

SURGICAL FIRST ASSISTANTS COMPETENCY VERIFICATION

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Hospital Employee: _____ Employee Number: _____

Private/Contract Employee: _____ Surgeon/s Employer: _____

_____ RN _____ LVN _____ Surgical Technician _____ Physician Assistant

Degree/s: _____

Certification/s: _____ Recertification Date/s: _____

Surgical Specialty: _____

Competency Review Date: _____

Definition:

The first assistant at surgery may be but is not limited to physician assistant, perioperative nurse, or surgical technologist who is authorized to practice in the state in which services are performed, and who has completed an educational program or appropriate training that prepares him/her. A surgical first assistant provides aid in exposure, hemostasis, and other technical functions that will help the surgeon carry out a safe operation with optimal results for the patient. This individual is educated in the use of surgical instrumentation on tissues in addition to the handling of instrumentation. The first assistant acts under the direction and supervision of the surgeon and in accordance with hospital policy and appropriate laws and regulations.

Scope of Practice:

1. The qualified individual will act as first assistant to the attending physician during those surgical procedures requiring an assistant.
2. The individual functioning as a first assistant will at all times act under the direct supervision of the attending physician, performing only those functions specifically stated in a manner consistent with his/her training.
3. The Nursing Managers, or designee, with regard to optimum patient care, difficulty of the procedure, and physician's request will make all assignments of hospital personnel.
4. In cases of extreme emergency, when the attending is unable to complete the surgical procedure, the first assistant will maintain hemostasis until another physician arrives.

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QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Graduate of accredited School of Nursing, accredited School of Licensed Vocational Nurse, or accredited Surgical Technologist School. Documentation of licensure and/or completion of technical training will be required after January 1, 1997. (An *accredited* Surgical Technologist School is defined as a program whose curriculum and teaching is approved by the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation - CAHEA. Similar accrediting agencies are applicable to the other professional schools.)
2. Current license to practice in this state if RN or LVN.
3. Certification as a surgical technician and maintenance of that certification via continuing education or retesting is required.
4. One year minimum perioperative experience (prefer two years perioperative experience) is required for hospital employees. Other individuals must meet the required hospital standards for competency skills.
5. Current C.P.R. Certification.
6. Demonstrated professional accountability (hospital employee: work attendance, performance appraisals, and attendance at educational offerings).
7. Possesses appropriate manual dexterity and technical proficiency.
8. Has an in-depth knowledge of surgical asepsis, surgical anatomy, physiology, and operative technique related to the specific procedures in which assistance is provided.
9. Has sufficient education or training to make appropriate intraoperative decisions concerning the care of the patient and the progress of the intended procedure in the context of the patient's medical history and physical condition should the surgeon be unable to complete the procedure.
10. Certification as a surgical first assistant is an asset but not required.

TRAINING:

1. Didactic and/or on-the-job training by surgical staff demonstrating competency in the prescribed areas.
2. Successful completion of a program for first assistants is a preference but not required.

RESPONSIBLE TO:

Director of Surgical Services.

Attending Physician while performing function as a First Assistant.

Comments: _____

Competency Verification Completed: _____	Date: _____
Chief of Surgery Signature: _____	Date: _____
Director, Surgical Services: _____	Date: _____
Employee/Private Employee: _____	Date: _____

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- I. Private/Contract Labor
 - A. Makes a formal application to the hospital via Medical Staff Services. The application shall include but not be limited to:
 - 1. An outline of their qualifications and credentials,
 - 2. Stipulation of their requests to assist in a surgeons practice including assisting at the operating table,
 - 3. Indications of the surgeon who will be responsible for the Surgical Assistants or Physician Assistants performance.
 - B. First assistants may not operate independently.
 - C. The application approval follows the guidelines set forth by Methodist Hospital Medical Staff Bylaws - Article VI (pg. 16-20)
 - D. A competency skills list must be completed and filed for each applicant. This competency is verified by surgeons and nurses. (*Refer to Competency Checklist.*)
 - E. Documentation evidencing recertifications or relicensures must be provided to Medical Staff Services prior to lapse of these credentials.
 - F. An annual documented review is conducted by the respective surgeon for whom the private/contract employee works and by the director of Surgical Services or designee.

