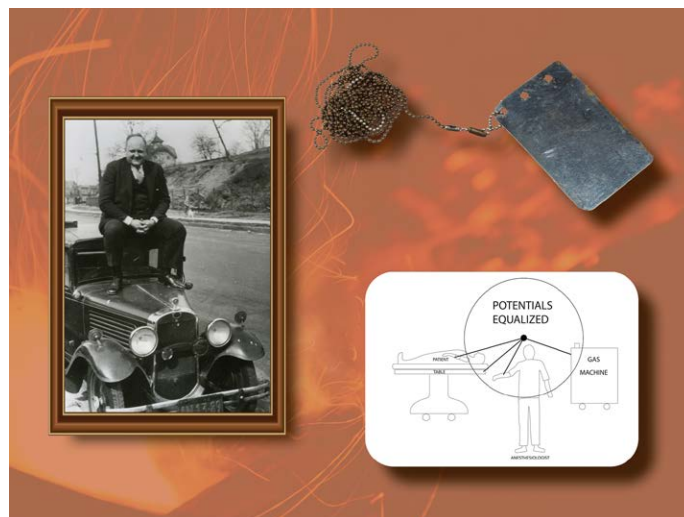


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## ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

# Paul Wood’s Grounding Plate: A Shockingly Down-to-Earth Strategy for OR Safety



Modern anesthesiologists do not think twice about “charging” their portable devices and equipment. For physicians using ether, ethylene, and cyclopropane, a “charged” device implied a shockingly different situation. Combustible anesthetics required vigilance to neutralize current leaks or static electricity sparks between conductive materials. Such discharges could ignite a flammable cloud of oxygenated volatile agent. Safety-minded anesthesiologist and Wood Library-Museum founder Dr. Paul M. Wood (1894 to 1963) used a grounding plate and chains to minimize potential differences. His personal grounding plate (*upper right*) created a low-resistance pathway that linked the anesthesiologist, patient, and operating room table to the drag chain-grounded anesthesia machine. A 1941 ASA report titled “The Hazard of Fire and Explosion in Anesthesia” encouraged such connections. Luckily, for our dapper founder, the automobile industry had already grounded the electrical components of his shockingly stylish 1938 Bantam Coupe (*left*). (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists’ Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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