

Surgical Technologists Have Many Life-saving and Cost-saving Roles in the Operating Room



Certified Surgical Technologists not only serve as the surgeon's co-pilot and provide instruments and supplies to the surgeon, but they prevent patient death and harm related to medication, surgical fires, instruments and implants, cancer specimens, infection, and bleeding.

As essential surgical team members, surgical technologists must perform very effectively to prevent **"never events,"** including medication errors, surgical implant errors, unintended retained surgical items, patient burns, and incorrect site surgery.

Surgical Technologists Ensure Presence of Instrumentation Needed for Surgery

The surgical technologist sets up the room, not the surgeon. This requires a deep understanding of thousands of instruments in various specialties.



Surgical Technologist Errors in Medication Safety Can Cause Patient Harm and Death

Three very prevalent medications in surgery are heparinized-saline, lidocaine, and epinephrine, all which can cause patient death without vigilant medication safety practices.

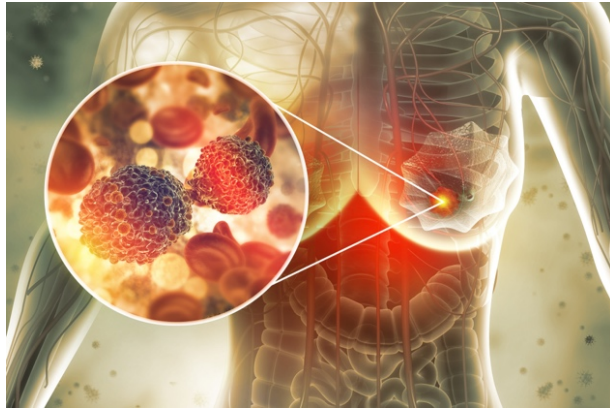


Surgical Technologists Prevent Surgical Fires

One study demonstrated that a quarter of surgeons had witnessed a surgical fire. Surgery creates a high fire risk because supplemental oxygen is often present near ignition sources which are very common in surgery, such as electric cautery.

Surgical Technologists Prevent Patient Harm Related to Implants

The surgical technologist manages instruments and implants. Mismanaged surgical implants have caused patient injury, disability, and death.



Surgical Technologists Prevent Patient Harm and Death Related to Cancer Specimens

The surgical technologist's ability to manage cancer specimens quickly and accurately can be life or death to the patient, as a mix-up can lead to untreated cancer.

Surgical Technologists Set the Pace of Surgery

The surgical technologist serves as the surgeon's co-pilot and provide instruments and supplies to the surgeon during surgery, and they must constantly anticipate the surgeon's needs. Every minute a patient is under anesthesia the risks related to anesthesia and infection increase.

Surgical Technologists Prevent Patient Harm and Death Related to Sterile Technique

Surgical technologists maintain the sterile surgical field to ensure surgical team members adhere to sterile technique to prevent surgical site infections.



Surgical Technologists Prevent Patient Harm and Death Related to Bleeding

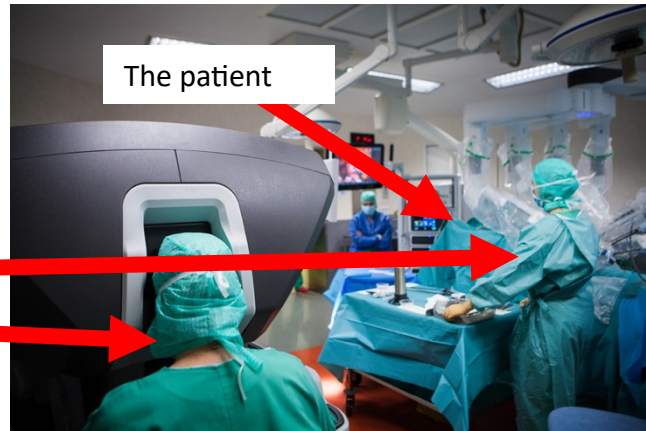
Automatic reflexes are built with practice during skills lab and clinicals. The pace and skill of the surgical technologist are vital to patient outcomes during cases with rapid bleeding.

No One Supervises the Surgical Technologist Before or During Surgery

The surgeon is not in the room before surgery. Circulating nurses are busy seeing the patient before surgery. During surgery, the surgeons' eyes are on the surgical site.

During robotic surgery, the surgeon is in the robotic console and has no line of sight to the sterile field or patient.

The surgical technologist
The surgeon



Surgical Technologists' Impact on Healthcare Costs

Surgical technologists significantly impact healthcare facility costs. The US Department of Health and Human Services cited that surgical site infections result in an estimated 13,088 deaths annually and cost hospitals approximately \$25,546 per infection. If a hospital falls into the top 25% of hospital-acquired conditions for the previous year, then the hospital faces an additional 1% reduction in Medicare reimbursement payments. Certified Surgical Technologists also save facilities money by preventing long delays and not throwing away expensive equipment.

Surgical Technologists Should be Graduates of Accredited Programs and CST-Certified

Because the role of the surgical technologist is vital for patient safety and surgical patient outcomes, all healthcare facilities should require graduation from a [CAAHEP](#)- or [ABHES](#)- accredited surgical technology program and Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) certification by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) for liability protection, cost savings, patient safety, and patient outcomes.

The [Association of Surgical Technologists](#) and the [American College of Surgeons](#) recommend accredited education and the CST from the NBSTSA for surgical technologists. The [Council on Surgical and Perioperative Safety](#) recognizes only the CST certification for surgical technologists. The Association of periOperative Registered Nurses' job description for surgical technologists recommends accredited education and CST® certification from the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting.