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Position Statement Role and Duties of the CST During Endoscopic Procedures

The performance and complexity of minimally invasive procedures have greatly increased which contributes to the expanding role and duties of the CST, in particular, as related to the performance of endoscopic surgical procedures. The Association of Surgical Technologists recognizes that CSTs are called upon to perform intraoperative tasks, under the direction of the surgeon, which contribute to the efficient and safe conduct of the operation. This includes advancing rigid endoscopes (e.g., laparoscopes) through the sheath and flexible endoscopes (e.g., colonoscope, duodenoscope, ureteroscope), maintaining the position of the rigid or flexible endoscope to provide optimal visualization of the body organ(s) for the surgeon, and moving the rigid or flexible endoscope to maintain optimal visualization under the broad delegatory authority of the physician, as defined by the American College of Surgeons, the provisions for which vary from state to state, and according to state law and hospital policy.

When completing a CAAHEP-accredited surgical technology program the student may have the opportunity, under the supervision of the CST preceptor and surgeon, to learn how to maintain and move flexible and rigid endoscopes. However, if the CST has had limited opportunity to perform these skills, it is recommended he/she complete additional training and the competency documented by the healthcare delivery organization.

Therefore, it is the position of AST that individuals who have graduated from a CAAHEP-accredited program and attained the credential of CST have the knowledge and experience to perform those tasks as related to the intraoperative advancement and movement of the rigid and flexible endoscope, as necessary, to contribute to quality surgical patient outcomes.