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# Wrong Site Surgeries

What you need to know about JCAHO, CMS and AORN regulations and standards... and how to analyze the real cost of those injuries.

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**“Wrong site surgery is the fourth top sentinel event.”<sup>8</sup>**

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**Standard APR 19** The hospital\* has implemented a process to eliminate wrong site, wrong patient, wrong procedure surgery.

*Elements of Performance:* The hospital has created and uses a preoperative verification process, such as a checklist, to confirm that appropriate documents (for example, medical records, imaging studies) are available...and the hospital has implemented a process to mark the surgical site and involve the patient in the marking process. **2**

**Standard PC.13.20** Operative or other procedures and/or the administration of moderate or deep sedation or anesthesia are planned. *Elements of Performance:* The site, procedure, and patient are accurately identified and clearly communicated, using active communication techniques, during a final verification process, such as a "time out," prior to the start of any surgical or invasive procedure. **3**

**Universal Protocol for Preventing Wrong Site, Wrong Procedure, Wrong Person Surgery** Marking the operative site.

*Elements of Performance:* To identify unambiguously the intended site of incision or insertion. For procedures involving right/left distinction, multiple levels (as in spinal procedures), the intended site should be marked such that the mark will be visible after the patient has been prepped and draped. **4**

**Standard EC.1.10** The hospital manages safety risks. *Elements of Performance:* The hospital conducts proactive risk assessments that evaluate the potential adverse impact of buildings, grounds, equipment, occupants, and internal physical systems on the safety and health of patients, staff and other people coming to the hospital's facilities... and the hospital uses the risks identified to select and implement procedures and controls to achieve the lowest potential for adverse impact on the safety and health of patients, staff and other people coming to the hospital's facilities. **3**

\*The term Hospital also refers to all types of medical facilities.

### AORN

**AORN's Position Statement** A comprehensive approach is needed in each healthcare delivery system to prevent wrong site surgery...While it is the surgeon's responsibility to diagnose the patient's need for surgery and to delineate the surgical site, verifying the correct surgical site at the time of surgery is the responsibility of each health care provider, including perioperative RNs. **6**



**Medicare Conditions of Participation (CoPs)** If the hospital provides surgical services, the services must be well organized and provided in accordance with acceptable standards of practice. Surgical services must be consistent with needs and resources. Policies governing surgical care must be designed to assure the achievement and maintenance of high standards of medical practice and patient care. CFR 482.51 **1**

## Facts You Should Know

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76% of all wrong site surgeries reported through the Joint Commission's Sentinel Event reporting system (since 1996) involved surgery on the wrong body part. 13% involved the wrong patient. **7**

Wrong site surgery is the fourth top sentinel event. **8**

Wrong site surgery most commonly occurs during orthopaedic procedures, followed by urologic and neurosurgical procedures. **9**

84% of cases involving wrong site orthopedic surgery claims during a 10 year period resulted in indemnity payments. **10**

Claims cost of wrong site surgery – documented cases of wrong site surgery – can result in costs up to \$3,000,000. **11**

# Benefits of Correctly Marking Surgical Site



- Eliminate wrong site procedure errors.
- Reduce unnecessary surgical procedures.
- Reduce the risk of litigation from wrong surgical site procedures.
- Reduce medical malpractice claims.
- Improve perioperative communication.
- Improve patient safety outcomes.

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## Footnotes

**1** Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Conditions of Participation for hospitals CFR 482. **2; 3; 5** Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) 2004 Standards. **4** Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) Universal Protocol. **6** AORN Position Statement of Correct Site Surgery, February 2003. **7; 8** JCAHO Sentinel Event – Wrong Site Surgeries Sentinel Event Alerts 6 and 24. **9** JCAHO Sentinel Event Statistics, JCAHO January, 2001. **10** American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons. **11** Health Care Risk Manager, February 2003.

# Cost Analysis of Expenses Resulting From Wrong Site Surgery

Period Covered  to

Department Covered  O.R.  Other  Facility-wide

Source of Information

# of Claims Reviewed

Costs	Total Cost
1 Treatment	\$ <input type="text"/>
2 Diagnostic Testing Required	\$ <input type="text"/>
3 Additional Surgical Procedure	\$ <input type="text"/>
4 Increase in Hospital Stay	\$ <input type="text"/>
5 Staff Time in Performing Root Cause Analysis	\$ <input type="text"/>
6 Increase to Facility's Insurance Premiums	\$ <input type="text"/>
7 Increase in Liability Reserves	\$ <input type="text"/>
8 Attorney's Fees	\$ <input type="text"/>
9 Cost of Settlement	\$ <input type="text"/>
10 Other:	\$ <input type="text"/>
11	\$ <input type="text"/>
12	\$ <input type="text"/>
13	\$ <input type="text"/>
<b>Total Cost For The Period</b>	\$ <input type="text"/>

Cost of SMI product(s) to reduce/solve problem (\$1.00-\$3.00 per surgical procedure)

Potential cost savings per year

Nurse inspired innovative product(s) to solve this issue are available from Sandel Medical Industries, LLC.

**Correct Site™ Surgery Kit**  
 Sandel Skin Marker™, Sandel Safety Marker™, Correct Site™ Tattoo, Correct Site™ Sticker and more

Prepared by

Title  Date

**Make safety a line item in your budget.**

## Associated Websites

### [www.jcaho.org](http://www.jcaho.org)

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

### [www.cms.hhs.gov/regulations](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/regulations)

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (regulations)

### [www.aorn.org](http://www.aorn.org)

Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses

### [www.aaos.gov](http://www.aaos.gov)

American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons –  
American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

## Partial List of Facilities Using Our Products

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**Angleton Danbury General Hospital** Angleton, TX

**Overlake Hospital & Medical Center** Bellevue, WA



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