

2024 Electrical / Electronic (ECMO Retrieval)

Permission to print:	Yes
Category	Electrical / electronic
Category 2	ECMO
Severity	Good Catch Near Miss
Duration of incident:	hours
Description:	<p>An ECMO retrieval by aeroplane. Upon arrival in the destination ICU and opening the Pelican cases to commence placing a patient onto ECMO, one of the four ECMO retrieval Pelican cases was very hot to touch. On opening this case, the portable Sonosite ultrasound inside the case was extremely hot to touch open, (too hot to hold a hand too close). This was also noted by one of the flight crew who was assisting with transport of the equipment into the destination ICU. The Sonosite was not used as the ICU had their own equipment available. It was decided by the flight crew that the Sonosite was not to be placed inside the Pelican case on the return flight, but rather carried in in the hand. Subsequent discussion revealed that the Sonosite was connected to the probe prior to departure by the intensivist to test functionality – a common practice. It transpires that it is very easy to leave the ultrasound machine in the on position when closing. The device is quite tightly packed in the Pelican case accentuating overheating in this constrained space</p>
GOOD CATCH - what went well	The Sonosite did not reach ignition temperature and was sequestered for the return flight
What could we do better	The Sonosite should have been checked to be powered off pre departure and transported separately as hand luggage.
Preventive actions	Recommendations for checking the ultrasound is powered down prior departure for ECMO retrievals and that all devices containing lithium batteries are separately transported as “carry-on luggage” (and not stowed in the hold) has been forwarded to the. ECMO Governance Group.
Type of incident:	Management
Timing of incident:	ECMO/VAD
Hospital incident filed	Yes
Ext Authority Advised	No
Discussed with team:	Yes
Knowledge issue	No
Rule issue	Yes
Skill issue	Yes
Team Issue	No
Patient outcome variance	Nil
Commentary	<p>This is the first report of its type to PIRS. Long distance retrieval of patients on ECMO by both fixed wing and helicopter has become more common and the risks associated with lithium containing devices, common in medical devices, presents a particular hazard in these circumstances. PIRS Ed</p>