Role of the Surgical Technologist

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.

The following description of the surgical technologist is provided as a general guideline of the duties that a surgical technologist may be required to perform or to assist others to perform in order to function as a part of the surgical team. The surgical technologist primarily functions in the scrub role but may assist the surgical team in other ways as needed. In order to meet program accreditation requirements and to prepare student for the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting Board Certified Surgical Technologist exam, students of the LBWCC Surgical Technology Program are erudite in a diversity of surgical skills. **Facility policy and local or state laws vary and should always be followed.**

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 the 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
12. Anticipates additional supplies needed during the procedure
13. Keeps accurate records throughout the procedure
14. Properly cares for specimens
15. Secures dressings after incision closure
16. Helps transport patient to recovery room
17. Assists in cleaning of room and preparing for next patient

**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