Name of Policy:	**Electrosurgical Unit (ESU) Safety**
Policy Number:	3364-124-28
Department:	Nursing Service/Operating Room
Approving Officer:	Chief Nursing Officer
Responsible Agent:	Chief Nursing Officer
Scope:	Operating Room/Perioperative Services

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO MEDICAL CENTER

Effective Date: 6/1/2022

Initial Effective Date: 6/1993

_____ New policy proposal
_____ Major revision of existing policy
__X__ Minor/technical revision of existing policy
_____ Reaffirmation of existing policy

(A) Policy Statement

Electrosurgical Units (ESUs) will be properly used and maintained.

(B) Purpose of Policy

To assure effective and safe use of ESUs during surgical procedures.

(C) Procedure

1. Circulator inspects the ESU power console, foot pedal and cord prior to use. The unit is tagged and removed from the surgical area if damage is noted.
2. All patients must be grounded using a dispersive electrode (grounding pad) whenever monopolar electrocautery is required as part of the procedure.

Circulator will perform a pre-operative and post-operative skin assessment to observe the skin integrity at surgical site(s) and dispersive electrode (aka grounding pad) site(s). At the end of the case, special attention is given to the grounding pad site, under EKG leads, and positional pressure points. The following documentation will be completed by the perioperative RN:

a. device identification number (eg, ESU, ultrasonic scalpel, ligasure, etc.),
b. location of grounding pad placement,
c. patient's skin condition before and after grounding pad placement.

3.

4. All grounding pads are disposable, used once, and discarded. Grounding pads are kept in a sealed, protective foil package until ready for use.
5. The grounding pad is positioned on clean, dry skin over a large muscle mass as close to the operative site as possible. Hair in the pad site will be clipped as needed to ensure proper contact of adhesive to skin. Do not place the pad on or near implanted metal. Try to avoid placing pads over tattoos, especially tattoos with red ink. Keep the pad dry and protected from fluids that may seep or pool.
6. ESU cabinets will NOT be used for storage of fluids of any kind.
7. When ESU devices are used during surgeries, the following requirements regarding flammable germicides or antiseptics are followed:
    a. Nonflammable packaging
    b. Unit-dose applicators
    c. Preoperative "time-out" prior to the initiation of any surgical procedure to verify the following:
        i. Application site is dry prior to draping and use of surgical equipment
        ii. Pooling of solution has not occurred or has been corrected
        iii. Solution-soaked materials have been removed from the patient vicinity prior to draping and use of surgical devices.
8. When ESU devices are used during surgeries, they will be stationed in the holster until needed. Long devices may be kept on the mayo stand. The device must never be rested on the patient drapes.

9. When passing ESU devices at the sterile field, care must be taken to not activate the power button.

Approved by:	**Review/Revision Date:**
/s/ Kurt Kless, MSN, MBA, RN, NE-BC — Date Chief Nursing Officer *Review/Revision Completed By:* *Heidi Pitzen MSN, BBA, RN, CNOR* *Perioperative Educator, 2018, 2022* *Revised: 6/2022* *Review By: Policy & Standards Committee, 12/2018, 6/2022* *Reference: https://aorn.org/essentials/electrosurgical-safety* *Retrieved 3/14/2022. Copyright © 2020 AORN, Inc.*	6/96 6/2022 1/99 7/2002 7/2006 6/10/2008 6/10/09 8/2012 8/2015 12/2018 **Next Review Date:** 6/2025
Policies Superseded by This Policy: 4-28	

It is the responsibility of the reader to verify with the responsible agent that this is the most current version of the policy.