



**Soffzone™ Neutral Zone Tray  
Trial Implementation**

# Available Soffzone™ Neutral Zones



FNZ609RED  
6" x 9"



FNZ309RED  
3" x 9"



FSY309RED  
Syringe Tray

# Experts agrees you should be using a neutral zone

## **AST (Association of Surgical Technologists)**

A neutral zone should be utilized during all surgical procedures to prevent two individuals from simultaneously handling a ... sharp, including but not limited to scalpel blades, suture needles, hypodermic needles, and sharp surgical instruments.

## **AORN (Association of periOperative Registered Nurses)**

OR Sharps Safety Checklist: Work Practice Controls - Neutral zone selected and deployed

## **OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration – Government)**

[When] feasible, hospitals must implement the use of proper work practices, **such as designated neutral or safe zones, which allow hands-free passing of sharps, to prevent sharps injuries in operating rooms.**

## **CDC (Center for Disease Control – Government)**

During a procedure that involves the use of needles or other sharp devices: Do not hand-pass exposed sharps from one person to another; **use a predetermined neutral zone or tray for placing and retrieving used sharps.**

## **ACS(American College of Surgeons)**

The hands-free technique (HFT) requires the surgical team to **designate a sharps neutral zone** ... for the pickup and release of surgical sharps such as needle-holders, scalpels, and syringes with needles.

# The proof is in the numbers

**CDC : Surgeon Mark Davis** [notes] hand-to-hand passing causes the most sharps-related injuries. 25% of suture needles and more than 50% of scalpel blade injuries occur during the passing of these devices.

**AST (over the course of a year):** Cuts or needle sticks occur in up to as many as 15% of surgical operations.

Surgeons are at the highest risk for injury suffering up to 59% of injuries in the OR.

The first scrub sustains the second highest number of injuries, up to 19% in the OR.

**ASPS Member Surgeon Dr. Kevin C. Chung and colleagues at The University of Michigan Health System, Ann Arbor:** Nearly 400,000 sharps injuries occur each year in the U.S. About 25% of injured workers are surgeons. *Average costs for testing, follow-up and preventive treatment range from \$375 for needle stick exposure from a patient with no known blood-borne illness, up to nearly \$2,500 for injuries from a patient with known HIV.*

**April 2014 Surgical Products:** Sharps injury rate in surgical settings has increased ... by about 6.5%.

The highest proportion (33%) of hospital-based sharps injuries takes place in the O.R. (25%).

Top 3 sharps injuries caused by suture needles (43.4%), scalpel blades (17%) and syringes with needles (12%).

Costs of related to sharps injuries run from \$71 to \$5,000 per injury. Yearly impact is estimated to be between \$100.7 million to \$405.9 million.

**NCBI - U.S. National Center for Biotechnology Information, part of the National Institutes of Health** – Evaluation of Sharps Safety techniques including “hands free passing” with the use of a neutral zone. 2 studies by Stringer and colleagues evaluated **Hands Free Technique (HFT)** and how it affected sharp injury rates among OR staff. HFT was used 75% of the time on 10,000 procedures - it lowered the sharps incident rates by close to 40%. HFT on 3,700 procedures over a 6 month period - reduced injury rates by nearly 60%.

# Soffzone™ Neutral Zone Tray Demo

[Click here to  
watch demo](#)

## Soffzone™ Syringe Tray Demo

[Click here to  
watch demo](#)

# Sample Evaluation and Trial Forms

## Soffzone Neutral Zone Product Evaluation Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Facility: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_ Product Being Evaluated (check product used):

(CST, RN Scrub, RNFA, RN Circulator)

Red Soffzone Tray Large (6X9)	
Red Soffzone Tray Small (3X9)	
Red Soffzone Syringe Tray Small (3X9)	

Number of times used (please circle):    1-10    11-20    21-30    31-40    41-50    50+

Please rate the product according to the following criteria:

