

NATURE OF WORK

A surgical technologist (ST) works as a part of the surgical team to ensure that the operative procedure is conducted under optimal conditions. Surgical team members function in two capacities—nonsterile and sterile. The nonsterile team members are the circulator and the anesthesia provider. In certain situations, other personnel, such as the radiology technologist or pathologist, may also be present. Surgical Technologists are vital members of the operating room team. The ST is responsible for three phases of patient care, or surgical case management, with minimal direction or supervision from team members. All surgical team members must adhere to the practice of sterile techniques. Honesty and moral integrity are necessary to uphold these standards. The proficient ST must display a caring attitude toward the patient care environment. It is also necessary to understand normal anatomy and physiology, the pathological condition affecting the patient, the planned operative procedure, and consider any variations that may be necessary to accommodate a specific patient.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The O.R. environment is brightly lit, relatively quiet, and temperature controlled. Most of the duties of the ST require standing for extended periods of time and the ability to lift and move heavy objects. Attention must be focused. The ST can be exposed to communicable diseases, unpleasant sights, odors, and hazardous materials. Most surgical procedures are carried out during the day and a 40-hour workweek is common. The ST may be required to work the evening or night shift, weekends, holidays, and periodically be on call.

TRAINING & QUALIFICATIONS

Most employers require that technologists be certified. Continuing education or reexamination is necessary to keep a certification and needs to be renewed every four to five years. Medical technologies and techniques change rather often and the ST is expected to keep up with new developments through continued education.

JOB OUTLOOK

Surgical Technology is one of the fastest growing careers and the demand for high quality technologists is projected to keep rising in the years to come. Job options will be best for the certified STs.

CAREER OPTIONS

Surgical Technologist, Surgical or Operating Room Technicians

ESTIMATED SALARY RANGE

New Mexico— \$25,000—\$35,000

Nationally — \$25,000—\$40,000

RELATED OCCUPATIONS

Dental assistants, licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses, clinical laboratory technologies and technicians and medical assistants.

SJC Basic Program Information

This program runs from January to December. There is a selection process.

Must have a minimum of a C average in the prerequisites of: Microbiology, Freshman Composition, Medical Terminology, Anatomy & Physiology I & II.

For further information go to:

www.sanjuancollege.edu/pages/158.asp

Click on AAS link under Career Programs

www.bls.gov/oco/ocos106.htm

www.careers-nm.org



*Most of this information is from the Occupational Outlook Handbook—2008-2009

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