

Keeping Up with ANSI Standards Surgery

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Summary

There's been an injury caused by a laser. Could this have been prevented? The lawyers want to know. Now OSHA is involved. Have you followed the standards required to prevent this injury? The ANSI is the regulatory standard that is used for lasers in healthcare. How is it used and how can you keep up?

The Clinical or Operational Challenge

- **The Problem:** The acronym agencies are talking about laser safety standards; AORN, ANSI, TJC, ASLMS, and more. But how would you know where to start and what to use?

- **The Impact:** If the standards aren't followed to develop and implement an effective laser safety program, people get hurt. Lasers have a high risk for litigation from injuries to patients and staff alike.

ForTec Solution

Facility Requirements

Any facility that uses lasers—even if it does not own them—should designate a Laser Safety Officer to oversee the laser safety program and help ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulatory standards, and best practices.

The Laser Safety Officer role should not be outsourced. Policies and procedures for laser safety and operation need to reflect local laws, facility culture, and staff needs. For example, some facilities use broad safety policies that work well with frequent staff turnover or traveling personnel, while others rely on more detailed policies supported by additional clinical education. An outsourced Laser Safety Officer also would not have the administrative authority needed to enforce policies and procedures with staff.

Once policies and procedures are in place, they typically need to be reviewed only at the facility's standard policy review interval, after an incident, or when new ANSI standards are issued. Most ANSI standards are updated every three years.

ForTec employs two Certified Medical Laser Safety Officers through the Board of Laser Safety. Contracted facilities can schedule consultative review meetings with ForTec's CMSLOs.

ForTec also has a team of Clinical Education Specialists and Certified Clinical Technology Specialist Trainers who regularly provide on-site training for nursing staff and physicians on laser safety and equipment platforms. These in-services meet ANSI requirements for basic laser safety training.

In-Service Options

- **Basic Laser Safety.** Usually this is by PowerPoint and lasts from 20 minutes to an hour. Basic Laser Safety can be presented by sales, trainers, or clinical specialists.
- **Resident Trainings.** Resident Trainings are usually a 1 hour of laser physics and safety presented by clinical educator or Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer, followed by 2 hours of hands-on station time for surgeon practice. This is commonly done for urology and ENT resident surgeons. Most facility administrators will recognize this training as part of the laser credentialing process for physicians.
- **Technology Demonstrations.** Individual surgeons or groups of surgeons may need hands on time with new technology. ForTec has a team of highly trained Clinical Education Specialists that can spend time with the surgeons covering the basic safety, operation, and manufacturer recommendations on core product offerings at ForTec.

Operational Benefits

ANSI compliant Laser Safety Programs require work. While keeping policies and procedures are a requirement for facility administrators, there is help available from ForTec. Outsourcing some laser education can be a significant relief for nursing administration or nursing education.

Data & Comparison

- **Financial Advantage:** ForTec's laser safety education helps reduce the training burden on nurse administrators and educators, allowing them to focus on broader education, safety, and compliance priorities.
- **Technical Advantage:** ForTec Medical's Clinical Education team draws on 35 years of experience and support for more than 200,000 patients each year to help facilities improve laser safety and compliance across care settings.



Clinical Outcomes & Safety

Well established and compliant laser safety programs promote safety for everyone in the operating room, patients and staff.

Conclusion

ForTec can help your team better understand laser safety and compliance and support a laser safety program that includes the elements needed to promote safe laser use in the operating room.

Call-to-Action (CTA)

Call your local ForTec Territory Manager and ask how ForTec can help with laser safety and education at your facility.