STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Veterinary Surgical Preparation SOP

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Revision	1.0
Owner	Practice Manager
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Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To prepare surgical patients consistently and safely, confirming consent and bloodwork, monitoring anesthesia induction, and completing a final time-out before the procedure begins.

2. Scope

Applies to patients undergoing scheduled or emergency surgery under general anesthesia. Post-surgical recovery and discharge are covered by a separate procedure.

Definitions

Pre-anesthetic bloodwork	Blood tests performed before anesthesia to screen for conditions that could affect anesthetic safety.
Surgical time-out	A final pause before the first incision to confirm the correct patient, procedure and surgical site.
Induction	The process of administering anesthesia to bring the patient from consciousness to a surgical plane of anesthesia.

3. Responsibilities

Veterinary Technician	Places the IV catheter, monitors anesthesia and prepares the surgical site.
Veterinarian	Reviews bloodwork, performs the physical exam and leads the surgical time-out.
Surgical Assistant	Sets up the surgical suite, sterilizes instruments and assists with positioning and draping.

RACI matrix

Activity	Veterinary Technician	Veterinarian	Surgical Assistant
Verify consent and pre-anesthetic bloodwork	C	R/A	-
Place IV catheter and induce anesthesia	R	A	C
Prepare surgical suite and instruments	C	I	R/A
Clip and scrub the surgical site	R/A	I	C
Lead the surgical time-out	C	R/A	C

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Pre-anesthetic bloodwork analyzer
- IV catheters, fluids and administration sets
- Anesthesia machine and monitoring equipment
- Surgical instrument packs and sterilization indicators
- Clippers and surgical scrub solution
- Sterile drapes, gowns and gloves

Personal protective equipment

- Surgical gown and sterile gloves
- Surgical mask and cap
- Eye protection for prep tasks

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Verify consent and estimate** Confirm the signed surgical consent form and estimate are on file and match the procedure scheduled before any preparation begins.	Veterinarian	☐
5.2	**Review pre-anesthetic bloodwork** Review the pre-anesthetic bloodwork results and confirm they support proceeding with anesthesia, flagging any abnormal value for further discussion. **Checkpoint:** Pre-anesthetic bloodwork is reviewed and documented as acceptable before induction.	Veterinarian	☐
5.3	**Confirm fasting status** Confirm with the owner or the patient's chart that the fasting instructions were followed, and note any deviation before proceeding.	Veterinary Technician	☐
5.4	**Perform the pre-anesthetic physical exam** Perform a physical exam and record temperature, heart rate, respiratory rate and body condition immediately before anesthesia.	Veterinarian	☐
5.5	**Place the IV catheter and start fluids** Place an IV catheter in an appropriate vein, secure it, and start intravenous fluids at the rate ordered for the procedure.	Veterinary Technician	☐
5.6	**Prepare the surgical suite** Set up the surgical suite with sterilized instrument packs, drapes and supplies needed for the specific procedure before the patient enters the room. **Checkpoint:** Sterilization indicators on instrument packs confirm a passed cycle before the pack is opened.	Surgical Assistant	☐
5.7	**Induce anesthesia** Administer the induction agent per the anesthesia protocol and monitor the patient closely as it transitions to a surgical plane of anesthesia. **Warning:** Do not leave an anesthetized patient unattended at any point from induction through recovery.	Veterinarian	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.8	**Intubate and connect monitoring** Intubate the patient, confirm correct tube placement, and connect monitoring equipment for heart rate, oxygen saturation, blood pressure and temperature.	Veterinary Technician	☐
5.9	**Position and secure the patient** Position the patient for the specific procedure and secure it with ties or positioning aids, protecting pressure points and the airway.	Veterinary Technician	☐
5.10	**Clip and scrub the surgical site** Clip fur beyond the planned incision margins and perform a surgical scrub of the site working from the incision line outward in concentric circles.	Veterinary Technician	☐
5.11	**Perform the surgeon's hand scrub and gown** Perform a surgical hand scrub, then don a sterile gown and gloves using aseptic technique before touching any sterile field.	Surgical Assistant	☐
5.12	**Perform the surgical time-out** Before the first incision, pause as a team to confirm the correct patient, correct procedure and correct surgical site against the consent form. **Checkpoint:** The surgical time-out confirms patient identity, procedure and site match the consent form before incision.	Veterinarian	☐

6. Quality checks

- Pre-anesthetic bloodwork is reviewed and documented before induction.
- Sterilization indicators are checked before instrument packs are opened.
- Vital signs are monitored continuously from induction through the procedure.
- A documented surgical time-out occurs before every incision.

7. Records

- Signed surgical consent form
- Pre-anesthetic bloodwork results
- Anesthesia monitoring log
- Surgical time-out checklist

8. KPIs

- Percentage of surgeries with a documented time-out
- Anesthesia-related complication rate
- Average time from admission to induction
- Percentage of bloodwork abnormalities flagged before induction

9. Common mistakes

- Skipping the surgical time-out when the team is rushed.
- Not reviewing bloodwork results before starting induction.
- Leaving an anesthetized patient unmonitored during a handoff.
- Clipping fur without extending far enough beyond the incision margin.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Ilia Pirozhenko

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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