

SOP Template: Patient Transfer and Handover Protocols

This SOP defines **patient transfer and handover protocols**, encompassing the standardized procedures for safely transferring patients between departments or facilities, effective communication methods, documentation requirements, roles and responsibilities of healthcare providers, ensuring continuity of care, minimizing risks during transfer, and verifying patient identity and condition. The aim is to enhance patient safety, reduce errors, and promote seamless coordination among healthcare teams during handover processes.

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized process for transferring and handing over patients between departments or facilities ensuring patient safety, continuity of care, and reduction of errors during the transfer process.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all healthcare staff involved in the transfer and handover of patients within and between healthcare departments or facilities.

3. Definitions

- **Patient Transfer:** Movement of a patient from one department or facility to another.
- **Handover:** The process of passing essential information and responsibility for care from one healthcare provider/team to another.

4. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Attending Physician	Assess appropriateness for transfer; communicate clinical condition; approve and facilitate the transfer process.
Nursing Staff	Prepare patient, ensure proper documentation, verify patient identity, and accompany patient during transfer if required.
Receiving Team	Review handover information, confirm patient details, and assume care responsibility upon arrival.
Transport Personnel	Safely transport the patient and ensure transfer documents accompany the patient.

5. Procedure

1. **Assessment for Transfer:**
 - Attending physician evaluates patient stability and suitability for transfer.
2. **Preparation:**
 - Nursing staff verifies patient identification (using at least two identifiers).
 - Collect and prepare patient records, medications, and relevant equipment.
3. **Communication & Handover:**
 - Use a standardized handover tool (e.g., SBAR: Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation).
 - Communicate essential patient details including current condition, ongoing treatments, allergies, and special precautions.
4. **Documentation:**
 - Complete transfer forms including patient details, reason for transfer, current treatment, and contact information of both sending and receiving clinicians.
 - Ensure all legal and consent requirements are fulfilled and documented.
5. **Physical Transfer:**
 - Follow safe transfer practices (use of appropriate transport equipment, monitoring during transfer, etc.).
 - Transfer documents must accompany the patient.
6. **Receipt & Acceptance:**

- Receiving team confirms patient identity and condition upon arrival.
- Complete and sign acceptance documentation.

6. Documentation

- Transfer and handover forms
- Patient medical records
- Consent forms
- Communication logs

7. Quality Assurance

- Regular audits of transfer documentation and handover quality.
- Incident reporting and review of adverse transfer events.
- Ongoing training for all staff involved in patient handover and transfer.

8. References

- National and Institutional Patient Safety Guidelines
- Relevant Clinical Practice Standards

9. Review & Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
2024-06-01	1.0	Initial SOP draft	Healthcare Quality Team