



Tool 4: Surgical Safety Checklist Observation Instructions

This tool collects information intended to improve Surgical Safety Checklist implementation and surgical outcomes. Below are a few notes to help you use the tool.

Observer information:

This tool should be completed by the circulating nurse participating in the case being observed.

- This tool should be used in cases that last longer than one hour. It should be completed for the same cases as the Surgical Teamwork Observation Tool. Someone designated to coordinate this monitoring effort at your hospital should indicate which cases you should observe.
- The checklist observer should be present for the duration of the surgical case being observed and may complete the tool during the observation or immediately following the case.
- The Surgical Safety Checklist Observation Tool should be completed for the same cases as the Surgical Teamwork Observation Tool.
- Following the case, please give the completed observation tool to the person coordinating the monitoring effort.

General instructions:

- Please fill in the bubble (○) or box (□) that corresponds to your choice.
- If you make a mistake, ~~strike through~~ your error and fill in the correct choice.
- Please include comments or additional information on the back of the tool, if desired.

In the upper right-hand corner:

- Write the date the observation was performed.
- Write the name of your hospital.

In the Procedure and Observer Information boxes:

- Record each item requested.
- “Significant nonclinical disruptions” include interruptions that are not directly related to the procedure that disturb or distract from the progress of the operation (e.g., urgent pages requiring the surgeon’s attention, scheduling, or other external concerns that demand surgical team members’ attention).
- Case delays greater than 30 minutes from the scheduled start time should also be recorded.

Processes of Care:

- For each of the three processes, record whether the action was taken or not.
- By “Yes, w/o prompting”, we mean that the action was taken (or discussed) before the Checklist was initiated.
- By “Yes, prompted by Checklist”, we mean that the action was taken (or discussed) after the Checklist was initiated.
- If an item did not apply to the procedure (e.g., warmer NOT required for a case expected to last less than 1 hour), please mark “N/A”.

Briefing:

- Check boxes (□) to indicate which individuals participated in confirming the patient’s identity, procedure or operative site before incision.
- For Questions 6-10, which begin with the words “Before incision”, fill in “Yes” or “No” to indicate whether each aspect of the procedure was discussed. For example, if the surgeon discussed details of the operation (i.e., anything more than the name of the procedure), fill in “Yes” for question 6. If the nurse is given an opportunity to discuss sterility, equipment or other concerns but has none, the appropriate response for question 9 would also be “Yes”.

- For Question 11, fill in “Yes” or “No” to indicate whether the checklist was read directly from a poster, paper or electronic document without reliance on memory. All surgical teams (including those with extensive experience) are expected to read the checklist aloud prior to every surgical procedure.

Debriefing:

- As in the briefing, any discussion should prompt a “Yes” response. Discussions may be as simple as stating that there are no corresponding concerns.

Buy-In:

- For question 15, check boxes () to indicate which individuals actively participated in discussing Checklist items.
- For question 16-19, rate Checklist buy-in on a scale from 1 to 5. One represents “POOR” buy-in and 5 represents “EXCELLENT” buy-in. Examples of poor, neither excellent nor poor, and excellent buy-in are provided. Rate buy-in on the part of each member of the surgical team: circulating nurse, anesthesia provider (anesthesiologist or CRNA, whichever is present during the checklist), surgeon, and surgical tech. If multiple providers in the same role are present (e.g., multiple surgeons), rate the buy-in of the primary person in that role.

Additional Data:

- Fill in the bubble that corresponds to your answer for each question.
- “EBL NS” means expected blood loss was not significant.
- Question 25 asks whether the need for antibiotic re-dosing was **discussed** for operations whose expected duration is greater than 2 hours, not whether antibiotics were re-administered within 2 hours. “N/A (<2h)”, means that the question is not applicable because the expected case duration was less than 2 hours.