According to the American National Standard for Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care (ANSI Z136.3), the employer must provide a safety program that includes employee training for class 3B and class 4 lasers and laser systems. The following are 10 steps that can help you develop a medical laser safety program that complies with the laser safety standard. This list is not intended to be comprehensive.

1. Appoint a Laser Safety Officer (LSO) and define roles and responsibilities of the LSO per the ANSI Z136.3 standard for the Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care.

2. Train the LSO. According to the ANSI Z136.3 standard, the employer shall provide training on the potential hazards and controls of medical laser systems.

3. Write the laser safety policy statement and develop the details of the Laser Safety Program.

4. Take an inventory of all class 3B and class 4 lasers.

5. Identify which lasers are current on their Preventive Maintenance (PM) and which lasers are compliant with the Food and Drug Administration’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) federal requirements. If the lasers are not compliant with the CDRH, contact the manufacturer.

6. Perform a laser hazard assessment of each operating room. Follow the ANSI Z136.3 for Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care standard and the Association of periOperative Registered Nurse’s (AORN) recommended practices.

7. Evaluate, document and control non-beam hazards such as laser generated air contaminants due to laser plume.

8. Write standard operating procedures and maintenance procedures for all laser systems. Implement control measures for the control of beam and non-beam hazards.

9. Authorize laser personnel and implement training commensurate to the degree of hazard.

10. Audit the program to make sure the laser safety program is effective and the controls and standard operating procedures for the hazards are working to keep people safe.