

OR Staffing Guideline

Purpose

To establish guidelines for operating room (OR) staffing to ensure the timely and efficient management of patients requiring surgical intervention. The guideline aims to provide a structured approach to OR staffing, accommodating the unpredictable nature of cases while ensuring patient safety and adherence to best practices.

Scope

This guideline applies to all surgeons, anesthesiologists, surgical nursing staff, OR technicians, and allied health professionals involved in the care of patients at Westchester Medical Center.

Definitions

1. **Emergent Surgery:** Cases that require immediate intervention to preserve life, limb, or function.
2. **Urgent Surgery:** Cases that should be performed within a specific timeframe, typically within 4-6 hours.
3. **Elective Surgery:** Cases scheduled in advance that do not pose an immediate threat to life or function.
4. **OR Team Composition:** Includes surgeons, anesthesiologists, scrub nurses, circulating nurses, OR technicians, and ancillary staff.

Responsibilities

- **Medical Director:** Ensures adequate staffing and appropriate training for OR personnel. Reviews staffing needs and adjustments.
- **OR Nursing Manager:** Coordinates with services to maintain appropriate nurse staffing levels. Oversees daily assignments and manages staff availability for cases.
- **Anesthesia Department Head:** Ensures sufficient anesthesiologists and nurse anesthetists are on call 24/7 for cases.
- **Surgeons and OR Staff:** Available and prepared to respond as required.

Staffing Requirements

1. Emergent Cases (an operating room must be available within 15 minutes of request):

- An OR team must be available and on-site 24/7, including:
 - 1 Anesthesiologist or CRNA
 - 2 OR Nurses (1 Scrub Nurse, 1 Circulating Nurse)
 - 1 OR Technician
- Additional staff may be called in based on case complexity.

2. Urgent Cases:

- An OR team should be available on-site or reachable within 15 minutes.
- The team must include:
 - 1 Anesthesiologist or CRNA
 - 2 OR Nurses (1 Scrub Nurse, 1 Circulating Nurse)
 - 1 OR Technician

3. Elective Cases:

- Scheduled during regular OR hours, with flexibility to adjust based on case load.
- Staffing determined by daily case volume and complexity.

Procedures

1. On-Call Staffing:

- Maintain a roster of on-call personnel, including anesthesiologists, OR nurses, and technicians, who can be mobilized at any time.
- The on-call schedule should be reviewed monthly and communicated to all relevant staff.

2. Emergency Response Activation:

- Upon activation, the OR manager will alert the on-call OR team, ensuring immediate preparation of an OR suite.
- The anesthesiologist and OR staff must be in the OR within 15 minutes of activation.

3. Staff Backup and Support:

- Ensure backup personnel (second on-call team) are available in case of multiple simultaneous cases or mass casualty incidents (MCIs).
- Cross-training of staff to provide flexibility in roles, especially for high-acuity trauma cases.

Training and Competency

- All OR personnel involved in patient care must complete annual competency training on emergency preparedness.
- Regular simulations and drills will be conducted to ensure readiness for MCIs.

Performance Monitoring and Review

- The Medical Director and OR Nursing Manager will review OR staffing performance quarterly.
- Any deviations from this policy or challenges in staffing will be documented and reviewed for quality improvement purposes.

Compliance

All staff must comply with this guideline to ensure patient safety and high-quality trauma care. Non-compliance may result in corrective action, up to and including disciplinary measures.

Effective Date: March 2023

Next Review Date: March 2026