

Proposed AORN Position Statement on the Role of the Scrub Person

Preamble

Perioperative registered nurses provide care throughout a patient's surgical experience; the patient remains the focus of that care.^{1,2} The scope of responsibility of perioperative registered nurses includes the scrub role as it relates to patient outcomes.³

Perioperative registered nurses have defined practice standards for the scrub person.⁴⁻¹⁶ Perioperative registered nursing practice incorporates the cognitive, behavioral, and technical components of professional nursing.² When functioning in the scrub role, the perioperative registered nurse augments his or her ability to anticipate, plan for, and respond to the needs of the patient, surgeon, and other team members. The perioperative registered nurse is cognizant of patient responses to both planned and unplanned surgical events and contributes to the overall well-being of a patient by being vigilant in assessing the patient's condition as it is demonstrated within the surgical field and by visual monitoring devices. Perioperative registered nurses have performed the role of scrub person for more than 100 years.¹

Position Statement

AORN believes that to achieve optimal patient outcomes in the surgical environment, the perioperative registered nurse should maintain an active presence in performing the scrub role to ensure appropriate delegation and supervision of scrub duties and to maintain an integral link between scrub and circulating responsibilities.

AORN believes that with the continued technological advances in surgical care, a continued presence in the scrub role enhances the perioperative registered nurse's ability to assess and implement a plan of care (including the appropriate delegation of duties).

AORN believes individuals who are not licensed to practice professional nursing and who perform in the role of scrub person are performing a delegated technical function under the direct supervision of a perioperative registered nurse. In any state that has categories of unlicensed assistive individuals who are not under the jurisdiction of nursing, the role of the scrub person may be assigned to an unlicensed assistive individual. These technical functions are assigned by the perioperative registered nurse in charge, based on the level of training and competencies the unlicensed assistive individual may have.

AORN believes perioperative registered nurses performing in the role of the scrub person are practicing nursing.^{1,2}

Notes

1. "Perioperative patient focused model," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 15-18.
2. L K Groah, *Operating Room Nursing: The Perioperative Role* (Reston, Va: Reston Publishing Co, 1983) 3-20.

3. "Perioperative patient outcomes," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 197-206.
4. J Rothrock, "Concepts basic to perioperative nursing," in *Alexander's Care of the Patient in Surgery*, 12th ed, J C Rothrock, ed (St Louis: Mosby, 2003) 2-5.
5. "Recommended practices for surgical attire," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 223-227.
6. "Recommended practices for sponge, sharp, and instrument counts," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 229-234.
7. "Recommended practices for electrosurgery," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 245-259.
8. "Recommended practices for endoscopic minimally invasive surgery," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 267-271.
9. "Recommended practices for environmental responsibility," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 281-284.
10. "Recommended practices for surgical hand antisepsis/hand scrubs," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 291-299.
11. "Recommended practices for safe care through identification of potential hazards in the surgical environment," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 301-307.
12. "Recommended practices for laser safety in practice settings," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 319-328.
13. "Recommended practices for standard and transmission-based precautions in the perioperative practice setting," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 361-365.
14. "Recommended practices for maintaining a sterile field," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 367-371.
15. "Recommended practices for sterilization in perioperative practice settings," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 373-382.
16. "Recommended practices for surgical tissue banking," in *Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines* (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2004) 385-395.