Guidelines for Performing Electrocardiograms

**Purpose**
To standardize the role and training of Respiratory Care Services staff performing EKG's.

**Scope**
Respiratory Care Services will assist the Heart Station department by performing EKG's. (This will reduce response time and improve the timelines of patient care.)

**Accountability/Training**
- Licensed Respiratory Care Practitioners
- Trained by Heart Station Personnel and completed check-offs with EKG technician.

**Equipment and Supplies**
- EKG machine
- Adhesive electrodes
- Epic order/printed request for EKG

**Procedure**

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| 1    | Prepare the patient (see Section II of Operator's Guide). **Remember:**  
  - Verify patient using two identifiers.  
  - Explain procedure.  
  - Ask patient to relax, be still and quiet.  
  - Female patients appreciate privacy. |
|      | Note: Unlike limb electrodes, which can be placed anywhere on the arms or legs, the chest electrodes should be placed no more than a quarter of an inch (6mm) away from the designated location. |
| 2    | Position electrodes:  
  V1 - Fourth intercostal space at right Border of Sternum.  
  V2 - Fourth intercostal space at left Border of Sternum.  
  V3 - Midway between positions 2 and 4.  
  V4 - At the mid-clavicular line and the inter-space in which the apex is located (the 5th intercostal space is used if the apex is not palpable).  
  V5 - At the anterior axillary line on the same horizontal level as V4.  
  V6 - At the mid-axillary line on the same horizontal level as V4 and V5. |
**Guidelines for Performing Electrocardiograms**

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**Effective:** 10/19/94  
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**Procedure Continued**

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| 3    | Type information:  
- Patient information per prompts.  
- Unit history number  
- Tech ID |
| 4    | Initiate EKG (see Section III of Operator's Guide).  
Note:  
- When an EKG is performed, the time printed on the EKG should be transposed onto the request.  
- One copy should be made of all EKG's and kept with the request.  
- Respiratory Care Services staff will perform STAT EKG’s from 1700 – 0500 and on weekends for UTMB and the Shriners Hospital.  
- The Heart Station will pick up the EKG's and requests for the previous 24-hour period daily. |

**Infection Control**

Follow procedures outlined in Healthcare Epidemiology Policies and Procedures #2.24; Respiratory Care Services.  

**References**


