

UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

SUBJECT: WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICE RESTRICTIONS

Procedure No: ME-08-001

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

It is the procedure of the University of Toledo Medical Center to minimize the risk of using wireless communication devices within the hospital environment. Wireless communication devices consist of the following: cellular phones, two-way pagers, walkie-talkies, cordless phones, PDAs (that provide internet, e-mail and two-way messaging), one-way pagers and WLANS (wireless local area networks).

All in-house communication equipment shall be tested by Biomedical Engineering Services to be approved for use.

PURPOSE OF PROCEDURE

To restrict the use of wireless communication in the hospital environment and minimize risk.

PROCEDURE

The University of Toledo Medical Center will minimize the risk of using wireless communication devices in Patient Dependent Equipment (PDE) locations such as MICU, CVU, SICU, Emergency Department, Operating Room, monitoring locations in outpatient facilities, etc. A PDE location is defined as an area which has equipment attached to patients which, if the equipment malfunctions, could cause or contribute to the serious illness, injury, or death of a patient.

The use of some wireless communication devices has been known to cause interference with the performance of clinical devices. In view of this, the Safety and Health Committee has issued the following guidelines:

*All cellular phones/cordless phones, two-way pagers, PDA's, one way pagers WLANS should be used with caution in Patient Dependent Equipment locations

*The use of two-way radios/walkie-talkies are considered to be restricted for use in PDE locations and need to be approved for use by Biomedical Engineering Services.

Radios/walkie-talkies do not need to be turned off, only refrain from transmitting with them in these areas.

*Although these devices are not specifically prohibited in Patient Dependent Equipment (PDE) locations they should only be used when essential and preferably in areas away from life support medical equipment. Staff should ensure that these devices are not within (5) feet of critical medical devices.

If two-way radios/walkie-talkies need to be used in a PDE location every effort should be made to adhere to the following guidelines which are listed in order of preferred compliance:

- Immediately leave the PDE location to use the two-way radio.
- If circumstances dictate the emergent use of a two-way radio in a PDE location, transmitting near any energized medical device should be avoided at all times.
- If output levels are adjustable, use the lowest setting possible that will still facilitate acceptable communications.

In the event that there is a concern for safety, confidentiality, noise, and/or other issues relating to wireless communication devices, direct the individual(s) to the following areas:

- Nearest waiting area
- Lobby
- Cafeteria

In order to maintain these controls and reduce radio frequency interference the following measures are required before the equipment is put into use:

All purchases, loans or trials of clinical equipment must be coordinated by Biomedical Engineering Services at (419)-383-4899.

All purchases of two-way radios must be coordinated through Biomedical Engineering Services.

Staff members can contact Biomedical Engineering (x 4899) if they suspect that the function of a medical device has been affected by a wireless communication device. Biomedical Engineering will follow up on any incident and report to Risk Management.

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