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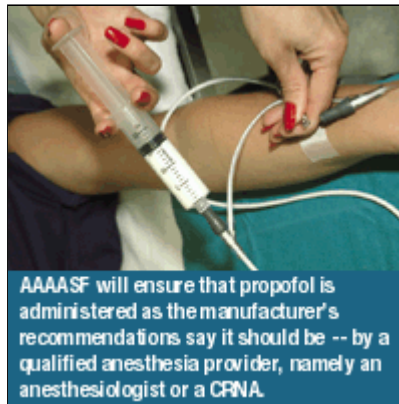
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► **AAAASF: Only Qualified Anesthesia Providers May Administer Propofol**

Saying that it has received several reports of adverse events, including the death of a cosmetic surgery patient, after RNs improperly administered propofol, the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities ([AAAASF](#)) is rushing to ensure that only those trained to give general anesthesia or rescue from general anesthesia [administer propofol](#) in its 1,100 or so accredited facilities. The AAAASF announced last week that facilities that want to continue to use propofol -- even if only for "conscious sedation" -- must either upgrade to a Class C facility (where all anesthesia must be administered by an anesthesiologist or CRNA) or promise to always use an anesthesia professional to administer the drug. Facilities must comply by May 1.



"We decided that we need to get our standards in line with the manufacturer's recommendations," says Jeff Percy, executive director of the AAAASF. "The easiest way to do that was to require those facilities that want to continue to use propofol to become Class C facilities."

For Class B facilities that would like to continue to use propofol but won't use other types of general anesthesia, complying with the new standard is simple. These facilities must fill out a form certifying that they have a dedicated anesthesiologist or CRNA administering the sedative-hypnotic. They also must have neuromuscular blocking agents available in the facility. No on-site inspection is necessary. There will be no additional charge, says AAAASF.



Those facilities that are upgrading to a C and plan to use general anesthesia (inhalational) in addition to using propofol must comply with all Class C criteria, says AAAASF.

AAAASF President Michael F. McGuire, MD, a board-certified plastic surgeon, says the major motivation for making the change was that "administration of propofol by a non-anesthesia provider is really not appropriate."

Dr. McGuire adds that the new standard has caused quite a bit of confusion and concern, mostly among Class B facilities that don't give inhalational anesthesia and misread the standard to mean they couldn't

administer propofol unless they bought an anesthesia machine and CO₂ monitor. Part of the confusion, he says, lies in the nature of the propofol.

"Is propofol a general anesthetic or a sedation agent? It's both. Really, truly, it is both," says Dr. McGuire. "At a certain level and in a certain individual, it is a sedation agent. In other individuals or at higher doses, it becomes a general anesthetic agent. It's so unpredictable, which is not a problem if you're an anesthesiologist but can be if you're a surgeon trying to do surgery and supervise a nurse giving the medication."

-- [Bill Meltzer](#) and [Dan O'Connor](#)

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