

# DEPARTMENT OF ANESTHESIOLOGY

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER

**Standard Operating Procedure Title:** Refusal to Participate in Anesthesia Based on Moral or Ethical Grounds

**Policy Number:** C 330

**Date Established:** 2/1/90

**Date Reviewed:** 3/22/97; 3/31/00; 5/27/03; 4/26/16

**Date Revised:** 10/12/03; 3/7/06

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1. On occasion faculty, resident, or nurse anesthesia personnel may feel morally obligated to decline to participate in certain procedures (e.g., abortion, sterilization, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc). Each anesthesia person should feel free to exercise this judgement when necessary.
2. In the event a "first call" Attending Staff physician objects to participation in a specific case, s/he must call her/his "second call." If that person objects, the official substitute "covering" for him should be contacted and so on until all backup staff have been consulted. At that time the vice-chair for clinical affairs or the chair will be contacted. If all available Attending Staff members decline on these grounds to accept the case, the responsible attending surgeon will be so notified of the grounds for this failure.
3. In the event the First Call Attending cannot find one of his assigned resident/CRNA/SRNA call team who is willing to participate, he should contact the Anesthesiology Chief Resident and Chief CRNA. The Chief Anesthesiology Resident and Chief CRNA should call each of the staff searching for a substitute. If this is not possible, s/he will notify the vice-chair for clinical affairs who will intercede according to her/his best judgment.