

THE SAFE ZONE

Innovative Medical Systems Monthly Patient Security System
Newsletter for Hugs, Pedz & Passport

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FINISHING WELL

When is the last time you saw a nurse finish a patient's injection by stuffing the used needle into her pocket? NEVER! Nurses are all too familiar with the dangers of used sharps. That's why those red sharps bins are everywhere in your hospital, right? Finishing well is a safety issue and nurses learn very early in their career to never ever mishandle sharps.

Mishandling discharges from the Patient Security System is also a serious safety issue. It is very important that staff learn to finish well and discharge properly. That simple practice will keep your patients safer, save your staff from hassles and conserve your budget.

FINISH AT THE LINE

When discharging your patients from your Patient Security System, we recommend bringing them to your Patient Security Computer to do so. Think about the PS Computer as the finish line. If you run a race, you cannot win until you cross the finish line. Discharging the patient by bringing them to the Computer will produce several benefits for you and your patients. At the Computer, you can place a "Dirty Tag Bin," encouraging staff to deposit dirty tags there instead of stuffing them into their pockets or losing them elsewhere.

FINISH WITHOUT HASSLES

When you discharge your Security Tags, remove them from your patient, pull the

strap completely out of the tag and place the tag into the "Dirty Tag Bin." If you leave strap pieces in your tags (Hugs Tags), the pieces can reconnect later accidentally causing the tag to re-admit into the System. Just as easily as the pieces jostled together, they can also jostle apart, causing a Tamper Alarm with locked doors, chimes and lights. The Tag is unidentified in the system and can take a long time to resolve. This hassle is easily avoided.

FINISH IN THE BLACK

Dropping dirty tags into the "Dirty Tag Bin" near the Computer at discharge is a great way to conserve tags. When Tags are removed in patient rooms, they can often be misplaced, thrown down the laundry chute, stuffed into a nurses pocket or left on a patient. Once the Tag is discharged, it will not alarm at exits and can easily vanish if it is not cared for properly. Conserve your Tags by discharging at the Computer. Your budget will benefit.

FINISH SAFE

Finally, discharging by bringing your patients to the Computer allows you to keep your patients protected right up to the end of their stay. In the recent past, sloppy discharge procedures have opened the door for abductions. Stuffing needles into pockets doesn't happen at your hospital. Neither should you stuff Security Tags into pockets. Finish well!

Written by Jeff Smalla, Corporate Trainer, IMS

HOW DO YOU SAY GOODBYE?

I remember my grandparents always parted with us by walking us all the way out to the car. They never left their post until we were out of sight. My parents say goodbye the exact same way and, guess what, so do I. Care to guess how my children say goodbye? Exactly. Is it any wonder? My family believes a proper goodbye is as important as a hardy hello, maybe even more so.

How you part company with your patients is also important. Why not make the process of removing your patient's security tag a part of your "waving goodbye ritual"? That way your patient is protected until the moment they leave your unit.

We recommend that you keep your patients protected until they are ready to hop on the elevator and walk out the door. So, help them gather their belongings, bring them to the Patient Security Computer, discharge the patient from the Security System and remove the tag. You care deeply for these patients and their family so it makes perfect sense that you protect them until your last goodbye. It's just one of the many ways you care for your patients.

WHAT IS A DIRTY TAG CONTAINER OR BIN?

A "Dirty Tag Container or Bin" can be a small basket, a Tupperware container, a bowl, a cup, or any type of vessel that can hold a day or two worth of tags depending on the size of your hospital. The idea is to locate it near your Patient Security PC so that it is easily accessible to place the discharged (and removed) tag into it and yet not so visible that the public may easily grab a tag out of it for a cheap souvenir. Your policy should reflect the usage of this container, stating that all discharged tags are to be placed in such a container (you may have more than one at multiple PC's) as well as who is in charge at what time of day or week to collect the tags and clean and return them for service. By using such a container, and creating such a policy, as mentioned above, you must discharge the tag from the computer first before you cut it off to prevent an alarm, so why not have the patient at the computer when you discharge it. If you are at the computer, have that as your place to remove the tag and have a place to put the tag as it has been on a patient and must be cleaned before being re-used. The container is a reminder to return the removed tag. Most importantly, security is maintained right up until departure.