

Question #7 submitted by committee member Sandstrom:

7) If surgical technologists work only under supervision/ direction of a licensed health professional and in a state- regulated facility, what is the benefit to the public by the adoption of a scope of practice for surgical technologists?

As stated in the response to question #6 submitted by committee member Sandstrom, there are no regulations (public or private) that actually impose a certification, education or competency requirement for surgical technologists for state-regulated facilities. It is up to the hospital to establish these standards. Some hospitals have chosen to make this a requirement others have not.

Although the practice of the surgical technologist is delegated by the surgeon or the registered nurse, there are several times when the surgical technologist performs tasks independently without having their work double checked by any other member of the team. An example of this would be the assembly of instruments and equipment that will be utilized during the surgical procedure during preparation for the case when the surgeon is not present. The physician relies on the competency of the surgical technologist and often does not double check the assembly prior to use on the patient. Another example of this occurs often times during turnover between cases when two surgical technologist will open all of the supplies and instruments that will be needed for a procedure verifying the sterility of all items while the nurse is in the preop area retrieving the patient. The nurse relies on the competency of the surgical technologist in the area of aseptic technique to ensure that all items utilized during the procedure are sterile.

The establishment of a license for surgical technologists would set forth an education and competency standard that would be applied on a consistent basis ensuring quality patient care for all surgical patients in the state of Nebraska.