

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Preparation and Transfer of Instruments to the Surgical Field

This SOP details the **preparation and transfer of instruments to the surgical field**, covering the sterilization process, assembly and inspection of surgical instruments, proper handling techniques to maintain sterility, and the systematic transfer of instruments to the sterile field during surgery. The objective is to ensure aseptic conditions, minimize infection risks, and support efficient surgical procedures by maintaining instrument integrity and readiness.

## 1. Purpose

To establish a standardized procedure for the preparation and transfer of surgical instruments to maintain sterility and optimize surgical efficiency.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all perioperative staff involved in surgical instrument handling, including sterile processing technicians and scrub personnel.

## 3. Responsibilities

- **Sterile Processing Personnel:** Ensure proper sterilization, assembly, and inspection of all instruments.
- **Scrub Staff:** Handle instruments aseptically and assist in their transfer to the sterile field.
- **Circulating Nurse:** Facilitate the flow of instruments while maintaining sterile technique.

## 4. Procedure

### 1. Instrument Sterilization

- Clean instruments thoroughly using approved detergents and methods.
- Inspect for debris or damage before packaging.
- Package instruments in sterilization wraps or containers as per protocol.
- Process instruments in autoclave or low temperature sterilizer using validated cycles.
- Document sterilization parameters and verify chemical/biological indicators.

### 2. Assembly and Inspection

- After sterilization, assemble instrument sets according to tray lists.
- Inspect each item for integrity, cleanliness, and function (e.g., joints, sharpness).
- Place instruments in order of intended use for efficient transfer.

### 3. Transfer to Sterile Field

- Verify integrity of sterilization before opening (check indicators, package condition).
- Open instrument trays/wraps aseptically onto the sterile field.
- Scrub person receives and arranges instruments; non-sterile staff must not touch sterile surfaces.

### 4. Handling During Surgery

- Use proper hand-off techniques: sterile-to-sterile, non-sterile-to-sterile without direct contact.
- Account for all instruments throughout the procedure and during counts.
- Remove and segregate contaminated or dropped instruments immediately.

## 5. Documentation

- Record sterilization cycles, biological/chemical indicator outcomes, instrument log, and any deviations or incidents.

## 6. References

- Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) Guidelines
- Facility Infection Control Policy
- Manufacturer Instructions for Use (IFU)

## 7. Revision History

Date	Version	Changes	Approved By
2024-06-01	1.0	Initial creation	Dr. J. Smith