



Tennessee Surgical Technology Education and Certification Law

68-57-101. Qualifications for employment of surgical technologists.

(a) Individuals employed as surgical technologists shall:

- (1) Hold current national certification established by the [National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting \(NBSTSA\)](#);
- (2) Have completed a program for surgical technology accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs \(CAAHEP\)](#);
- (3) Have completed an appropriate training program for surgical technologists in the Armed Forces or at a [CAAHEP](#)-accredited hospital or [CAAHEP](#)-accredited ambulatory surgical treatment center program. For the purposes of this chapter, "armed forces" means the army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard, or public health service of the United States; or
- (4) Successfully complete the surgical technologists [NBSTSA](#) certifying exam.

(b) Any student who completes a surgical technology program that is in the process of becoming CAAHEP-accredited on July 1, 2006, shall be considered a graduate of a CAAHEP-accredited program.

(New requirement, effective July 1, 2013)

(c) Persons qualified to be employed as a surgical technologist pursuant to subsection (a) shall complete fifteen (15) hours of continuing education or contact hours annually to remain qualified for employment and shall submit verification of having completed such continuing education or contact hours requirements to their employers. The submission of current certification by the NBSTSA shall satisfy the requirements of this subsection (c).

(d) The provisions in this section and Section 68-57-102 shall not constitute a requirement to be assessed during any inspection under chapter 11, part 2 of this title.

68-57-102. Alternative qualifications for employment

(a) In addition to individuals identified in § 68-57-101, a person may be employed upon providing sufficient evidence that, prior to May 21, 2007, the person was at any time employed as a surgical technologist for not less than eighteen (18) months in the three (3) years preceding May 21, 2007, in a hospital, medical office, surgery center, or an accredited school of surgical technology, as defined by this chapter. An individual who has begun the appropriate training to be a surgical technologist as defined by this section, prior to May 21, 2007, shall be eligible for employment as a surgical technologist; provided, that the training is completed by May 21, 2010.

(New requirement, effective July 1, 2013)

Persons qualified to be employed as surgical technologists pursuant to this subsection shall complete fifteen (15) hours of continuing education or contact hours annually to remain qualified for employment and shall submit verification of having completed such continuing education or contact hours requirements to their employers. The submission of current certification by the NBSTSA shall satisfy this requirement.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a surgical technologist in the service of the federal government is exempt from this chapter while performing duties related to such employment.

68-57-103. Penalties.

The license of a hospital, ambulatory surgical treatment center, or other such entity that violates any provision of this chapter may be subject to penalties imposed by the board for licensing healthcare facilities pursuant to § 68-11-207.

68-57-104. Waiver.

A hospital, ambulatory surgical treatment center, or other such entity may petition the director of health care facilities of the department for a waiver from this chapter if such entity is unable to employ a sufficient number of surgical technologists who meet the requirements of this chapter. The hospital, ambulatory surgical treatment center, or other such entity must demonstrate to the director that a diligent and thorough effort has been made to employ surgical technologists who meet the requirements of this chapter. The director shall refuse to grant a waiver upon finding that a diligent and thorough effort has not been made. A waiver shall exempt a facility from this chapter for not more than six (6) months. Additional waivers may be granted, but all exemptions greater than twelve (12) consecutive months must be approved by the board.

68-57-105. Scope of practice of surgical technologists.

For the purposes of this chapter, "surgical technologist" means one who works under supervision to facilitate the safe and effective conduct of invasive surgical procedures. This individual is usually employed by a hospital, medical office, or surgical center and supervised during the surgical procedure according to institutional policy and procedure to assist in providing a safe operating room environment that maximizes patient safety by performing certain tasks, including, but not limited to:

- (1) Preparation of the operating room and the sterile field for surgical procedures by preparing sterile supplies, instruments, and equipment using sterile technique;
- (2) Preparation of the operating room for surgical procedures by ensuring that surgical equipment is functioning properly and safely; and
- (3) Passing instruments, equipment or supplies to a surgeon, sponging or suctioning an operative site, preparing and cutting suture material, holding retractors, transferring but not administering fluids or drugs, assisting in counting sponges, needles, supplies, and instruments, and performing other similar tasks as directed during a surgical procedure.

68-57-106. Health care providers' duties in surgical setting unaffected.

Nothing in this chapter shall limit or prevent health care providers licensed pursuant to title 63 from performing duties in a surgical setting.