Performance of Correct Procedure at Correct Body Site
Standard Operating Protocol Fact Sheet

A Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) is a set of instructions for implementing a defined patient care process by multiple users in a consistent and measurable manner. In the High 5s initiative, each SOP targets a specific patient safety problem, defines a standardized care process for addressing the problem, and prescribes an implementation plan that includes relevant measures and analytic procedures. These High 5s SOPs are to be implemented in a group of selected hospitals within participating countries for the purpose of demonstrating the feasibility of implementation of standardized care process across multiple hospitals and countries, as well as determining the impact of this standardization effort on the targeted patient safety problem.

The Correct Site Surgery SOP addresses a specific type of surgical complication: Wrong site, wrong procedure, wrong person surgery, which is generally considered to be preventable and appears now to be far more common than previously recognized. Early studies of wrong site surgery cases identified a lack of critical preventive measures during the preoperative period to be the most common causes. More recent root cause analyses show these measures to be reflected in policy but performed inconsistently.

This SOP seeks to prevent incorrect surgery through consistent, effective implementation of three complementary steps in the preoperative preparation of each surgical patient, as follows:

- A comprehensive preoperative verification process
- Surgical site marking
- Final verification “Time Out” immediately before starting the procedure

Success of this effort depends upon active involvement and effective communication among all members of the perioperative team including, to the extent possible, involvement of the patient.
Evaluation of the SOP implementation and its impact on patient outcomes will include:

- Standardized process and outcome measures for each step of the preoperative process to evaluate hospitals’ performance over time and in comparison with other participating hospitals and countries
- Detailed event analyses of specified actual and “close call” incorrect surgery events if and when they occur
- Qualitative information obtained through direct observation at the participating hospitals and interviews of their leadership and staff members

The results of these evaluation strategies will be used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a standardized approach to preparing patients for surgery and to assess the feasibility and efficacy of standardization in this context.

For further information about the Correct Body Site SOP, please contact: WHO Collaborating Centre (LCaisley@jcrinc.com) or the World Health Organization (nakandic@who.int).