(A) Policy Statement

All personnel present during laser procedures shall use Personal Protective Equipment.

(B) Purpose of Policy

To reduce the risk of laser induced injury and provide a safe environment for all personnel present during a laser procedure.

(C) Procedure

Eye Protection

1. During laser procedures the patient's eyes will be protected with moistened gauze pads or appropriate laser protective eye wear (glasses or goggles). Appropriate eye protection will be determined as follows:

   a. Laser surgery below the head and neck - local anesthesia, all lasers:
      (1) If alert and cooperative, patient may wear appropriate eyewear, provided there is no opening between the goggle and skin surface where laser light may enter. These patients must be instructed in the importance of adherence to safety precautions.

   b. Laser surgery below head and neck area - general anesthesia, all lasers:
      (1) Patients' eyes will be cared for in the usual manner by Anesthesia staff. In addition one of the following methods of eye protection will be used:
         (a) moistened gauze eye pads applied
         (b) eye wear appropriate to wavelength applied, if it does not interfere with anesthesia techniques.
         (c) physical barrier, i.e., wet towel placed between laser outlet source and patient's eyes.

   c. Laser surgery in the head and neck area - local or general anesthesia, all lasers.
      (1) Eyes covered with wet gauze eye pads or filtering lenses that correspond to the specific laser wave length. Eyewear should be placed to prevent entry of laser light.
      (2) Treatment of the periorbital area that would ordinarily be covered by gauze packs (excluding eyelids). The eye may be protected by holding a metal shield over the eye itself to pose more skin surface for treatment.
      (3) For treatment of the eye lid a lead eye shield will be used.
2. All personnel within the operating room shall wear appropriate protective eyewear.
   a. Different laser wavelengths require different eyewear. Check the label or protective eyewear for the appropriate type.

3. Protective eyewear should be inspected by the laser safety technician before the procedure.

4. When using the laser through a microscope or endoscope, all personnel in the operating room must use appropriate eye protection.

5. Endoscopic lens covers with special filtering can be used during microscopic procedures to provide appropriate protection.

6. Warning signs stating that eye protection is needed must be placed on all access doors to the operating room where a laser procedure is in progress. Appropriate protective laser glasses should be available at each entry door.

7. Windows must be appropriately covered depending upon the wavelength of the laser used. The CO₂ laser does not penetrate glass and windows do not need to be covered.

8. To prevent reflection of the laser beam, special precautions must be followed. Instrumentation that is not matted or ebonized should be covered with wet towels or sponges to decrease reflection.

**Masks and Gloves**

1. Laser masks must be worn by all present during the laser procedure. The masks are available on the laser cart.

2. The mask should be worn appropriately to cover the nose and mouth to decrease the inhalation of potentially hazardous particulate.

3. Gloves should be worn to prevent cross-contamination.

4. The laser will not be activated until all masks are on, the smoke evacuation tube is positioned near the laser tissue interaction site (on CO₂ cases), and the smoke evacuator is operating.

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**Approved by:**

Edwin Hall  
Administrator, Surgical Services  
8/21/02 Date

Norma Tomlinson, RN, MSN, CNA  
Associate Vice President/Associate Executive Director  
4/5/08 Date

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