Purchasing Surgical Supply Carts

What to consider before buying surgical supply carts for your surgical suite.

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1. Involve the end-user in the purchasing decision – An obvious consideration that is often overlooked.

When looking for surgical supply carts, consider the end-users, give them an opportunity to voice their needs, and act on their requests. This will allow the department to appropriately match need with functionality. For instance, a mobile wire rack with bins won't fit the bill if the end-user is looking for a cart to store smaller, general nursing supplies. Ergonomics, work space, and the ability to maintain eye contact with the patient are characteristics of a point of care cart. Every surgical supply and procedure cart is designed for a specific application and should be treated as such.

2. Standardization. Look to standardize mobile supply carts to improve staff efficiencies. If a patient bedside cart is selected, work to make every cart in every room identical. Each drawer, each tray, and each divider should be identical and labeled for quick supply retrieval. Standardization reduces confusion, error, and inventory waste. Standardization also reduces amount of time it takes for a new staff member to become acclimated to a new environment.

3. Security. The ability to apply the correct level of mobile cart security is of growing importance. Understand your department's goals and risk level depending on how and where the cart is used throughout the day. Do you have meds that

need to be on a double locking system? Do you want a manual lock or do you prefer keyless entry? Do you want staff members to use their existing proximity cards/badges to unlock a cart? How do you plan to administer cart security and enroll new users? Consider vendors that have a range of possibilities that can be tailored to meet your supply cart needs.

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