

Position Statement Utilization of the CST During Cesarean Section and Tubal Ligation Procedures

Certified Surgical Technologists (CST) are individuals who complete education and training to function as members of the surgical team under the broad delegatory authority of the surgeon, the provisions for which vary from state-to-state and according to state law and health care facility policy. As stated in the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) resolution *Role of the Scrub Person*, the surgical technologist who performs the role of the scrub person is practicing surgical technology. This applies to the CST performing specific patient care duties during cesarean section (C-section) and tubal ligation procedures.

C-sections are unique when compared to other abdominal procedures. C-sections are performed when there is the potential for life threatening risk to the mother and/or the fetus.

This includes but is not limited to malpresentation of the fetus (breach), prolapsed umbilical cord, ruptured placenta (placenta abruptio), delivery of the placenta ahead of the fetus (placenta previa), active sexually transmitted disease, previous cesarean section, cephalopelvic disproportion (CPD), toxemia, diabetes and failure to progress. Additionally, a specific patient care duty during a C-section is the application of fundal pressure to facilitate the delivery of the neonate.

As a surgical technology student in an accredited program, the educational and training process includes didactic instruction, as well as observation and performance in the first scrub role during C-sections under the supervision of the CST preceptor and surgeon when completing surgical rotation. Therefore, the CST is educationally prepared and clinically competent in performing the first scrub role during a C-section to include anticipating the needs of the surgeon and patient during an emergency situation.

The education and training includes application of fundal pressure during a C-section to facilitate the delivery of the neonate. The CST is educationally prepared and clinically competent in performing fundal pressure under the supervision of the surgeon, who directs the performance of fundal pressure. At their place of employment, the CST should demonstrate competence in performing fundal pressure under the direction and supervision of the surgeon, and the health care facility policy should require documentation of initial and continuing competency.

As compared to C-sections, a tubal ligation procedure may be performed in the Labor and Delivery Department. Tubal ligation procedures, like any other surgical procedure, has the potential for complications including perforation of an organ or major vessels resulting in hemorrhage, shock, and even death.

Therefore, it is the position of AST that individuals who work in the operating room, regardless of the location of the operating room, eg Surgery Department or Labor and Delivery Department, practicing surgical technology during surgical procedures to include cesarean section and tubal ligation procedures should be a graduate of an accredited surgical technology program and attained the credential of Certified Surgical Technologist (CST). Furthermore, it is AST's position that CSTs have the knowledge and competency to perform fundal pressure during a cesarean section under the direct supervision of the surgeon, a deemed necessary to facilitate quality surgical patient outcomes.