

Medical-Surgical Unit Checklist

- Securely and permanently affix walls, ceilings, moldings and floors of patient rooms in order to prevent the surreptitious concealment of potentially harmful items, such as razor blades, matches and drugs.
- Routinely inspect fixed and moveable items in patient rooms and replace/repair when indicated to prevent dismantling and subsequent use as a weapon.
- Eliminate electric and manually adjustable beds unless indicated by clinical needs. Remedy or replace beds that have anchor points for hanging.
- Lock closet doors and drawers in patient rooms to prevent removal and use as a weapon. Require staff control the keys.
- Lock closets and drawers in patient rooms that contain clothing to prevent the use of clothing to commit suicide.
- Recess sprinklers, smoke detectors, and light fixtures or build them into the walls or ceilings in patient rooms. This will lessen the risk that these items will be used as anchor points for attempted hanging.
- Equip doors in patient rooms with lever handle locksets that provide minimal attachment opportunities for ligature.
- Install windows in patient rooms that are constructed from unbreakable safety glass or acrylic. This is to prevent the window from being broken and the sharp pieces being used as a weapon or a device for self-harm.
- Use insulated tempered glass panels at least 1-inch thick for exterior windows. Use sash control devices that limit opening windows to no more than 6 inches to reduce the risk of patients jumping out. Reinforce older windows with heavy-gauge stainless steel frame and screen fabric. If window treatments are used, use flame-retardant material with no cords.
- If table lamps are used in patient rooms, firmly attach them to the surface to help prevent patients from using the lamp as a weapon. Additionally, shatter-resistant light bulbs.
- Install heating and cooling vents with a protective, fine mesh covering. This will prevent them from being used as an attachment point for hanging devices.
- Secure vents in patient care areas with security screws. Security screws cannot be removed with conventional screwdrivers. Vents are metal and have the potential to be used as a weapon or as a device for self-harm.

- Use only paper trash can liners in trash receptacles. Plastic trash can liners can be used as a ligature device or for suffocation.
- No Needle boxes in secure room.
- Secure electrical outlet covers in patient care areas with security screws. Security screws cannot be removed with conventional screwdrivers. Electrical outlet covers have the potential to be used as a weapon or as a device for self-harm. Electrical outlets should be ground-fault interrupted or otherwise designed to prevent injury by inserting objects into them.