



Clinical Practice Frequently Asked Question

Q: Can we put preop patients in the same area that we have patients recovering from anesthesia?

A: The American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses' *2025-2026 Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practices Recommendations and Interpretive Statements* has practice recommendations and position statements for maintaining a safe, comfortable, and therapeutic environment for patients, families, visitors, and healthcare personnel.

ASPAN recommended criteria related to your question include:

- preanesthesia patients may be in the same physical space as patients recovering from anesthesia or sedation as staffing and room design permit; however, they should be cohorted and separated as far away as physically possible from phase I patients
- an appropriate number of perianesthesia registered nursing staff with demonstrated competence must be available to care for both preanesthesia and postanesthesia patients safely
- it is desirable to have a separate healthcare team for preanesthesia patients; that is, a preoperative nurse is also not caring for a postanesthesia patient
- safeguards are in place to protect patient privacy and personal health information

ASPAN encourages organizations to set policies and define practices which identify quality environments for the care of surgical patients. Patient safety, and nurse personnel safety, are priority for PACU nurses in caring for perianesthesia patients.¹

Reference

1. American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses. Standard III: environment of care. In: *2025-2026 Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements*. ASPAN; 2024:28-29.