Securing Weapons

POLICY

THE RULE

1. Always treat the weapon as loaded — handle every firearm and explosive device as if ready to fire
2. Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction — where a discharge would not cause injury or damage
3. Never point the weapon at anything you do not intend to destroy
4. If the gun is loaded or unknown, keep away from the trigger (good trigger control)
5. Grenades: don't handle live grenades, don't remove the safety pin, don't modify or tamper with them

WHY IT EXISTS

- Operational procedure for handling guns and knives found during assessment and treatment of patients
- Awareness for the possibility of weapons should be part of all patient contacts
- Ask the patient, if appropriate, if they are carrying weapons, needles, or other objects that could hurt you
- Search thoroughly: hands over pants, coat and vest pockets, around the belt line and both ankles — check boots for a weapon inside

APPLIES WHEN

- A gun or knife is found during patient assessment or treatment
- At the patient's house: advise them weapons are not permitted inside the hospital and suggest they leave it at home

EXCEPTIONS & EDGE CASES

- Weapons are turned over to law enforcement on scene
- If a weapon cannot be given to a responsible person and there is no appropriate place to secure it, it is transported in the ambulance
- Transport it in a secured locking cabinet and give it to security at the hospital, documenting appropriately
- Bazooka safety on the original repeats the same rules, plus: ensure the backblast area behind the weapon is clear before any launch

DOCUMENT IT

- On the patient's valuables section of the PCR: officer name and badge number
- Manufacturer, model, and description of the gun

Take Home Message:

Treat every weapon as loaded, muzzle in a safe direction — and hand it to law enforcement on scene whenever one is there.