AST
Association of Surgical Technologists

JOB DESCRIPTION: SURGICAL TECHNOLOGIST

The *Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Programs in Surgical Technology* have been approved by the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST), American College of Surgeons (ACS), Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology (ARC/STSA), and Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and include this description of the profession of surgical technology:

Surgical technologists are allied health professionals, who are an integral part of the team of medical practitioners providing surgical care to patients. Surgical technologists work under the supervision of a surgeon to facilitate the safe and effective conduct of invasive surgical procedures, ensuring that the operating room environment is safe, that equipment functions properly, and that the operative procedure is conducted under conditions that maximize patient safety. Surgical technologists possess expertise in the theory and application of sterile and aseptic technique and combine the knowledge of human anatomy, surgical procedures, and implementation tools and technologies to facilitate a physician's performance of invasive therapeutic and diagnostic procedures.

Education
Surgical technologists graduate from surgical technology programs accredited through ARC/STSA, a collaborative effort of AST and ACS, by CAAHEP. CAAHEP is a recognized accreditation agency of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). In addition, surgical technology programs are located in educational institutions that are institutionally accredited by agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE) or The Joint Commission. The ARC/STSA is also a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA).

Credentials
Certification is conferred by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA). Initial certification as a Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) is based upon satisfactory performance on the national certifying examination following completion of an accredited program in surgical technology. CSTs maintain their certification by earning 60 hours of approved continuing education in a four-year period or by successfully retaking the certifying examination at the conclusion of the four-year period.

The NBSTSA's CST certification program is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the accreditation division of the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) and is in compliance with NCCA's *Standards for the*

Accreditation of Certification Programs. NCCA standards and accreditation services are referenced requirements in state and federal legislation pertaining to personnel certification. NOCA is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as a developer of American National Standards. ANSI accreditation provides third-party validation that NOCA's standards development process ensures openness and due process.

Professional Organization

The professional organization for surgical technologists is the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST). Formed in 1969 with the support of the American College of Surgeons, American Medical Association (AMA), American Hospital Association (AHA), and Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN), AST represents the interests of over 80,000 surgical technologists.

AST's primary purpose is to ensure that surgical technologists have the knowledge and skills to administer patient care of the highest quality and is the principal provider in conjunction with more than 40 state organizations of continuing education for surgical technologists. AST also works with ARC/STSA and NBSTSA to set standards for education and certification and represents the profession at state and national levels to ensure graduation from an accredited program in surgical technology and that all surgical technologists attain the Certified Surgical Technologist credential as a condition of employment.

Statement on Surgical Technology Training and Certification

The following statement was developed by the American College of Surgeons' Committee on Perioperative Care, and approved by the ACS Board of Regents at its June 2005 meeting. This statement was subsequently approved by the Association of Surgical Technologists, American Society of Anesthesiologists, American Association of Surgical Physician Assistants, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, and American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses.

Surgical technologists are individuals with specialized education who function as members of the surgical team in the role of scrub person. With additional education and training, some surgical technologists function in the role of surgical first assistant.

Surgical technology programs are accredited by the Accreditation Review Committee on Education in Surgical Technology—a collaborative effort of the Association of Surgical Technologists and the American College of Surgeons, under the auspices of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. Accredited programs provide both didactic education and supervised clinical experience based on a core curriculum for surgical technology.

Accredited programs may be offered in community and junior colleges, vocational and technical schools, the military, universities, and structured hospital programs in surgical

technology. The accredited programs vary from nine to 15 months for a diploma or certificate to two years for an associate's degree.

Graduates of accredited surgical technology programs are eligible for certification by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting, an administratively independent body from the Association of Surgical Technologists consisting of representative Certified Surgical Technologists, a surgeon, and the public.

The American College of Surgeons strongly supports adequate education and training of all surgical technologists, supports the accreditation of all surgical technology educational programs, and supports examination for certification of all graduates of accredited surgical technology educational programs.

Role of the Surgical Technologist

The following description of the surgical technologist has been approved by the American College of Surgeons and the Association of Surgical Technologists:

Scrub Surgical Technologist
The scrub surgical technologist handles the instruments, supplies, and equipment necessary during the surgical procedure. He/she has an understanding of the procedure being performed and anticipates the needs of the surgeon. He/she has the necessary knowledge and ability to ensure quality patient care during the operative procedure and is constantly on vigil for maintenance of the sterile field. Duties are as follows:

1. Checks supplies and equipment needed for surgical procedure
2. Scrubs, gowns, and gloves
3. Sets up sterile table with instruments, supplies, equipment, and medications/solutions needed for procedure
4. Performs appropriate counts with circulator prior to the operation and before incision is closed
5. Gowns and gloves surgeon and assistants
6. Helps in draping sterile field
7. Passes instruments, etc., to surgeon during procedure
8. Maintains highest standard of sterile technique during procedure
9. Prepares sterile dressings
10. Cleans and prepares instruments for terminal sterilization
11. Assists other members of team with terminal cleaning of room
12. Assists in prepping room for the next patient

Circulating Surgical Technologist
The surgical technologist assisting in circulating obtains additional instruments, supplies, and equipment necessary while the surgical procedure is in progress. He/she monitors conditions in the operating room and constantly assesses the needs of the patient and surgical team. Duties are as follows:

1. Obtains appropriate sterile and unsterile items needed for procedure
2. Opens sterile supplies

3. Checks patient's chart, identifies patient, verifies surgery to be performed with consent forms, and brings patient to assigned operating room
4. Transfers patient to operating room table
5. Assesses comfort and safety measures and provides verbal and tactile reassurance to the patient
6. Assists anesthesia personnel
7. Positions patient, using appropriate equipment
8. Applies electrosurgical grounding pads, tourniquets, monitors, etc., before procedure begins
9. Prepares the patient's skin prior to draping by surgical team
10. Performs appropriate counts with scrub person prior to the operation and before incision is closed
11. Anticipates additional supplies needed during the procedure
12. Keeps accurate records throughout the procedure
13. Properly cares for specimens
14. Secures dressings after incision closure
15. Helps transport patient to recovery room
16. Assists in cleaning of room and preparing for next patient
17. Performs urinary catheterization when necessary.

Second Assisting Technologist

The second assisting surgical technologist assists the surgeon and/or first assistant during the operative procedure by carrying out technical tasks other than cutting, clamping, and suturing of tissue. This role is distinct from that of the first assistant and may, in some circumstances, be performed at the same time as the scrub role. Duties include but are not exclusive to the following:

1. Holds retractors or instruments as directed by the surgeon
2. Sponges or suctions operative site
3. Applies electrocautery to clamps on bleeders
4. Cuts suture material as directed by the surgeon
5. Connects drains to suction apparatus
6. Applies dressings to closed wound