

South Carolina Education and Certification Surgical Technologist Law

SECTION 44-7-380. Surgical technology and operating room circulators; definitions; requirements to practice; exceptions.

(A) As used in this section, "surgical technology" means intraoperative surgical patient care that involves:

- (1) preparing the operating room for surgical procedures by ensuring that surgical equipment is functioning properly and safely;
- (2) preparing the operating room and the sterile field for surgical procedures by preparing sterile supplies, instruments, and equipment using sterile technique;
- (3) anticipating the needs of the surgical team based on knowledge of human anatomy and pathophysiology and how they relate to the surgical patient and the patient's surgical procedure; and
- (4) as directed within the sterile field in an operating room setting, performing tasks including:
 - (a) passing supplies, equipment, or instruments;
 - (b) sponging or suctioning an operative site;
 - (c) preparing and cutting suture materials;
 - (d) transferring fluids or drugs;
 - (e) holding retractors; and
 - (f) assisting in counting sponges, needles, supplies, and instruments.

(B)(1) A person may not practice surgical technology in a health care facility unless the person meets one of the following requirements:

- (a) has successfully completed an accredited educational program for surgical technologists and holds and maintains the Surgical Technologist Certification administered by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting, or its successor; however, upon completion of an accredited education program for surgical technologists, graduates may practice for up to three months before completing certification by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting, or its successor;
- (b) has completed an appropriate training program for surgical technology in the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard or in the United States Public Health Service;
- (c) provides evidence that the person was employed to practice surgical technology in a health care facility in this State prior to January 1, 2008; or

(d) is in the service of the federal government, to the extent the person is performing duties related to that service.

(2) A person qualified to practice as a surgical technologist pursuant to subsection (B)(1) remains qualified to practice regardless of a break in practice provided the continuing education required in subsection (D) is current.

(C) A person who does not meet the requirements of this section, may practice surgical technology in a health care facility if:

(1) after a diligent and thorough effort has been made, the health care facility is unable to employ a sufficient number of persons who meet the requirements of this section; and

(2) the health care facility makes a written record of its efforts made pursuant to item (1) and retains the record at the health care facility.

(D) A person who qualifies to practice surgical technology in a health care facility pursuant to subsection (B)(1)(a), (b), or (c) annually must complete fifteen hours of continuing education to remain qualified for employment.

(E) A health care facility that employs a person to practice surgical technology shall verify that the person meets the continuing education requirements of subsection (D) or that the person has held and maintained the Surgical Technologist Certification as required in subsection (B)(1)(a).

(F) A health care facility shall supervise each person employed by the health care facility to practice surgical technology according to the health care facility's policies and procedures to ensure that the person competently performs delegated tasks intraoperatively according to this section or other applicable provisions of law.

(G) This section does not prohibit a person licensed under another provision of law from performing surgical technology tasks or functions if the person is acting within the scope of his or her license.

HISTORY: 2007 Act No. 95, Section 1, eff January 1, 2008.