

 <p>Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Office régional de la santé de Winnipeg Caring for Health À l'écoute de notre santé</p> <p style="text-align: center;">POLICY</p>	<p>Level:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">REGIONAL</p> <p>Applicable to all WRHA governed sites and facilities (including hospitals and personal care homes), and all funded hospitals and personal care homes. All other funded entities are excluded unless set out within a particular Service Purchase Agreement.</p>	1	
	<p>Policy Name:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator Handling after Death</p>	<p>Policy Number:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">110.025.040</p>	<p>Page:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 of 6</p>
	<p>Approval Signature:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Original signed by A. Wilgosh</i></p>	<p>Section:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLINICAL SERVICES</p>	
	<p>Date:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">April 2014 (Re-numbered from 110.000.230 Oct 2016)</p>	<p>Supercedes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">December 2008</p>	

1.0 **PURPOSE:**

To provide direction and a process to promote the safe care and handling of an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) following a patient's death.

2.0 **DEFINITIONS:**

- 2.1 **Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD):** a device which detects and treats heart rhythm disorders by delivering a high voltage electrical current to the heart. The system is comprised of two parts, the generator and the lead(s).
- 2.2 **Deactivation:** Deactivation of an ICD refers to turning off the shock therapy.
- 2.3 **Interrogation:** Interrogation of an ICD refers to obtaining data from the ICD regarding any arrhythmias.

Note: An ICD is a different device from a pacemaker. This policy only applies to an ICD.

3.0 **POLICY:**

- 3.1 The presence of an ICD shall be noted and recorded upon the patient's presentation to an Acute Care, Home Care or Palliative Care Community Program's health record and upon the death of the patient. Each facility shall:
- Develop a process to ensure that the presence of an ICD is documented on the patient's admission.
 - Ensure the presence of an ICD is documented on the Provincial Interfacility Transport Checklist.
 - Ensure the presence of an ICD is documented on the notification of death record.
 - Develop a process to ensure that the body is clearly identified as having an ICD and if the ICD has been deactivated and
 - Develop a process to ensure a sticker is placed on the patient's chart indicating the patient has an ICD.

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- 3.2 **All staff should assume that the ICD is active (shock therapies turned on) unless a sticker, located on the body or shroud, is dated and signed that the ICD has been deactivated.**
- 3.3 It is preferable that an ICD be deactivated prior to being removed from a body. The handling of an ICD in its' activated state either in performing an autopsy or in preparation for cremation may result in serious injury to the pathologist physician, tissue bank coordinator or mortician. **Note: An ICD does not have to be deactivated or removed from the body if burial is planned.**
- 3.4 An ICD shall not be incinerated i.e. the ICD must be removed from the body prior to cremation. The ICD contains a lithium battery and must be removed prior to incineration to prevent explosion. The sealing technique of the pulse generator is such that considerable pressure will build up within the metal housing of the unit causing the power cell and capacitors to explode during incineration.
- 3.5 On admission and death of a patient, a sticker is used to document the presence of an ICD as outlined in the procedure.
- 3.6 WRHA policy 90.00.090 Sterile Storage: Transportation and Distribution of Contaminated, Clean and Sterile Medical Devices shall be followed when returning removed ICDs to the SBH Pacemaker/Defibrillator Clinic.
- 3.7 The Pacemaker/Defibrillator Clinic staff shall follow WRHA policy 110.220.060 Management of Medical Devices (Implanted and Explanted), where applicable.

4.0 **PROCEDURE:**

- 4.1 On admission the presence of an ICD is noted:
- 4.1.1 Acute Care
- On the emergency record.
 - On the admission assessment form and patient care plan (kardex).
 - On the initial assessment and/or flow sheets (EPR SBH).
 - On the Provincial Interfacility Transport Checklist.
- 4.1.2 WRHA Home Care/Palliative Care Program
- The presence of an ICD is noted on the Home Care or Palliative Care Community program's health record.
 - Information on the presence of an ICD will be included on the letter of anticipated death

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4.1.3 Personal Care Home

- The presence of an ICD is noted and recorded on the front of the chart and on the care plan.
- On the Provincial Interfacility Transport Checklist

4.2 Call the SBH Pacemaker/Defibrillator Clinic during regular business hours if unsure of the type of device the patient has. Note Patients receive specific information related to the type and function of the ICD.