1 = Strongly Disagree    2 = Disagree    3 = Agree    4 = Strongly Agree

If you answer "1" or "2" on any question, please explain reason why. (Additional comments below)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Check if not applicable
Does the Soffzone neutral zone product increased patient safety precautions.	1	2	3	4	
Does the Soffzone neutral zone product increased staff safety measures.	1	2	3	4	
Does the Soffzone™ Neutral Zone eliminate/reduce the need to reach in blindly for the sharps instruments?	1	2	3	4	
Was the Soffzone neutral zone is easily identifiable while using this product.	1	2	3	4	
The neutral zone product is an appropriate size.	1	2	3	4	
Overall, the product performed satisfactorily.	1	2	3	4	

Was there a particular procedure where this product did not work well?                      Yes                      No

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments (use back of form if necessary):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your feedback. Please return completed form to the area provided

## Neutral Zone Device Trial Use of Neutral Zone Devices Guidelines

- ❖ The Neutral Zone is used for the protection of all surgical team members at the sterile field. If the use and location of a Neutral Zone are not established by the surgical team members prior to surgery, all members are at risk for sharps injury.
- ❖ **Circulating or Scrub Person:** Introduce use and location of the Neutral Zone Device at the time of the Briefing or Time Out. Establish agreement from Surgeon, RNFA, SA and Scrub Person on how the device will be used for this particular procedure/group of procedures.
- ❖ Only one sharp in the neutral zone at a time.
- ❖ ONLY Puncture Resistant Devices may be placed on the patient. Kidney basins are not used as Neutral Zone Devices.
- ❖ Sharp objects include but are not limited to knife blades, suture needles, hypodermic needles, saw blades, and any other items that pose a high risk of injuring a team member during instrument passing.
- ❖ All sterile surgical team member discuss how they will be safe in passing sharps at the time of briefing and/or Time Out

## Examples of Neutral Zone Agreements

### Strict Use

NO sharp item will be hand passed from Scrub Person to Surgeon/RNFA/SA. The item will be placed in the Neutral Zone by each party.

- ❖ **Scrub Person** announces "sharp" and places sharp item in the Neutral Zone
- ❖ **Surgeon/RNFA/SA** picks up the instrument from the Neutral Zone, uses it and announces "sharp" prior to returning it to the Neutral Zone
- ❖ **Scrub person** takes the item from the Neutral Zone and returns it to a safe place on the field

### Modified Use

Sharp items will pass from Scrub Person to Surgeon/RNFA/SA by hand.

- ❖ **Scrub Person** announces "sharp" and places sharp in Surgeon/RNFA/SA hand
- ❖ **Surgeon/RNFA/SA** uses the instrument and announces "sharp" prior to returning it to the Neutral Zone
- ❖ **Scrub Person** takes the item from the Neutral Zone and returns it to a safe place on the field

### Exceptions to Neutral Zone Device Use

- ❖ Situations in which the Surgeon/RNFA/SA cannot safely divert attention from the surgical field
- ❖ Surgeon/RNFA/SA cannot reach the neutral zone due to patient positioning
- ❖ Microscope or loops are being used by the surgeon/assistant
- ❖ To assure safe sharp passing, all parties (Scrub/Surgeon/RNFA/SA) announce "sharp" when passing/returning sharp instruments

# How to use a Neutral Zone


Video provided by AORN

[Click here to  
watch demo](#)





