

OR nurses: Are all operating rooms the same?

As a traveling professional, you must learn yet another assessment skill. You not only have to assess your patients, you must also assess your environment in order to function in a new place effectively. Let me share with you some basic differences I look for when entering a new operating room.

Source of Power

One of the first items I look for in the operating room is their source of nitrogen power for the drills. Do they hang from the ceiling or are they located on the wall and if so...where on the wall? Do you need to bring in a nitrogen tank? Power is one of those things that you don't really think about until you need it.

Bovie Machine

After I know where my source of power is so to speak, I move onto looking at the bovies. Am I familiar with their machines? Do I know where to turn them on? Where do they tend to plug in? What kind of bovie pad do they require? Are the bovie pads easy to locate? Taking a few minutes to assess the machine in the beginning will save you from looking like an idiot when you are caught in the moment. You don't want them waiting to start the case while you try to figure out where the on switch is. It just doesn't look good. As you know, the Operating Room can be an unforgiving place. You have to be extremely efficient and quick.

Suction Devices

Next, I move onto the suction devices. Most suction devices, believe it or not, tend to be the same from place to place. However, every once in awhile, you will be surprised. For instance, right now, I am working at a place that has a suction device with a hose that plugs in directly from the ceiling to the suction container itself instead of plugging into the Y connection below the suction containers. The on off valve is located at the ceiling connection rather than at the container.

Electrical Outlets

Also, check out the electrical outlets. Are they three pronged or are they the one piece push and twist kind requiring an extension cord to convert the 3 prong plug to a male ended push and twist type?

Anesthesia Cart

Finally, glance around and look at the anesthesia cart. Does it look like a personal cart or a generic cart? Some places allow the anesthesiologist to have their own personalized cart. This way they know what and where all their supplies are. Often they will have pictures of their families hanging on the cart. If they have a personal cart, then you know

that the cart will need to be moved from room to room as the anesthesiologists move from room to room. Also, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the monitoring equipment.

Will all this assessment prevent you from any moments of embarrassment? No! But it will lessen occurrence of those dreaded moments. You will look smart from the start. You know what they say about first impressions. Well...it's true. If you are proficient at the basics, the staff will be a lot more patient with you when it comes to more specialized skill and knowledge.