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

**Effective Date:** 4/1/2016  
**Initial Effective Date:** 6/1993

(A) **Policy Statement**

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, 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 by the use of a dispersive electrode (grounding pad) when the surgeon requires monopolar electrosurgery as part of the procedure.
3. The circulator will perform a pre-operative and post-operative skin assessment to observe the skin integrity. At the end of the case, special attention is given to the ESU dispersive electrode site, under EKG leads, and positional pressure points. Pre-op and post-op skin assessments of ground pad site are documented in the operative record.
4. All grounding pads used are disposable and discarded after single patient use. Grounding pads are kept in sealed, protective foil package until ready for use.
5. The dispersive pad is positioned on clean, dry skin over a large muscle mass as close to the operative site as possible. Dispersive pad site will be clipped as needed to insure proper contact of adhesive to skin.
6. ESU cabinets will NOT be used for storage of fluids of any kind.

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**Approved by:**

**C. Powlesland, BSN, RN.**  
Nurse Manager Operating Room  
4.26.16  
Date

**Moneeca Smith, MSN, RN.**  
Chief Nursing Officer/CNO  
4.26.16  
Date

**Review/Revision Date:**

- 6/96
- 1/99
- 7/2002
- 7/2006
- 6/10/2008
- 6/10/09
- 8/2012
- 4.1.2016

**Next Review Date:** 4/2019

**Policies Superseded by This Policy:** 4-28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.*