

# Patient Safety Alert

Veterans Health Administration Warning System  
Published by VA Central Office

---

**Item:** Smiths Medical, Fast Flow Fluid Warmer Models 250, 500 and 1000.

**Specific Incident:** Hospitals in Australia report serious patient injury from intravascular air embolisms introduced while using the Smiths Medical fluid warmers identified in this Alert.

**Action:**

1. Promptly (within one week) check local inventory to identify all units affected by this Alert and institute recommended practices to minimize risk (**attached**) for all users of Smiths Medical Fast Flow Fluid Warmers, models 250, 500 and 1000.
2. Procure and install the Smiths Medical accessory Air Detector/Clamp, model H-31 that is designed to reduce the risk of air embolism introduction while using the Smiths Medical Fast Flow Fluid Warmers, models 250, 500 and 1000.

**Addl. Information:** All new models of Smiths Medical fluid warmers include the air detector/clamp as a standard component. Also, while we are unaware of other sites without this accessory, check your inventory and contact your Smiths Medical representative to update their list and order the H-31 detector/clamp.

**Source:** VA Center for Engineering & Occupational Safety and Health  
Smiths Medical and ECRI

**Contact:** Paul Sherman (CEOSH): 314-543-6700

SMITHS MEDICAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO MINIMIZE  
RISK OF AIR EMBOLISM WHILE USING THEIR FLUID WARMERS:

- (1) Remove all air from fluid bags and lines before connecting to patients.
- (2) Follow all instructions for priming the infusion line and set.
- (3) Monitor fluid lines, and check to ensure that they are free of air bubbles.
- (4) Do not open ports in the infusion system unless precautions are taken to prevent the entry of air.
- (5) Do not reconnect partially emptied fluid bags. Disconnected bags may contain a significant volume of air, which can enter the bags when they are first disconnected.
- (6) Do not use autotransfusion bags with warming systems unless the warmer is clearly indicated for this use.

LIST OF VA SITES WITH H1000 FLUID WARMERS WITHOUT THE H-31 AIR  
DETECTOR/CLAMP - AS IDENTIFIED BY SMITHS MEDICAL:

<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>Serial Number</u>
Chicago	IL	2030 West Taylor St	J02087
Clarksburg	WV	1 Medical Center Dr	20020120
Clarksburg	WV	1 Medical Center Dr	J02062
Cleveland	OH	10701 East Boulevard	20030492
Gainesville	FL	1601 SW Archer Rd	J01886
Huntington	WV	1540 Spring Valley Dr	20030151
Indianapolis	IN	1481 West 10th Street	20010209
Lexington	KY	2250 Leestown Rd/Bldg 12	J01386
Lexington	KY	1101 Veterans Dr	20020139
Lexington	KY	1101 Veterans Dr	20020135
Lexington	KY	1101 Veterans Dr	20020136
Los Angeles	CA	1103 Wilshire Blvd	20000648
Louisville	KY	800 Zorn Ave	20010033
New York	NY	423 East 23rd St	19990447
Philadelphia	PA	University Ave	J01791
Pittsburgh	PA	University Dr	20000379
Shreveport	LA	510 East Stoner Ave	J01725
Temple	TX	1901 S 1st St	20030300
Tucson	AZ	3601 S 6th Ave	19990286
Wichita	KS	5500 East Kellogg	20030482