

Saskatchewan Surgical Registry – Frequently Asked Questions

Changes to the Surgical Booking Form

Saskatchewan's provincial OR booking form was revised in 2024 to support the collection of diagnosis codes for surgical prioritization. At that time, some other changes were made to support collection of prescribed information as per the Saskatchewan Surgical Registry regulations.

This FAQ document relates to new changes to the Surgical Booking Form effective April 1 2025.

Are Mandatory Fields Really Mandatory?

As of April 1 2025 all fields in capital letters are mandatory in the surgical booking system province-wide, and facility staff are unable to enter surgical bookings unless these fields are complete. These fields represent elements that have been identified as critical by surgical booking offices, as well as items prescribed under Surgical Registry Regulations since 2004. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Why do I have to enter “Date Referral Received” and “Date of First Consult”?

These elements allow the Surgical Registry to collect information about “Wait 1” – the wait from referral to specialist consult. (“Wait 2” is the wait from booking to surgery.) Wait 1 provides a more complete picture of the patient experience. GPs and patients are not satisfied with surgical wait time data that excludes the wait time to see a specialist. Also, Wait 1 is becoming part of provincial and federal measures of health system performance.

How do I find Date of Referral/First Consult?

You or your medical office staff must review the patient's file to find the date the referral was received and the date of your first consultation with the patient. SMA Practice Advisors can provide advice on how to highlight these pieces of information in your EMR for easier retrieval.

What if I have been seeing a patient for years, and there was no specific referral related to surgery?

If you have consulted with the patient repeatedly for medical advice and treatment, then for the purpose of surgical booking you may use the date when surgery was first discussed as a proxy for both referring date and first consult date.

Where do I enter clinical priority?

On the 2025-26 booking form, there is no separate field for clinical priority. When you enter a diagnosis code and description, the surgical booking system will assign the standard, consensus-based clinical priority that corresponds to this diagnosis (based on Saskatchewan's Surgical Diagnosis Codes List). If you wish to assign a different priority, you can select from the “other” codes for your specialty.

What if I can't find a code that corresponds to the patient's diagnosis?

The Dx Code List is broken down by specialty, and similar diagnoses are grouped together to help surgeons/staff to find a specific code. The List is also provided in several different searchable formats. If you still can't find the diagnosis you are looking for, you can select an “other” code and write a description of the diagnosis. You can also notify the Surgical Registry that a new code is required.

What is the description for “other” codes?

With “other” codes you must provide your own description and explain the rationale for not using a standard code. For example, “revision of previous bariatric surgery.” If the description field is left blank, repeats the code, or contains no description, the booking form may be returned to you.

Why are there separate pediatric Dx codes?

As of April 1 2025, a list of pediatric Dx codes are available for surgery on patients under 18 years old. This code set has clinical priorities that are more appropriate to care of children, based on Pediatric Canadian Access Targets for Surgery.

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Can I program diagnosis codes into my EMR?

Yes, surgeons are encouraged to add frequently-used diagnosis code tables to the booking form once they have downloaded it from the repository into their EMR.

Is there support from the Ministry for me to make changes to my EMR?

Most changes to EMRs must be made by surgeons and staff in individual offices. Inquiries about how to do this can be addressed to SMA practice advisors or EMR vendors. The Ministry is developing system-wide supports for digital OR booking that will streamline this process in the longer term.

Why is “proven or suspected cancer” mandatory?

Although cancer may be part of the diagnosis description, this box enables the Surgical Registry to track cancer surgery separately when required. Only check this box if the cancer diagnosis is related to the surgical visit.

Is “Alternate Contact” Mandatory?

The 2025-26 Surgical Booking form makes the “Alternate Contact” field optional. However, including this information is highly encouraged. It may prevent a cancellation, if it helps the scheduling office to locate your patient. Patients can be assured that the details of their care will not be shared with their alternate contact.

Why is it up to me to discuss the dates when the patient is unavailable for surgery?

If you can record unavailable dates on the booking form, it communicates to schedulers that they cannot offer surgery at those times. A patient who refuses (for personal reasons) surgical dates that are offered to them may have their surgery cancelled, and the booking will be returned to you. So it is important to tell schedulers what dates to avoid. Your patient can also call the surgical booking office to update their unavailable times.

Similarly, if you can identify patients who are **Available on Short Notice**, it can speed up booking and improve OR efficiency. If you have not discussed short notice or unavailable dates, just check “no” on the booking form.

New surgical booking forms were made available in most EMRs on February 27, 2025, under these names:

NEW Surgical Booking Form – Provincial
NEW Surgical Booking Form – Regina
NEW Surgical Booking Form – Saskatoon

The booking form (page 1) is standardized province-wide, but physician orders (page 2) have been customized in Regina and Saskatoon.

As surgical booking and scheduling processes are modernized and move into digital platforms, some of the limitations associated with paper forms will be avoided.

Also, new digital applications are expected to make better use of the functionality of physician EMRs.

Until then, thanks very much for your cooperation in completing the provincial surgical booking form.

For more information, contact surgicalregistry@health.gov.sk.ca