

Policy Number: S0031**Policy Title: S0031 Policy - Visitor Requirements in Surgical Services****Chapter Location: Patient Care & Clinical Guidelines**

Owner: Manager; Surgical Services	Date Created: 10/2025
Approver(s): Vice President of Operations & Chief Nursing Executive	Date Last Approved: 10/2025
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Printed copies are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy for the latest version.

Policy Statement: To ensure the safety of patients, staff, and visitors and to preserve the sterile environment and integrity of surgical procedures, this policy outlines the criteria and conditions under which visitors may be granted access to the Operating Room (OR).

Purpose: To establish a standardized process for prioritizing and managing visitors in the Operating Room (OR), with a focus on maintaining patient safety, confidentiality, infection prevention, and team efficiency, while supporting collaboration and education. This includes appropriate use of the designated observation deck to reduce unnecessary foot traffic in the surgical environment.

Scope: This policy applies to all visitors entering the OR, including but not limited to: students, observers, vendors, media, administrative personnel, and visiting healthcare professionals (including visiting clinicians).

Oversight: Perioperative Leadership Committee

Definitions:

- **Visitor:** Any non-credentialed or non-clinical staff member entering the OR who is not directly providing care to the patient.
- **Observer:** A student, resident, or guest shadowing for educational purposes. This could also include administrative personnel, OR Team Members who are learning, or those within the organization.
- **Observation Deck:** A designated, enclosed viewing area that allows observation of surgeries in OR 4 and OR 5 without entering the sterile field or OR environment.
- **Vendor:** Includes industry sales representatives, service technicians, clinical and or training personnel, third party distribution or manufacturer's representatives and consultants

Policy:

1. Sponsor Requirement for All Visitors in the OR
 - Sponsor requirements for Vendors can be found in [EOC-P6 Guideline - Visitor and Vendor Badging](#)
 - Any visitor who is not a Gillette Employed team member must complete the application to job shadow found on the Gillette [external website](#).

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- Any individual entering the Operating Room who does **not have a direct clinical role or immediate operational need** must be accompanied by a staff sponsor at all times.
- The sponsor must be an OR staff member familiar with sterile field protocols and authorized to manage the visitor's conduct and location within the room.
- This applies to students, administrative personnel, researchers, external observers, and other guests.
- The sponsor is responsible for ensuring that the visitor:
 - Maintains an appropriate position relative to the sterile field
 - Is supported should they need information or attention.
 - Does not disrupt workflow
 - Ensures the visitor exits the OR if their presence becomes a distraction or risk

2. Use of the Observation Deck

- The observation deck must be considered the first-line option for observers, students, or visitors not directly involved in patient care.
- The observation deck will be the only option provided for any visitors in the OR who do not have a staff appointed sponsor, or for any cases in which there is a patient safety consideration that requires limited room traffic, infection prevention considerations, or provider recommendations.
- The observation deck should be prioritized for:
 - External students shadowing surgeons, unless a Surgeon has agreed to provide mentorship and escort/sponsor to the student in the OR.
 - Donors or community partners touring the facility
 - Internal staff or leaders observing workflow or case types
- In-room access should only be granted if:
 - The observation deck does not provide adequate visibility of the intended case, in which case a sponsor will be required.
 - The case is occurring in a room not viewable from the deck, in which case any and all steps should be taken by OR Leadership to move cases requiring necessary viewing to ORs 4 or 5.
- In the event this cannot be accommodated, a staff sponsor for the visitor will be required.
- If this cannot be accommodated, the visitor will need to work with OR Leadership to determine an alternative date or case to observe.
- The visitor has an approved educational or operational need requiring presence in the OR

4. Prioritization of Visitors – In-Room OR Access

When OR entry is required, visitors will be prioritized as follows:

Tier 1: Direct Clinical Necessity

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- Industry representatives required for surgical support (e.g., implants, devices). Reference policy [EOC-P6 Guideline - Visitor and Vendor Badging](#) for additional information.
- Consulting or assisting physicians and interdisciplinary care team members

Tier 2: Clinical Education

- Medical, nursing, or allied health students on rotation who require in-room access for educational competencies (See Sponsor Requirement).
- Internal staff training for specific roles (e.g., PeriAnesthesia nurse learning OR flow or airway management). An in-room Sponsor would still be required.

Tier 3: Internal Observation

- Leadership or operational teams studying process or layout
- Staff from other departments gaining cross-functional exposure

Tier 4: External or Discretionary Guests

- Visiting students, donors, partners, or media must default to the observation deck unless a specific in-room need is approved and a Sponsor has been assigned.

5. Visitor Limits and Supervision

- A maximum of two non-essential visitors may be present in an OR at one time, unless approved by the OR Manager or Medical Director.
- Visitors in the OR must be accompanied or supervised by a staff member (see Sponsor Requirement).
- The circulating nurse retains full authority to manage visitor access and remove visitors at their discretion.

6. Attire and Infection Prevention

- Visitors must be appropriately dressed for the restricted zone.
- Bunny suits are acceptable for up to 1 hour. If observation in the operating room extends beyond that time, visitors must be dressed in Gillette issued surgical service scrubs.
- Observation deck viewers do not require full surgical attire but must remain within the enclosed space and should follow appropriate dress for the semi-restricted zone.

7. Escalation and Exceptions

- Any unusual visitor requests or concerns must be escalated to the OR Manager or Medical Director.
- Exceptions to prioritization rules must be documented and approved in advance by OR Leadership.

8. Enforcement

- Non-compliance may result in immediate removal from the OR or observation deck, and future access restrictions.

Related Documents:

[S0097 Policy - Dress Attire for PeriAnesthesia, Surgical Services, and Reprocessing](#)

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[S0033 Procedure - Traffic Control in Surgical Services](#)
[EOC-P6 Guideline - Visitor and Vendor Badging](#)

THIS POLICY SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUS GILLETTE POLICIES OR PRACTICES.