



Introduction and Goal Statements

For over four decades, the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) has demonstrated a commitment to ensuring quality patient care through ongoing support of the surgical technology profession through the following:

- Dedication towards providing Certified Surgical Technologists and Certified Surgical First Assistants with the knowledge and skills required to provide quality patient care.
- Development of continuing and formal education programs and resources.
- Promotion of professional standards and credentials.
- Providing a forum for the exchange of ideas.
- Monitoring of the changing health care environment.

AST strives to promote the personal and professional development of all surgical technologists and surgical assistants. The mission statement of AST clearly supports the commitment to both the surgical patient and the surgical technologist, “Enhancing the profession to ensure quality patient care.”

The *AST Standards of Practice* have been developed in an effort to support the surgical technology practitioners and serve as a guide for student surgical technologists, surgical technology educators, surgical assistants, and for the organizations that employ surgical technologists. Surgical technologists belong to a separate non-nursing profession of highly skilled, credentialed, allied health professionals who possess specialized education and training to work specifically in the operating room. Therefore, the standards and recommended practices are broad in scope in order to allow for their application in a variety of health care settings where surgical technologists are employed and support the many facets of the surgical technology profession.

Overall, the goal of publishing the standards is to provide additional support to the profession. Accordingly, the *AST Standards of Practice* represent AST’s official position on the preoperative, intraoperative, and postoperative practices and skills performed by the surgical technologist. Each recommended practice has been driven by the profession throughout the whole process of writing, reviewing, and revising in order to reflect the changing health care environment. It must also be emphasized that this will be a continual process as the profession identifies additional standards for AST to research and publish.

The surgical technologist exhibits the characteristics of moral integrity, honesty, surgical conscience, and a commitment to upholding the highest principles of aseptic technique. These characteristics backed by the *AST Recommended Standards of Practice* represent a profession dedicated to the future of health care.

Goal Statements

The following are the goals as related to the development and publishing of the *AST Standards of Practice*.

1. Standards of Practice that provide guidance to surgical technologist practitioners, students, educators, and the health care environment.
2. Promote and contribute to the enhancement of quality care for the surgical patient.
3. To inform the public of the standards of care they are entitled to receive from the surgical technologist.