

Attachment #3: CNA's Surgical Plume H&S Survey Results (April 2026)

An online survey was sent to registered nurses (RNs) in April 2026. A total of 57 RNs responded to questions about plume exposure, including both CNA members and non-union RNs. Plume questions were only provided to RNs working in the operating room (OR), pre-op or post-anesthesia care units (PACU), and labor and delivery (L&D) units.

Main Findings:

- Most RNs in the OR, pre-op or PACU, and L&D units reported exposure to surgical plume (56.6% nationally, 65.2% in California).
- Most RNs in California reported that their employer already has plume evacuation systems available in their facility (52.2%).
- However, only 21.7% of California RNs said their employer has policies in place to ensure plume evacuation systems are used for every procedure utilizing electro- or laser surgery.

Table 1: CNA Surgical Plume H&S Survey (April 2026), Results for RNs Working in Hospitals, National

<i>Hospital RNs working in OR, pre-op or PACU, and L&D</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Total nurses who answered plume questions		57	100%
How often are you exposed to surgical plume?	Every shift	10	17.5%
	Frequently	9	15.8%
	Sometimes	8	14.0%
	Occasionally	7	12.3%
	Never	15	26.3%
	Not sure	8	14.0%
Does your employer have plume evacuation systems available in your facility?	Yes	24	42.1%
	No	5	8.8%
	Not sure	28	49.1%
Does your employer have policies in place to ensure plume evacuation systems are used for every procedure utilizing electro- or laser surgery?	Yes	12	21.0%
	No	10	17.5%
	Not sure	35	61.4%

Table 2: CNA Surgical Plume H&S Survey (April 2026), Results for RNs Working in Hospitals, California			
<i>Hospital RNs in California working in OR, pre-op or PACU, and L&D</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Total nurses who answered plume questions		23	100%
How often are you exposed to surgical plume?	Every shift	4	17.4%
	Frequently	5	21.7%
	Sometimes	4	17.4%
	Occasionally	2	8.7%
	Never	5	2.2%
	Not sure	3	13.0%
Does your employer have plume evacuation systems available in your facility?	Yes	12	52.2%
	No	1	4.3%
	Not sure	10	43.5%
Does your employer have policies in place to ensure plume evacuation systems are used for every procedure utilizing electro- or laser surgery?	Yes	5	21.7%
	No	3	13.0%
	Not sure	15	65.2%

RNs shared additional insights in the survey that indicate the need for additional action:

- “There are plume devices for laparoscopic cases, other than that for all cases there might be 1-2 devices (if that) available for all rooms. We generally have 7-8 rooms running.”
- “I’m not sure if my hospital has a policy for it, but every obstetric surgery it is available to use and is the normal practice to use.”
- “The Neptunes are recent- last 2-3 years. Because each [unit] is \$100,000, we had to fight to get extras because the bottom line is administration is too cheap and would rather us be exposed.”
- “These devices and policies are a recent addition (within the past 2 years).”
- “Use of smoke evacuator with Bovie is used during our C/S cases [sic]. Although sometimes there is still a smoke smell. Not every case.”

Survey Methodology:

An online survey was circulated via email among RNs in April 2026. The survey addressed multiple health and safety issues and only the questions related to plume are reported here. Questions relating to plume exposure were provided only to RNs who reported working in a

hospital in the following areas: operating room, pre-op or post-anesthesia care unit (PACU), Labor & Delivery.

RN respondents were asked, but not required, to report the state where they worked: 30 respondents did not list a state, 23 listed California, two Florida, one Ohio, and one Connecticut.