

POST-ANESTHESIA EVALUATION

A postanesthesia evaluation completed and documented by an individual qualified to administer anesthesia* no later than 48 hours after surgery or a procedure requiring anesthesia services.

The postanesthesia evaluation for anesthesia recovery must be completed in accordance with State law and with hospital policies and procedures that have been approved by the medical staff and that reflect current standards of anesthesia care.

The postanesthesia evaluation must be completed and documented by any practitioner who is qualified to administer anesthesia; this need not be the same practitioner who administered the anesthesia* to the patient.

The calculation of the 48-hour timeframe begins at the point the patient is moved into the designated recovery area. The evaluation generally should not be performed immediately at the point of movement from the operative area to the designated recovery area. Rather, accepted standards of anesthesia care indicate that the evaluation should not begin until the patient is sufficiently recovered from the acute administration of the anesthesia so as to participate in the evaluation, e.g., answer questions appropriately, perform simple tasks, etc. While the evaluation should begin in the PACU/ICU or other designated recovery location, it may be completed after the patient is moved to another inpatient location or, for same day surgeries, if State law and hospital policy permits, after the patient is discharged, so long as it is completed within 48 hours. The 48 hour timeframe for completion and documentation of the postanesthesia evaluation is an outside parameter. Individual patient risk factors may dictate that the evaluation be completed and documented sooner than 48 hours. This should be addressed by hospital policies and procedures (71 FR 68690).

The elements of an adequate post-anesthesia evaluation should be clearly documented and conform to current standards of anesthesia care, including (§482.52(b)(3)):

- Respiratory function including respiratory rate, airway patency, and oxygen saturation;
- Cardiovascular function including pulse rate and blood pressure;
- Mental status;
- Temperature;
- Pain;
- Nausea and vomiting; and
- Postoperative hydration.

Depending on the specific surgery or procedure performed, additional types of monitoring and assessment may be necessary.

For those patients who are unable to participate in the postanesthesia evaluation (e.g., post-operative sedation, mechanical ventilation, etc.), a postanesthesia evaluation

should be completed and documented within 48 hours with notation that the patient was unable to participate.

For those patients who require long-acting regional anesthesia to ensure optimum medical care of the patient, whose acute effects will last beyond the 48-hour timeframe, a postanesthesia evaluation must still be completed and documented within 48 hours. However, there should be a notation that the patient is otherwise able to participate in the evaluation, but full recovery from regional anesthesia has not occurred and is not expected within the stipulated timeframe for the completion of the evaluation.

This CMS requirement for a post-anesthesia evaluation within 48 hours after anesthesia services is separate from the Joint Commission Element of Performance 4 of PC.03.01.07 that all patients need to be discharged from the recovery area or from the hospital, and in the absence of a qualified practitioner, patients may be discharged according to approved criteria.

*Qualified Anesthesia Professional (§482.52(a)):

- A qualified anesthesiologist;
- A doctor of medicine or osteopathy (other than an anesthesiologist);
- A dentist, oral surgeon, or podiatrist who is qualified to administer anesthesia under State law;
- A certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA), who, unless exempted in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section, is under the supervision of the operating practitioner or of an anesthesiologist who is immediately available if needed; or
- An anesthesiologist's assistant (AA) who is under the supervision of an anesthesiologist who is immediately available if needed

Survey Procedures §482.52(b)(3):

Review a sample of medical records for patients who had surgery or a procedure requiring general, regional or monitored anesthesia to determine whether a post anesthesia evaluation was written for each patient.

- Determine whether the evaluation was conducted by a practitioner who is qualified to administer anesthesia.
- Determine whether the evaluation was completed and documented within 48 hours after the surgery or procedure.
- Determine whether the appropriate elements of a postanesthesia evaluation are documented in the medical record.