



Position Statement on Health Care Facility Departments Use of Surgical Technologist's Skills

Graduates of accredited surgical technology programs complete a comprehensive education where they gain in-depth patient care knowledge and develop skills that can be utilized outside of the operating room in other healthcare facility (HCF) departments. During circumstances where HCFs experience shortages of healthcare practitioners (HCP) surgical technologists can fulfill the roles and duties of HCP positions that involve skills surgical technologists apply daily in the operating room or complete HCF training to perform specific patient care duties.

Certified Surgical Technologists (CST®) are subject matter experts (SME) in the principles of asepsis and application of sterile technique learned as a student per the requirements of the *Core Curriculum for Surgical Technology* (CCST). Many patient care duties involve the practice of sterile technique. The CST can train HCP in other HCF departments in the application of the techniques (see *AST Position Statement on Surgical Technologist as Subject Matter Expert on Application of Sterile Technique*). Additionally, the CST utilizes knowledge of anatomy, microbiology, and pharmacology to include documentation skills, medication handling, and patient care concepts as parts of their role and duties in the operating room. These skills are useful when performing duties that involve sterile technique and general patient care in HCF departments that are experiencing shortages of HCP. The following examples are not all-inclusive, and the CST can perform multiple skills upon completion of training.

- Sterile Processing Department (SPD)
 - Processing instruments and devices (sterile processing per the CCST – see *AST Position Statement on CST Working in Central Sterile Supply*).
 - Department supervisor (leadership and management skills learned with experience as a practitioner and possibly completing a higher degree).

- Emergency Department (ED)
 - Inserting urinary catheters (catheters per the CCST).
 - Monitoring and recording vital signs (vital signs per the CCST).
 - Assist ED physician with invasive procedures in the treatment of trauma patients such as chest tube thoracotomy, emergency department thoracotomy, peritoneal lavage, tracheotomy, and venous cutdown (skills used in the OR that can be applied in the ED).
 - Perform venipuncture for the purpose of continuous IV therapy (complete HCF training – see *AST Performing Venipuncture Position Statement*).

- Infection Control Department (ICD)
 - Provide training in other departments regarding infection control techniques (skills used in the OR applied in the ICD).
 - Monitor compliance with infection control protocols within the healthcare facility during healthcare crises (skills used in the OR that can be applied in the ICD).

- Labor and Delivery Department
 - Assist with deliveries (L & D per the CCST and skills used as a practitioner).
 - Monitor patients in labor and document information in electronic health record (EHR) (complete HCF training).

- Care of Patients on the Medical-Surgical Wards
 - Assist with re-positioning patients who are bed-ridden to avoid skin ulcers (positioning patients in the OR per the CCST and applied as a practitioner).
 - Perform dressing changes utilizing sterile technique skills as well as training and supervising other HCP in the various types of dressing changes (types and application of dressings per the CCST).
 - Monitor catheters and drains and perform duties in the care of such items, e.g., emptying drain collection device such as the bulb of a Jackson-Pratt drain or removing a urinary catheter (catheters and drains per the CCST).

- Electronic Health Record Entries, Completing Physician Orders, and Giving Injections
 - Perform screening tests and entering results into patients EHR (complete HCF training).
 - Enter standing orders into patients EHR, e.g., order entry for a screening test such as a COVID-19 screening test, blood pressure screening, or blood sugar level (complete HCF training).
 - Give injections such as vaccine shots to patients (sterile technique for drawing up medications in a syringe per the CCST and applied as a practitioner – may need to complete HCF training giving injections).

Therefore, it is the position of the Association of Surgical Technologists that the individual who has graduated from an accredited program and attained the credential of CST has the knowledge and skills that can be utilized in other HCF departments during periods of HCP shortages, such as during a healthcare crisis, and if necessary, add to those skills by completing HCF training.