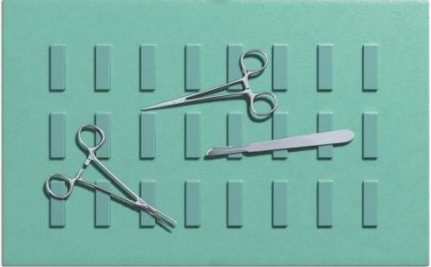

# Economic Advantage

## Soffzone™ vs. Disposable Neutral Zones



Product	50 uses	100 uses	150 uses	200 uses
Soffzone™ Neutral Zone FNZ609RED <b>Unit Price: \$32.50</b>	\$0.65	\$0.33	\$0.22	\$0.16
Kidney Basin* <b>Unit Price: \$0.37</b>	\$18.30	\$36.60	\$54.90	\$73.20
10"x16" Magnetic Drape** <b>Unit Price: \$10.50</b>	\$525.00	\$1,050.00	\$1,575.00	\$2,100.00
SANDEL® Z-Friction Drape™ Neutral Zone <b>Unit Price: \$2.89</b>	\$144.38	\$288.75	\$433.13	\$577.50

# Pros & Cons of each Options

Product	Pros	Cons
<p>Soffzone™ Neutral Zone FNZ609RED</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autoclavable: can be re-used hundreds of times</li> <li>• Bright red: easy to see</li> <li>• Flat surface makes sharps highly visible</li> <li>• Designed to fit on the MAYO stand</li> <li>• Thick silicone: hard to puncture, won't move from the MAYO</li> </ul>	
<p>Kidney Basin</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readily available in most kits</li> <li>• Cheap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly mentioned by the AORN as what <b>not</b> to use</li> <li>• Sharp is not highly visible – encourages blind reaching</li> <li>• Disposable</li> <li>• Typically in cool colors – not highly visible</li> </ul>
<p>Magnetic Drape</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autoclavable in some cases</li> <li>• Magnets insure sharps will stay put</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot be autoclaved with instruments</li> <li>• The IAHCMM (International Association of Healthcare Central Services Material Management) warns against magnetized trays as they can cause the instruments to become magnetized</li> <li>• Over sized – does not fit on MAYO stand</li> </ul>
<p>SANDEL® Z-Friction Drape™ &amp; Transfer Trays</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disposable</li> <li>• With transfer trays sharp is not highly visible – encourages blind reaching</li> </ul>

Best Practice – use the:  
**P.A.S.S.<sup>tm</sup> Technique**

As seen in General Surgery News

- **Place** the sharp instrument to be passed on the field and remove hands from the safe/neutral zone
- **Announce** verbally the name of the sharp instrument to be passed in the safe/neutral zone
- **Surgeon/surgical personnel** picks up the instrument and returns it to the safe/neutral zone after use
- **Surgeon/surgical personnel** states “sharps down”

# Neutral Zone Tips and Techniques

- Establish the Neutral Zone location and device prior to incision (preferably during “Final Time Out” by the scrub person)
- Determine what method will be used with the location and product (strict, modified, or exceptions)
- Only one sharp at a time should be in the neutral zone
- Encourage location of Neutral Zone on the Mayo stand (avoid placing on the patient)
- Non-sharp instruments may still be passed hand-to-hand

# Enforcing compliance

**AORN provided F.A.Q provided by Ramon Berguer, MD:**

- **How can we get our surgeons to use the neutral or hands-free zone when passing sharps?**
  - An OR sharps safety policy and procedure should be developed, implemented, and enforced to protect the safety of OR staff members and surgeons. ... The neutral or hands-free zone is an integral part of sharps safety. Including surgeons in the education about and implementation of its use is important.
- **How can we convince our scrub persons to use the neutral or hands-free zone when passing sharps?**
  - Education is the key to success for compliance with the use of a neutral zone. ... Encouraging them to use basins, mats, or an identified place on the mayo may help ease their anxiety about using a neutral zone.
- **How do you create a neutral zone on ophthalmology and microsurgery procedures?**
  - Ophthalmology and microsurgery procedures present unique challenges to creating a neutral zone because the surgeon must view the surgical site through a microscope. A partial technique (e.g., direct handoff to surgeon, instrument returns to neutral zone) can be used on microsurgery procedures. ... A neutral zone can be established on the surgical field or Mayo stand for the surgeon to deposit the used sharp.

**For additional information contact:**

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**Ask to speak to your sales representative.**