- II. Hospital Employee
 - A. A hospital employee may not operate independently.
 - B. Documentation evidencing recertification and/or relicensure must be provided to the Director of Surgical Services for inclusion in their personnel file by the expiration date of each item. If not, any merit increases previously awarded for certifications will be removed.
 - C. Certifications as a surgical first assistant is encouraged but not required.
 - D. A competency skills list must be completed and filed for each employee functioning in the capacity of surgical first assistant. This competency is verified by surgeons and nurses. (*Refer to the Competency Verification Checklist, Page 5*)
 - E. An annual documented review of competency is conducted at the time of performance appraisal by the nurse manager and specialty charge nurse.

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Directions: Please initial the appropriate box - Yes, No, Non-Applicable (N/A), date, and sign your name at the bottom. Example: John Doe (JD) This is your verification of the competency of the individual to perform in the role of surgical first assistant.

Name: _____ RN _____ LVN _____ Surg Tech _____
 Physician Assistant _____ Other _____
 Surgical Technician Certification Date: _____
 Surgical First Assistant Certification Date: _____

Hospital Employee Number: _____ Physician/Contract Employee:
 Physician/s: _____

Competency Checklist:

Skill/Process	Date	Yes	No	N/A
Basic Skills: (Demonstrates the following skills.)				
1. Applies principles of aseptic technique				
2. Preparation of Surgical Site: Shaving, Positioning, Surgical scrub/paint				
3. Draping				
4. Retracting				
5. Suctioning				
6. Knowledge of instrumentation and application				
7. Dressing Applications: (gauze, splints, casts, eye patches, other: _____)				
8. Manual dexterity				
9. Ability to follow direction				
10. Anticipates needs of surgeon/procedure				

Competency Reviewers:

Name/Initials: 1. _____ 2. _____
 3. _____ 4. _____
 5. _____ 6. _____
 7. _____ 8. _____
 9. _____ 10. _____

Date Approved: _____ **Comments:** _____

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Skill/Process	Date	Yes	No	N/A
Advanced Skills: (Demonstrates the following skills.)				
1. Principles of Tissue Handling				
a. Methods of tissue manipulation, e.g., manual vs. mechanical				
b. Traction/counter-traction				
c. Forceps handling for picking-up opposite				
d. Types of dissection, e.g., sharp and blunt				
e. Exposure				
2. Hemostasis:				
Permanent:				
a. Electrocautery (Clamping &/or cauterizing vessels or tissue; bipolar & unipolar)				
b. Tying and/or ligating clamped vessels or tissue (Application of free-hand tie, tie-on-a-pass, and stick-tie)				
c. Applying hemostatic clips				
d. Placing local hemostatic agents (gelfoam, surgical, etc.)				
e. Clamping				
f. Tamponade				
Temporary:				
a. Applying tourniquets and demonstrating awareness of the indications/contraindications for use with knowledge of side effects of extended use.				
b. Applying vessel loops				
c. Applying non-crushing clamps				
d. Applying direct digital pressure				

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Skill/Process	Date	Yes	No	N/A
Advanced Skills cont.: (Demonstrates the following skills.)				
e. Use of stapling devices				
3. Insertion, Placement, and Securing of Drains				
a. Purposes				
b. Types				
c. Functions				
d. Methods of securing				
4. Miscellaneous				
a. Harvesting of saphenous vein				
b. Preparation of saphaneous vein for implantation				
c. Tissue manipulation				
d. Tissue exposure				
e. Utilizes running or interrupted subcutaneous sutures with absorbable or non-absorbable material				
f. Utilizes subcuticular closure technique with or without adhesive skin closure strips				
g. Closes skin with method indicated by surgeon				
h. Packing with sponges				
i. Participating in volume replacement or autotransfusion techniques as appropriate.				
j. Assists in securing drainage systems for tissue				
k. Demonstrates skill and knowledge of anatomy when making incisions.				
5. Comments:				

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References:

1. American College of Surgeons
2. Medical Staff Bylaws 4-19
3. Texas Board of Nurse Examiners
4. Sample of RN First Assistant Job Description

- ~Job Description: CST Surgical Assistant by the Association of Surgical Technologists
- ~South Plains College format for instruction for the Surgical Technologist Program from Paul Price
- ~AORN (Association of Operating Room Nurses) Information on First Assistants and Standards of Practice
- ~Texas Board of Nurse Examiners

Edited: March 5, 2009