

OASIS Alert

Follow This Wound Photo Guidance

The Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society has published a position paper that includes helpful strategies for using photodocumentation of wounds.

The paper suggests that agencies create a policy for wound documentation photography that describes how your agency will:

- Comply with privacy rules and obtain an informed consent form prior to photographing your patient's wounds.
- Set a policy that determines when or under what circumstances you will take photographs and when to take follow-up pictures.
- Establish requirements as to who is qualified and what standards they must meet in order to take wound photographs. And how often you will revalidate their competence.
- Select and describe the type of camera being used and control any techniques used to ensure consistency in photographing. Photographic technique standards should include distance from the wound, a measuring guide of some sort in the frame, image size, and photographic integrity.
- Create effective patient identification and what type of information you will include -- such as initials, medical record numbers, and date and time markings.
- Maintain photographs effectively including storage location and who will have access.
- Provide copies to patients upon request.

The paper, which also addresses HIPAA and consent issues in detail, is at www.wocn.org/pdfs/WOCN_Library/Position_Statements/photoposition.pdf.