The appearance and dress of operating room (theatre) staff must adhere to the principles of safety, infection control, and professional standards. Adherence to these standards will lessen the opportunity for workers to serve as potential sources of infection.

The human body is a major source of microbial contamination within the operating room (OR) environment. Because it is not possible to sterilize skin, hair, and mucous membranes, other measures must be taken to reduce this source of potential pathogens.

### Scrubs and Gowns

All personnel entering restricted areas of the surgical suite should be dressed in operating room apparel. At no time should street clothes be worn within the restricted areas of the surgical suite.

### Hair Covers

All head and facial hair, including sideburns and neckline, should be covered in semi-restricted and restricted areas of the surgical suite.

- The surgical scrub cap or surgical hood should be clean and free of lint. Nets are not acceptable.
- Surgical caps or hoods must be changed upon returning to the surgical suite.

### Shoe Covers

All personnel entering the restricted areas of the surgical suite should wear shoe covers.

- Shoe covers are removed upon leaving restricted areas of the suite.
- Clean shoe covers are put on upon returning to the restricted area.

### Personal Effects

- Nail polish should not be worn by OR personnel. Fingernails should be kept clean and short. Artificial nails should not be worn.
- Earrings, if worn at all, must be small and unobtrusive, and worn under a scrub hat.
- Chains and necklaces must be contained inside the scrub shirt. Rings, watches, and bracelets should be removed.
| Table A20-2  | Scrub Technique |

Many hospitals have changed the time-honored hand and arm scrub method with a brush and soap to a brushless scrub with scrub solution alone. One method is as follows:

- Use a nail pick to clean under fingernails to remove dirt and debris. Turn water on and wet hands and arms.
- Hold an open palm under solution dispenser port then depress the foot pump, dispensing approximately a 2-cc portion of solution into palm.
- Begin by cupping palm with solution, then insert opposite hands’ fingertips into solution. Then twist fingertips around for a few seconds. Repeat with other hand.
- Rub hands together, beginning with both hands, then moving up to forearm region, extending slightly past the elbows.  
- **Scrub for 90 seconds.**
- Rinse thoroughly, then repeat steps 2 through 4, stopping before the elbow on the second application. Total scrub time is three minutes.