

### 10 Things I Should Have Learned in Orientation...

There are a few things that you just gotta know about equipment and utilities to function in this environment. They're the basics, the things that you should have learned in orientation.

1. All medical equipment must be inspected by clinical engineering before it is put into use. Reference HP 04-01, Medical Equipment Management Program
2. Only Clinical Engineering can approve electrical extension devices. Reference HP 04-03, Non-Clinical Electrical Equipment
3. Heat-producing devices, such as toasters, toaster ovens, and space heaters are prohibited. Reference HP 04-03, Non-Clinical Electrical Equipment
4. If a telephone is out of service, call 334 to have it repaired. Reference HP 04-11, Telephone Service
5. Employees must report all medical device-related incidents, including those caused

## Electricity: Don't take it for granted

A basic convenience of modern life, electricity powers our lights and equipment. But we rarely think about it, except when the power goes out and our lives seem to ground to a halt.

We ought to think about electricity more often than we do—not just as a convenience, but as a real and present danger. Electricity is the primary cause of a great many on-the-job injuries—electrical shock, burns, even death.

There are good reasons for taking precautions when using electrical equipment. In fact, because the risks are so high, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to teach their workers how to protect themselves from the risks associated with energized equipment.

### Protection begins with inspection.



Before using any electrical equipment, take the time to inspect it.

- **Check electrical cords.** Electrical wires are wrapped in insulation that keeps the electrical current on its path and prevent shocks. Check electrical cords to make sure that the insulation is not worn or frayed. To prevent damage, don't staple or nail electrical cords to any surface and don't run them across a walking path or under furniture.
- **Check plugs.** Electrical equipment is grounded through a conductor, like a three-pronged plug. That prevents the electrical circuit from using your body as a conductor. To assure grounding and prevent electrical shock, don't use a cord if the grounding plug is bent or missing.
- **Check for cracks in equipment casing.** In healthcare, most electrical parts are sealed in plastic or nonconductive equipment casing. Before using the equipment, check to make sure that it isn't damaged.
- **Check for build-up of dust.** A heavy build-up of dust is combustible if exposed to a heat source like a spark. Keep equipment clean to prevent fires or other equipment malfunction.

### Know the Basics

- **Don't overload circuits.** Overloaded circuits cause fires or shocks. The electrical system is set up to warn you if you've

by user error.  
Reference HP 04-13,  
Safe Medical Device  
Act

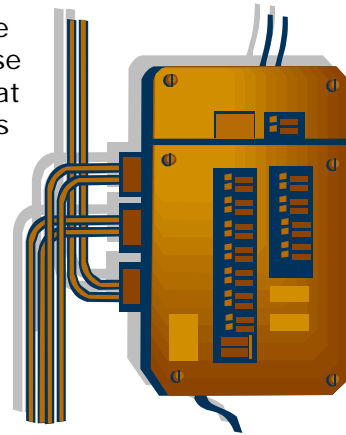
6. Equipment cannot be stored in hospital corridors while awaiting pick-up for surplus. Reference HP 04-21, Moving and Surplus of Hospital Equipment
7. If you're stuck in an elevator, use the intercom to call PPD. Reference HP 10-19, Alarms
8. Three chimes precede all emergency overhead pages. The chimes are your signal to stop and listen. Reference HP 10-23, Paging Codes
9. Call PPD for television repair. Reference HP 11-15, Television Service
10. A red outlet cover indicates an emergency power source.

Those are the basics from policies about building and equipment, but remember some employees need more information than others. If you're involved in patient care, check out these policies to make sure you've got the information you need.

- HP 04-12, Checking Emergency Equipment
- HP 04-13, Safe Medical Device Act
- HP04-27, Loaning Hospital Equipment
- HP08-19, Bedside Glucose Monitoring
- HP08-33, Point-of-Care Testing

overloaded a circuit by tripping the circuit breaker and shutting down the electricity. The problem comes when we ignore the warning and keep overloading the circuits using outlet extenders like extension cords or multi-outlet strips.

- **Don't mix water and electricity.** Water turns materials that normally resist electricity into conductors. GFCI are designed to prevent shocks in damp areas, but nothing takes the place of common sense. Don't touch electrical equipment if your hands are wet, you're standing on a wet floor or touching a wet surface.
- **Don't store items within 3 feet of an electrical box.** There are a couple of good reasons for this common sense rule. One is that most of the items that we store are combustible. The other is that PPD needs immediate access to these electrical boxes to respond to emergencies.
- **Report electrical problems as soon as you see them.** If it smokes, sparks, shocks, or smells, don't use it.
  - If it's a **utility** problem, call PPD at 3-6281.
  - If it's an **equipment** problem, call Clinical Engineering at 3-6383.



## Know What to Do in an Electrical Emergency

- **Use RACE to respond to an electrical fire.** If a piece of energized equipment catches on fire, use basic fire response procedures to guide you.
  - **Rescue** anyone in immediate danger.
  - **Alarm.** Call out *Green Grass* to alert others to the situation. Pull the fire alarm, and call 911.
  - **Contain** the fire.
  - **Extinguish** the fire, if possible. **Evacuate** the area, if necessary. To extinguish, turn off the power or pull the plug if either can be done safely. If it's a small fire, use the ABC fire extinguisher that is available in your work area. Never use water to try to extinguish an electrical fire.
- **Use caution when helping someone who has received an electrical shock.**
  - Don't touch the person while he's touching the electrical source; you'll become a conductor of the electricity too.
  - Turn off the power, if you can.
  - Move the person from the source of the electrical shock, using a non-conductive object. Have the person lie down, and cover him with a blanket.

