



Team Name: Wound Care Team Lead: Regional Director – Acute Care Approved by: Executive Director - Mid	Reference Number: CLI.4110.SG.005 Program Area: Across Care Areas Policy Section: General
Issue Date: January 20, 2017 Review Date: Revision Date: May 15, 2017	Subject: Wound Photography

STANDARD GUIDELINE SUBJECT:

Wound Photography

PURPOSE:

To ensure best practice and standardization of digital wound photography across Southern Health-Santé Sud.

DEFINITIONS:

Wound: a wound is a breakdown in the protective function of the skin; the loss of continuity of epithelium, with or without loss of underlying connective tissue (i.e. muscle, bone, nerves) following injury to the skin or underlying tissues/organs caused by surgery, a blow, a cut, chemicals, heat/cold, friction/shear force, pressure or as a result of disease, such as leg ulcers or carcinomas.

Digital Device: a digital camera will record and store photographic images in a digital format. These stored images can be uploaded to a computer, printed or shared electronically across a secure Southern Health-Santé Sud network.

Client: refers to patient, resident or participant.

Secure Environment: refers to reasonable administrative, technical and physical safeguards that ensure confidentiality, security, accuracy, and integrity of the recordings, including controls that limit the use and access to recordings, verification of a persons' authorization to use or access recordings, and procedures to prevent the interception of recordings by unauthorized persons.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Wound assessment is an important process that allows clinicians, clients and caregivers to monitor the stages of healing, to detect the presence of complications and assess the effectiveness of treatment. These observations can form the basis for clinical decisions including the selection of a suitable wound care regime.
- Wound assessment is documented in the client chart using the Integrated Progress Notes (IPN), the Wound Assessment and Treatment Form (WATF) and other relevant documents.
- Digital recording of the clients' wounds is useful in providing an objective assessment of wound healing.
- Photographs still remain the principal and favored assessment tool of those specializing in wound care. They are part of a comprehensive wound assessment.

- Appropriate choice of digital equipment and recording techniques will aid standardization, which is the key to successful wound documentation.

PROCEDURE:

Assessment :

- Clients with wounds will have initial and on-going assessments of their wound using an appropriate wound assessment tool.
- Wound assessments may be supported by photography.
 - Minor wounds do not necessarily need photography unless there are complications.
 - It is recommended that all suspected pressure injuries be photographed.
 - The wound should be re-photographed:
 - If there are any significant changes or concerns regarding the wound
 - To show the client their wound in order to promote adherence with treatment
 - At regular, scheduled intervals as part of the treatment plan

Risk Management:

- Only approved photographic equipment will be used for taking digital recordings. Clinical staff will not use their own digital devices.
- All photographic equipment will be stored securely at all times when not in use or transit.
- Appropriate precautions are required to reduce cross contamination caused by digital devices in multiple care settings.
- Consent, written or verbal as appropriate, will be obtained from the client or designate before wound photography is performed.
- There may be situations when the client would like to have a digital record of the wound or would like to share the image digitally. In these situations, the client's own camera, or other digital device may be used. The client can store or share the image as they see fit.

Consent:

- The health care provider is responsible for ensuring the client has given informed consent before any photography takes place. This consent will be documented in the client's clinical record.
- Photographs will only be used for purposes as authorized under the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA).
- For purposes of wound documentation, express verbal consent from the client or designate is required.
- In the event that a photograph is required for education, orientation of Southern Health-Santé Sud staff, research or publication, a written consent is required. In this case the Photo-Video-Audio Release Form ORG.1110.PL.004.FORM.01 will be used.
- The healthcare provider must ensure that the identity of the client cannot be ascertained by taking reasonable steps to avoid the inclusion of identifying features or information.
- In the event that photographs are to be taken over the course of more than one treatment, consent from the client is required only once prior to the first treatment if the client is made aware of the intent to take photos over the course of future treatments. The consent shall be considered as authorization for a period of up to one year following the date the consent was obtained. Any significant change to the course of treatment, or purpose or intended use of the photographs requires a new consent.
- Consent may be withdrawn by a client at any time and this shall be documented.
- The photograph shall be filed in the client's health record either in paper copy or electronically.
- When indicated, the organization is obliged to ensure that alternative and appropriate means of gaining consent are established, for example with the use of an interpreter or written evidence where a service user or client has an additional need based on their protected characteristics.

Equipment:

- Only approved Southern Health-Santé Sud photographic equipment will be used for taking photographs.
 - A digital device with a resolution of 3.0 megapixels or higher is recommended.
 - The device should be pre-set to record the date and time picture is taken (if possible).

Taking Photographs:

- Care will be taken to protect client identity by ensuring that faces or any other defining features are obscured.
- Client dignity and modesty will be protected by ensuring minimum client skin exposure.
 - Genitalia will be covered to preserve dignity. If damaged tissue is around or on genitalia and safeguarding is a concern, clinical judgment will be used.
 - The wound and surrounding skin (in particular the perineum) will be cleansed if indicated, prior to the photograph being taken.
- Follow up photographs will be taken:
 - In a similar position to previous photographs.
 - From a similar angle and distance so that photos can be compared objectively.
- Visual measuring tool will be used in each photograph.
 - A disposable paper ruler may be used for this purpose.
 - This measuring tool will be placed next to the wound.
 - The client's initials, wound location and date (if not recorded by camera) are recorded on the measuring tool.
- The preferred background for photography is white. Blue and green backgrounds should be avoided.
- Multiple images may be necessary to document detail, wound positioning and involved body part.
- Images should be previewed to ensure they are clear and visible. Retake as necessary.
- Recordings/photographs will be taken at a consistent angle (90°) perpendicular to the wound to avoid perspective distortion. Any subsequent photographs should be taken with the client and equipment in the same position.
- Position the camera at a minimum of 0.6 meters (2 feet) from the area and zoom in to capture the entire wound, including measuring tool. Zooming highlights tissue, texture and drainage. The image should display the wound, measuring tool and periwound skin with minimal background.
- The use of natural light is preferred. If evenly distributed lighting exists in the room, turn the flash off. The use of flash may cast shadows and obscure essential detail in the glare of moist surfaces.
- Clinicians taking photographs will ensure personal protective equipment is donned (as appropriate) and that hand hygiene is undertaken as appropriate.
- If the digital device is contaminated, it must be cleansed with an appropriate and an approved antiseptic.

Storage of Photographs:

- A recording/photograph shall be retained pursuant to the Southern Health-Santé Sud Retention and Destruction of Personal Health Information policy and/or any other applicable policy of Southern Health-Santé Sud regarding the retention or destruction of records.
- Where a photograph is to be destroyed, it shall be destroyed in a manner that ensures the recording is permanently destroyed or erased and cannot be reconstructed or recovered in any way.
- Photographs will be stored in the clients' clinical record.
 - They will be uploaded/added at the earliest opportunity.
 - They will be deleted from the camera as soon as possible after the picture has been added to the clinical record.
 - They must not be stored on laptops or computers.
- No other record of the recording/photograph will be retained unless there is a specific intention to use it for educational purposes (client written consent for such purpose is required).
- Photographs will be printed in colour.
 - The client's name, PHIN and date must be recorded on or near the photograph.
 - The photograph will be deleted from the device immediately after printing.

EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES:

Digital camera - 3 megapixels or greater

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:[CLI.4110.SG.013.FORM.01](#)[ORG.1110.PL.004.FORM.01](#)

Wound Assessment and Treatment Form

Photo-Video-Audio Release Form

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