

Russell Phillips & Associates, LLC

Fire and Emergency Management for Healthcare Facilities

Prevention and Management of Surgical Fires

“There are approximately 100 surgical fires each year, resulting in up to 20 serious injuries and one or two patient deaths annually.” The Joint Commission Sentinel Event Alert, June 24, 2003.

“It turns out, that surgical fires are at least five times as common as once thought, affecting between 550 and 650 patients a year.” Pennsylvania Patient Safety Reporting System, September 25, 2008 (MSNBC article)

The Joint Commission recommends:

1. Informing staff members, including surgeons and anesthesiologists, about the importance of controlling heat sources by following laser and ESU safety practices; manage fuels by allowing sufficient time for patient prep; and establish guidelines for minimizing oxygen concentration under the drapes.
2. Developing, implementing, and testing procedures to ensure an appropriate response by all members of the surgical team to fires in the OR.

Russell Phillips & Associates works with more than 1,300 healthcare facilities and has been providing site-specific surgical fire training services since 1976. We have found that providing staff with realistic, hands-on training is key in saving the life of patients and staff. Our program offers you:

1. Fire Plan Redesign for the surgical areas. The will include a survey of the surgical areas with customized plans outlining roles and responsibilities of the surgical team during a fire or evacuation. Interviews on current practices for prevention of surgical fires will take place at this time.

2. Realistic Training in an actual fire scenario has proven to be the most effective approach in preparing staff and reducing the chance for the loss of life in a real fire. The training will focus on:



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- A. *Fire Prevention:* What is causing surgical fires and how do we prevent them?
- B. *Fire Suppression:* What are the steps you should take to suppress airway, surgical site and drape fires?



- C. *Fire Plan Review:* What are the roles of the surgical team during a fire?
- D. *Evacuation:* How do you break down equipment and evacuate if fire or smoke conditions force you from the OR?
- E. *Practical:* These exercises will assist staff in becoming more familiar with their roles in fire suppression and evacuation. Staff will drill on who has responsibility for the patient, medical gas shut-offs, etc. This program will involve all staff in performing **realistic fire suppression** on a mock patient.

We recommend that surgeons, anesthesia providers, and surgical staff meet for a 1-hour general session, followed by 30-minute Practicals with groups of up to 25 per session. Approximately 100 staff can be trained per day in the Practicals with an unlimited number in the general sessions.

For more information, please contact us at 585-223-1130, via e-mail at info@phillipsllc.com or visit www.phillipsllc.com.

Principals: Russell Phillips • David Hood • Scott Aronson