
- Penile implants
- Coronary artery bypass
- Laparoscopic-assisted vaginal hysterectomies
- Lung transplants

It is imperative that when these vendors come within the sterile processing department that they are educated on how SPD retrieves surgical loaner trays that need re-processing and sterilizing. Vendors have to be oriented on the work and traffic flows of the sterile processing department. It should be firmly communicated that vendors should never enter the decontam room without the appropriate personal protective equipment.

Have you ever had an instrument set come down to the decontam area completely soiled and assembled? Did you know how to disassemble the set appropriately to ensure optimal cleaning?

Was the OR staff responsible for disassembling the instrument sets before they came down to be decontaminated? What is the department's policy for handling loaner trays? All of the answers to these questions should be communicated to the staff to ensure efficiency and patient safety. In order to decrease the incidence of sentinel events when processing loaner instrumentation the vendor has to communicate with the sterile processing manager. Ideally they should communicate what trays need to be re-processed within a few of weeks of the surgical procedure. All manufacturers' instructions for each item needing sterilizing must be present within the department to verify the proper way to reprocess and sterilize the sets. Management and the vendor can work effectively together by conducting inservices on how to suitably clean, decontaminate, and sterilize any new or existing loaner trays.

Vendors have the obligation to make sure that all instruments are within their specific sets before they are re-processed. Vendors keep an elaborate inventory of all equipment that goes through the sterile processing department. If there is an item missing that should be in the set, SPD has the duty to communicate the item missing to the vendor. This allows the vendor to either communicate the item missing

to the surgeon, or the opportunity to replace the item before the tray is re-processed. Communication is an integral part of optimum functioning within the sterile processing department when correlating with outside vendors. It can save everyone in the department anxiety, stress, and confusion when having to re-process 30 loaner trays for a case for Dr. Rosen-Needle.

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1. Verbal and non-verbal communication is the only identifiable types of communication.
TRUE FALSE
2. Non-verbal communication can only be expressed by the way we use our facial expressions.
TRUE FALSE
3. Exclamation marks or all bold letters in written content can indicate an urgency or angry tone.
TRUE FALSE
4. Effective communication is not necessary for overall patient safety.
TRUE FALSE
5. Vendors within the central processing department are mainly utilized for in- services pertaining to appropriate PPE use.
TRUE FALSE
6. It is protocol for vendors to enter the decontamination room without the appropriate personal protective equipment.
TRUE FALSE
7. Sentinel events can be reduced when processing loaner instrumentation if the vendor communicates with the sterile processing manager and provide manufacturer's instructions for use.
TRUE FALSE
8. It is essential for managers and vendors to communicate on how to suitably clean, decontaminate, and sterilize any new or existing loaner trays.
TRUE FALSE
9. An extensive inventory is kept for all instrumentation going in and out of the CPD department.
TRUE FALSE
10. Effective communication plays a role in reducing departmental stress and anxiety.
TRUE FALSE

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