

Surgery Technologist/Assistant

Nature of the Profession

A surgical technologist is an allied health professional who works closely with surgeons, anesthesiologists or anesthesiologists, registered nurses and other surgical personnel delivering patient care and assuming appropriate responsibilities before, during, and after surgery.

Surgical technologists perform a wide variety of tasks in the operating room. Their main role is to maintain the sterile field and hand the necessary instruments, supplies and equipment to the surgeon and members of the operating room team during surgery. Surgical technologists may also assist during surgery by holding retractors, cutting sutures, suctioning the wound and applying dressings.

Additional responsibilities include setting up the operating room in preparation for a procedure, care and handling of instruments after the procedure, and gathering supplies, instruments and equipment for the next day's procedures.

APTITUDES

- Ability to learn operating room procedures
- Ability to communicate with staff and follow written and spoken directions
- Good spatial and form perception, physical coordination, and dexterity
- Ability to make decisions based on prescribed standards or directions and to handle paperwork and detailed procedures accurately
- Ability to relate to a variety of people
- Ability to stand for long periods of time
- Ability to react calmly in emergency situations

EDUCATION

Most employers prefer to hire surgical technologists who have been trained in one- to two-year specialized programs in vocational and technical schools or community colleges.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN NEBRASKA

- Nebraska Methodist College – Omaha (C)
- Southeast Community College – Lincoln (A)

LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

Licensing is not required, but certification by the Association of Surgical Technologists adds professional prestige and increases job opportunities. Continuing education or reexamination is required to maintain certification, which must be renewed every six years.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Association of Surgical Technologists

Web Address: www.ast.org