4.3 Place a sticker on the front of the patient's chart (or note on the electronic record) following an ICD implant. Sites may order the sticker from SBH Print Shop.

4.4 Upon the death of a patient at a health care facility:

***Review algorithm in the appendix

4.4.1 During Regular Business Hours

The Charge Nurse or designate/Personal Care Home staff will notify the SBH Pacemaker/Defibrillator Clinic for specific instructions. If required, the Pacemaker/Defibrillator Clinic will arrange to have the ICD interrogated and/or deactivated.

4.4.2 Outside of regular business hours

If interrogation and/or deactivation of the ICD are required, the requesting physician must contact the on-call arrhythmia physician via SBH paging.

The charge nurse or designate will call Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service at 204-986-8410 to arrange for the body to be transported by a non-urgent Stretcher Car to SBH morgue where the body will remain.

The individual responsible for notifying the family of the death will also explain to the family if the body is to be transported to SBH morgue.

Note: Prior to transport to SBH morgue, the body is to be transported to the local facility's morgue and should not remain on the nursing unit.

4.4.3 The Charge Nurse or designate/ Personal Care Home staff shall complete the appropriate section of the notification of death record indicating the patient has an ICD and if the ICD has been deactivated.

The Charge Nurse or designate/Personal Care Home Staff will notify the funeral home indicated by the family of the presence of an ICD and this will be documented on the patient's medical record/progress note.

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- 4.4.4 The Charge Nurse or designate/Personal Care Home Staff shall ensure that the body is clearly identified with a sticker as having an ICD (note: only the person who has deactivated the ICD signs the sticker). The stickers will be placed:
- On the outside of the shroud, and/or
 - On the back of the toe tag.

- 4.4.5 For patients who die in the community with a letter of anticipated death
- Normal procedures for picking up the body will be followed.
 - Efforts made to contact the Funeral Home to communicate that the patient has died with an ICD and if the ICD has been deactivated or not.

<i>STICKER EXAMPLE</i>	
THIS PATIENT HAS AN IMPLANTABLE DEFIBRILLATOR	
Date Deactivated:	_____
Deactivated by:	_____
Notify Pacemaker Clinic upon admission or death at 204-xxx-xxxx	

- 4.5 Handling the body with an ICD still activated will NOT cause harm to staff. However, if there is a delay (i.e. remote location) in having the ICD deactivated and the ICD needs to be removed from the patient the following precautions shall be taken:
- The pathologist, tissue bank coordinator or mortician shall wear rubber boots and gloves when handling the body.
 - The leads shall be cut one at a time as close to the body of the ICD as possible. The cut leads must not be in contact with each other to prevent arcing.
 - If the ICD is not being removed from the body and is not deactivated, during the embalming process a magnet should be taped over the ICD site to disable.
 - Return the ICD as per WRHA policy 90.00.090 Sterile Storage: Transportation and Distribution of Contaminated, Clean and Sterile Medical Devices to:

St. Boniface Hospital Pacemaker/Defibrillator Clinic:
Y2045-409 Tache Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2H 2A6.

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5.0 **REFERENCES:**

- 5.1 Cardiac Arrhythmia Clinic Staff - Foot Hills Hospital. (1999). *Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator Handling After Death*. Calgary, Alberta: Author.
- 5.2 Technical Services Department Staff - Medtronic Canada. (2002). *ICD Handling Postmortem*. Technical services communication: Author.

Policy Contact: Lorraine J. Avery, RN, Regional Clinical Nurse Specialist,
WRHA Cardiac Sciences Program

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Appendix: Algorithm

