

JCAHO Fluoro Sentinel Event

There has been a great deal of discussion and a good bit of concern about what this all means and how to meet this standard.

What it all means is: each facility needs to continue to log fluoroscopy time for all patients just like they have always been required to do

How to meet this new standard: Implement a Policy containing the following information:

For all fluoroscopy in the State of California, the maximum allowable fluoroscopy exposure output rate is 5 R/min for the “standard” patient. This means that it would take 300 minutes of fluoroscopy time to reach the 1500 rad Sentinel Event Level for most of your fluoroscopy machines – and this is for a single view. The conclusion here is that none of your normal fluoroscopy rooms and none of your routine procedures will ever result in reaching the Sentinel Event level. Where you need to be careful is in the Specials / Interventional / Cath rooms where you might be running in the cine mode. In the cine mode you might reach exposure output rates on the order of 100 - 200 R/min. Fortunately, most cine runs are only for a few seconds. However, if there are procedures with cine runs on the order of 7 or more minutes of cine time, then you might reach the 1500 rad level. But again, remember this is for a single view.

Where we must be careful is in those rare events where a procedure has, for example, 150 minutes of fluoroscopy time – which does not reach the Sentinel Event level – but then a follow-on procedure the next day for example with another 150 minutes of fluoroscopy time, could cumulatively start to approach the Sentinel Event level.

The bottom line is, draft a policy indicating that for all fluoroscopy not in Specials / Interventional / Cath rooms the attainment of the Sentinel Event threshold will be watched for procedures with more than (pick a number with a large margin of error) 150 minutes of fluoroscopy time will be reviewed. And in the Specials / Interventional / Cath rooms (pick a number with a large margin of error) procedures with more than 150 minutes of fluoroscopy time or more than 3 minutes of cine run time will be reviewed.

Anyone with questions please call anytime to chat about this.