

CHAPTER 148

AN ACT requiring certain qualifications for employment as a surgical technologist and supplementing P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.).

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.26:2H-12.62 Definitions relative to qualifications for employment as surgical technologist.

1. For purposes of this act:

"Health care facility" means a hospital or other health care facility licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.).

"Surgical technologist" means a person who is authorized to practice surgical technology pursuant to the provisions of this act.

"Surgical technology" means surgical patient care that includes, but is not limited to, the following tasks or functions:

(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, performing tasks at the sterile field including:

(a) passing supplies, equipment or instruments;

(b) sponging or suctioning an operative site;

(c) preparing and cutting suture material;

(d) transferring and irrigating with fluids;

(e) transferring and administering drugs within the sterile field, according to applicable law;

(f) handling specimens;

(g) holding retractors and other instruments;

(h) applying electrocautery to clamps on bleeders;

(i) connecting drains to suction apparatus;

(j) applying dressings to closed wounds; and

(k) performing sponge, needle, supply and instrument counts with the registered nurse circulator.

C.26:2H-12.63 Requirements for practicing surgical technology.

2. No person shall practice surgical technology in a health care facility unless that person:

a. has successfully completed a nationally or regionally accredited educational program for surgical technologists; or

b. holds and maintains a certified surgical technologist credential administered by the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting or its successor, or other nationally recognized credentialing organization; or

c. has completed an appropriate training program for surgical technology in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard of the United States or in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps; or

d. provides evidence that the person was employed to practice surgical technology in a health care facility on the effective date of this act; or

e. is in the service of the federal government, to the extent that individual is performing surgical technology duties related to that service.

C.26:2H-12.64 Requirements for employment.

3. A health care facility shall not employ or otherwise contract for the services of a surgical technologist unless the person employed or contracted meets the requirements of section 2 of this act.

C.26:2H-12.65 Continuing education requirement.

4. A person who qualifies to practice surgical technology in a health care facility under section 2 of this act shall annually complete 15 hours of continuing education to remain qualified to practice as a surgical technologist in this State.

C.26:2H-12.66 Verification of eligibility to practice.

5. A health care facility that employs or contracts with a person to practice surgical technology shall verify that the person meets: a. the continuing education requirements of section 4 of this act; and b. the requirements of section 2 of this act.

C.26:2H-12.67 Person permitted to act within scope of practice of license.

6. Nothing in this act shall prohibit any person licensed under any other law from practicing surgical technology if the person is acting within the scope of practice of his license.

7. This act shall take effect immediately, except that section 4 shall take effect one year from the date of enactment.

Approved December 20, 2011.