

ENHANCING EQUIPMENT STORAGE WITH COLOR CODED IDENTIFICATION TAGS

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ASSESSMENT

- Following the expansion of the operating room suites, storage space for needed surgical equipment was markedly decreased. It was complicated to store, or even find, needed surgical equipment. Remaining storage rooms and hallways were cluttered. Storage for 21 ORs, serving 10 specialties, was contained within four small storage areas and three sterile cores.

During quick case turnovers (and at the end of day), items were placed in closest storage areas or simply left in hallways. When a specific piece of equipment was needed, it could take 10 to 15 minutes (or more) to search all storage areas and hallways.

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

- It was determined that items were returned in a disorganized manner to the nearest storage area, because the assigned storage for each item was not clearly discernible.
- An identifying color and name were assigned to each storage area to correspond to the location or category of the items to be stored there.

TEAM MEMBERS

- Cynthia Hawks, BSN, RN, CNOR, CSSM
- Hynrie Pomoy, Anesthesia Tech

IMPLEMENTATION

- Photos were taken of each piece of surgical equipment.
- Colored signage for the designated area and photos of the equipment were posted on the wall where items would be stored, clearly communicating the correct location for each item.
- Matching colored, laminated tags were placed on each piece of surgical equipment with the equipment name and storage location clearly visible.
- Example:



OUTCOMES

- Post implementation, surgical storage areas were less congested with misplaced equipment. Color coded tags made it more efficient to identify the storage location and return equipment properly. Organization of the storage areas were easy to maintain, with equipment returned to designated spaces.

Now, new staff members were able to easily return equipment to the proper location, even if they were not familiar with the item (an additional benefit of the identification tags).

PERIOPERATIVE IMPLICATIONS

- Color coding storage areas and tagging equipment increases efficiency with case preparation, room turnover, and end of day clean up. Decreased equipment storage in rooms and hallways limits the chance of injury to staff or damage to equipment, thus mitigating added risks in the perioperative setting. ⁽¹⁾

REFERENCES

- Link, T. (2019), Guideline Implementation: A Safe Environment of Care. AORN J, 110: 169-179. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aorn.12716>

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