

## Protections for Safer Hospitals

New protections in hospitals require that doctors take specific precautions to guard against surgical mistakes, according to an article in *The Washington Post*. Beginning July 1, rules from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) require that just before surgery, doctors write “yes” or their initials on the operation site to avoid surgery on the wrong body part. JCAHO is the organization that accredits most hospitals in the United States.

Similar to the airline industry’s standard checklist before takeoff, the rules also require that the entire team involved in the surgery take a “time-out” in the operating room to verify the identity of the patient, confirm the procedure, and make sure all equipment needed for the surgery is available. JCAHO will monitor hospitals on the new rules. Hospitals that do not comply could lose their accreditation.