



Practice Self-assessment Checklist

Identifying the Risks in Surgical Practice

The following checklist aims to assist you recognise areas of surgical practice that are known sources of adverse patient outcomes and medico-legal risk. By completing this checklist, you will be able to identify where you are managing risk well and whether there are areas for improvement in your own practice.

MDA National is available to provide individualised advice to assist you develop strategies to address identified areas for improvement and more information on known sources of medico-legal risk.

Practice Self-assessment Checklist

Identifying the Risks in Surgical Practice

Appointment Management

- My patients are provided with information regarding appointment availability, after-hours arrangements and emergency contacts
- My patients are notified and kept informed of any scheduling changes including delays, and are provided with alternatives when appropriate
- Patients who cancel or who 'did not attend' have a permanent record of this on their file or in the appointment system
- I review cancellations and 'did not attend' listings and initiate follow up as appropriate

Patient Consultation

- I discuss and correct any unrealistic expectations held by a patient regarding treatment/procedure options and outcomes
- I know whether a patient has understood the information I have provided them regarding their condition and treatment options
- My patients are informed of the fee structure
- My patients are informed of arrangements for contacting me in an emergency

Consent and Disclosure

- My patients' priorities and specific needs are established
- I find out which risks are important or 'material' to my patients
- I can produce written evidence of consent discussions with my patients
- My patients are informed of my billing practices and financial consent is obtained

Medical Records

- Medical records are kept in a manner that any member of the health care team can understand my patients' care
- I document consultations contemporaneously
- I document my reasoning for diagnoses and treatment plans
- The advice I provide regarding the need for follow up/further treatment is documented in my patients' files
- I note any specific advice or information given to recovery or ward staff
- I ensure that when I use abbreviations, they are unambiguous and universally accepted



Intraoperative Care

- I check the equipment before commencing a procedure
- I familiarise myself with the team and theatre before commencing a procedure
- I familiarise myself with facility procedures and protocols
- I have input into safe patient positioning
- I support my hospital/facility's protocol for 'time out'
- I am aware of my own and the team's level of fatigue, stress and inattentiveness

Postoperative Care

- Recovery and ward staff understand when they need to contact me
- I am confident that recovery and ward staff have appropriate experience to manage postoperative care
- My hospital/facility has adequately equipped and staffed facilities to ensure safe care of patients
- I am available to be contacted to review my patients when necessary
- My patients know how to contact me if they have a problem after discharge
- I arrange a formal handover of patients in the event of leave or absence from work

Telephones and Messaging

- Phone calls from patients are returned in a timely manner
- Messages from or about patients regarding clinical matters are documented in the patient record or other permanent means
- Any clinical advice given to patients via telephone is documented in the patient record at the time of the call or as soon as practicable

Test Result and Referral Tracking

- I discuss the responsibility for following up test results with the patient
- My practice reconciles requested tests or referrals with received test results/reports
- Incoming test results/reports are reviewed by me prior to filing or electronically storing
- My practice documents all efforts to contact the patient regarding test results
- My practice uses a system to confirm that patients attend referred appointments

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Patient information is collected, stored and transmitted in accordance with the National Privacy Principles
- I am aware of the precautions I need to take when using email to exchange patient information
- Patient information is kept out of view and earshot from other patients or members of the public

Complaints and Adverse Events Management

- I endeavour to minimise the likelihood of known treatment risks
- I take care of myself to minimise fatigue, stress and inattentiveness
- I understand and participate in my hospital/facility's open disclosure procedures and contact MDA National when I need advice
- I am notified of an adverse event or complaint about my care
- I offer patients the opportunity to discuss a complaint face-to-face
- I contact MDA National about complaints and adverse events and prior to responding to a complaint in writing



To find out more about our Support in Practice resources visit www.mdanational.com.au, contact 1800 011 255 or email peaceofmind@mdanational.com.au.

For specific advice in the case of an adverse event or complaint, call our Medico-legal Advisory Service any time, every day on 1800 011 255.