

**Polk State College**  
**Physical Therapist Assistant Program**  
**CRITICAL SAFETY INDICATORS**

Demonstrating mastery of specific critical safety indicators (CSI) during clinical rotations is necessary in order to pass each clinical affiliation. Competency with critical safety indicators indicate that a student carries out intervention, per the plan of care, in a manner that minimizes risks to the patient, self, and others.

To assist in the mastery of these skills, CSIs are carefully monitored by program faculty during specific lab exams, prior to clinical rotations. The CSIs also serve as the core elements of safety criterion marked with (\*) in the rubrics used to assess student performance in these lab exams. Instructors provide any additional specific CSIs that may apply to a particular skill being covered in a course/unit. Examples of essential program CSIs, include, but are not limited to:

1. Ability to follow and appropriately carry out the POC established by the PT.
2. Safe implementation of the POC based upon patient diagnosis, status and response to intervention without placing the patient in jeopardy of harm or injury.
3. Demonstration of knowledge regarding contraindications and precautions for specific patient diagnosis relative to the physical therapy interventions within the POC (i.e., following hip precautions when transferring a patient after total hip replacement; choosing an appropriate assistive device for the weight bearing status and abilities of the patient for gait).
4. Ability to correctly identify physiological measures (BP, HR, blood glucose levels, etc.) outside of parameters that allow for safe therapeutic exercise/intervention and provide proper response and notification of the PT/MD/Nurse.
5. Ensures safety of self and others by washing hands correctly, following universal precautions, able to competently set up a sterile field, and don/doff PPE without contaminating materials, patient or self to prevent spread of infection.
6. Uses acceptable techniques for safe handling of patients with proper body mechanics, guarding, and level of assistance; and employs standard safety precautions such as: always locking a wheelchair prior to transferring a patient, appropriate use of gait belt with transfers and gait training, washing hands prior to and after each patient contact, recognizing environmental hazards to safe ambulation, transfers, or other therapeutic intervention.
7. Establishes and maintains safe working environment (i.e., monitoring of lines and tubes and other medical equipment, checks physical therapy equipment and assistive devices for maintenance and/or disrepair, eliminates work place hazards).

8. Requests assistance when necessary (i.e., from clinical instructor, utilizes and monitors support personnel).

9. Ability to recognize patient responses during therapeutic intervention that may indicate a life threatening condition (shortness of breath, chest pain, sudden dizziness, sudden dysarthria, etc.) and provide proper response and notification of the PT/MD/Nurse.

10. Correct interpretation of weight bearing status and ability to choose appropriate assistive device for weight bearing status and individual patient's abilities.

11. Utilizes appropriate gait pattern and assistive device relative to patients weight bearing status and assistive device.

12. Demonstrates knowledge of facility safety policies and procedures.