



AST Recommended Standards of Practice for Wearing the Lab Coat, Cover Gown, or Other Appropriate Cover Apparel

Introduction

The following Recommended Standards of Practice were researched and written by the AST Education and Professional Standards Committee and have been approved by the AST Board of Directors. They are effective April 13, 2008.

AST developed the following Recommended Standards of Practice to support health care facilities in the reinforcement of best practices related to wearing the lab coat, cover gown and other apparel in the perioperative setting. The purpose of the Recommended Standards is to provide an outline that health care workers (HCWs) in the perioperative setting can use to develop and implement policies and procedures for cover apparel. The Recommended Standards is presented with the understanding that it is the responsibility of the health care facility to develop, approve, and establish policies and procedures for the wearing of cover apparel according to established health care facility protocols.

Rationale

The following are Recommended Standards of Practice related to wearing cover apparel in the perioperative setting. It is recommended when leaving the surgical department, O.R. personnel should wear long-sleeved, full-length cover apparel, such as a lab coat, cover gown, or other appropriate cover apparel that can be fastened in the front to protect the integrity of the surgical scrub suit.⁵ It has not been substantiated or proven if wearing cover apparel aids in reducing contamination or preventing surgical site infection; however, covering scrub attire may eliminate the need for a fresh pair of scrubs when reentering the surgical department and consequently decrease costs.^{2,3,4,6} All members of the surgical team should be involved in developing and implementing health care facility policies and procedures related to wearing cover apparel.

Standard of Practice I

Cover apparel, such as a lab coat, cover gown, or other appropriate clothing should be worn when exiting the surgery department.

1. Cover apparel should be completely fastened when leaving the surgical department.
2. Cover apparel should be knee length.
3. The cover apparel must be removed prior to entering the semi-restricted or restricted areas.
4. Health care facility policies and procedures should be followed pertaining to the wearing of cover apparel.

Competency Statements

Competency Statements	Measurable Criteria
<p>1. Certified Surgical Technologists (CSTs) and Certified First Assistants (CFAs) have the knowledge and proper skills for correctly donning scrub attire and cover apparel.</p>	<p>1. Educational standards as established by the <i>Core Curriculum for Surgical Technology</i>.¹</p> <p>2. The subject area of correctly donning the scrub attire and following health care facility policy for the wearing of cover apparel is included in the didactic studies as a surgical technology student.</p> <p>3. Surgical technology students demonstrate knowledge of proper wear of the scrub attire and cover apparel in the lab/mock O.R. setting and during clinical rotation.</p> <p>4. As practitioners, CSTs and CFAs properly wear scrub attire and cover apparel according to health care facility policies on a daily basis.</p>

References

1. *Core Curriculum for Surgical Technology*. 5th ed. Littleton, CO: Association of Surgical Technologists; 2002.
2. Donaldson K, Frederick D, Hodge M. Cover gown policy and postoperative infection rate. *Infection Control Today*. 2000; 4(4): 64 -70.
3. Kenny H, Lawson E. The efficacy of cotton cover gowns in reducing infection in neutropenic patients: An evidence-based study. *International Journal of Nursing*. 2000; 6:135-139.
4. Loh W, Ng VV, Holton J. Bacterial flora on the white coats of medical students. *J Hosp Infect*. 2000; 45:65-68.
5. Rothrock JC. *Alexander's Care of the Patient in Surgery*. 13th ed. St Louis: MO: Mosby; 2007.
6. Thigpen JL. Responding to research: Realistic use of scrub clothes and cover gowns. *Neonatal Network*. 1991; 9: 41-44.