# Equivalency for 20% Relative Humidity in an Anesthetizing Location

for ambulatory surgery centers

Enter Date

Enter Facility Administrator Name

Enter Facility Name

Enter Facility Address

Enter City, State, Zip

**HFID #**Enter HFID Number

This document is an equivalency for MN Rule 4675.1600, subp. 1, regarding the requirement that operating rooms and recovery rooms maintain 50 to 60 percent relative humidity. This waiver permits the facility to maintain a minimum 20 percent relative humidity (RH) in anesthetizing locations.

Survey & Certification (S&C) Letter: 13-25-LSC & ASC was issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in response to concerns expressed by health care institutions relating to infrastructure maintenance associated with maintaining the higher level of relative humidity. This S&C letter set the minimum humidity standard at 20%. Review by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), based upon input from health care institutions, indicates that maintaining a relative humidity level over 20 percent is unduly burdensome. Maintaining relative humidity at 35 percent or more may result in:

1. Degradation of HVAC systems due to high relative humidity in supply, return, and exhaust air,
2. Degradation of exterior wall and roof assemblies due to higher levels of relative humidity present within the building envelope, and
3. Degradation of building fenestration due to condensation.

In 2009, ASHRAE incorporated the new 20 percent minimum humidity standard in Addendum “d” to ANSI/ASHRAE/ASHE Standard 170-2008.

On February 20, 2015, CMS published a subsequent memorandum (“S&C: 15-27-Hospital, CAH & ASC”) advising that some supplies and equipment used in operating rooms may require minimum relative humidity of 30 percent. CMS notes that manufacturers are working to provide such supplies and equipment that can function at lower humidity levels, though this change will take time. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the ambulatory surgical center to understand and certify that the relative humidity levels maintained in its operating rooms is compliant with the instructions for use (IFUs) for all supplies and equipment located therein. In submitting this request for equivalency determination, this ambulatory surgical center facility certifies that all equipment and supplies used and stored in the operating rooms are compatible with a minimum relative humidity of 20 percent.

This ambulatory surgical center facility must keep this signed equivalency on record and available to provide to surveyors. This ambulatory surgical center facility also will monitor relative humidity in anesthetizing locations to ensure that it remains at or above 20 percent.

The signature of the facility’s administrator on this document constitutes acceptance of all conditions and limitations associated with this equivalency. This waiver will remain in effect indefinitely; however, all equivalencies are subject to review as deemed necessary by the Department. Please remember that all alternative measures or conditions attached to a variance or waiver shall have the force and provisions of Minnesota Statute. The period of time for correction and the amount of fines specified for the particular rule for which the equivalency was requested, shall apply.

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Signature of Facility Administrator

Enter Facility Administrator Name

Enter Facility Name

**For MDH Use Only:**

This waiver is approved, approved with conditions or denied as indicated below:

Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ □ Approval □ Approval w/conditions □ Denial

Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ □Approved □ Approved w/conditions □ Denied  
 Manager, Engineering Services

Reasons for denial or conditions of approval: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
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Note: Please be aware that this waiver is subject to review as deemed necessary by MDH to prevent adverse effects on the health and safety of residents and personnel in the facility.