(A) Policy Statement

All employees working in the OR shall follow the 'Chain of Custody' procedure.

(B) Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a procedure for maintaining the chain of custody, and to continue that chain with the least amount of personal exchanges possible.

(C) Definition

Chain of Custody (COC), in legal contexts, refers to the chronological documentation or paper trail, showing the seizure, custody, control, transfer, analysis, and disposition of physical or electronic evidence. Evidence is something that legally can be presented before a court of law such as an object or written document, which bears on or establishes the point in question.

(D) Procedure

1. All evidence pertaining to a case will be marked by the initial individual who has contact with the item, in such a manner as not to deface the item.

2. If the item is to be examined by the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, make sure that the item is protected by a plastic bag or specimen container, or whatever is necessary to preserve the evidence.

3. The COC form should have a patient label placed in the upper right hand corner. Remember that each person who is in contact with the piece of evidence must either sign, or initial next to their printed name on the COC form. The surgeon should hand-off the evidence directly to the circulating nurse to minimize the number of people in contact with the evidence. The surgeon can sign the COC form later as long as it is documented as a late signature.

4. The container should then be labeled with a patient label.

5. The label should be attached in such a manner that both side and lid are adhered to; or across the open end of the plastic bag, to form a seal. Place your initials on the label. Complete the COC form and contact the jurisdictional law enforcement agency where the incident occurred to pick up the evidence.

6. When passing off the evidence be absolutely certain that the person taking the evidence has the authority to do so and signs their name to the COC form. If there is a question of authority refer to the UT police department. The original, or a copy of the COC form, must stay in the patient’s chart. If the law enforcement agency receiving the evidence has their own COC form, a copy of their form must go in the patient’s chart.

7. If the physician is unable to sign the COC form prior to turning the evidence over to the law enforcement agency, the person turning over the evidence may sign with a notation that the doctor is currently involved in a surgical case.
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**Chain of Custody**

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<td><strong>C. Poulson</strong> RN</td>
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<td><strong>Moneca Smith</strong> MSN, RN. Chief Nursing Officer/CNO</td>
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Review: Policy & Standard Committee, 5/16
Revision completed by: Greg Shannon, MSN, RN.

**Next Review Date:** 5/2019

Policies Superseded by This Policy: 4-51

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