

Surgical Technologist/Technician

■ Job Description

Surgical technologists assist with patient care and related services in hospital operating rooms, performing tasks that help ensure a safe surgical environment. They contribute to the operating team's efficiency, and support the surgeons and others involved in operating procedures. The role of surgical technologist is not rigidly defined because of practice differences caused by varied geographic and socioeconomic factors. The technologist may set up the operating room, prepare surgical instruments and assist in their use, and prepare patients for surgery. The technologist has a knowledge of and experience with aseptic surgical techniques.

■ Job Settings

Most are employed by hospitals, mainly in operating and delivery rooms. Others are employed in clinics and surgical centers, and in the offices of physicians and dentists who perform outpatient surgery. A few, known as private scrubs, are employed directly by surgeons who have special surgical teams like those for liver transplants.

■ Projected Need

Nationally and in Illinois, employment of surgical technologists is expected to grow faster than average through 2010. The number of surgeries performed each year is expected to increase. This increase will be due in part to a growing and aging population. Older people generally require more surgical procedures. In addition, advances in technology will make new surgical procedures available. While hospitals remain the largest employer of surgical technologists, much faster employment growth is expected in doctor's offices and surgical centers.

In Illinois, there were about 2,550 people employed in this small occupation in 2000.

■ Salaries

Nationally, the median wage for surgical technologists is \$14.47 per hour. Half of all surgical technologists earn between \$12.12 and \$17.00 per hour.

In Illinois, beginning surgical technologists earn \$11.49 per hour. Experienced technologists receive \$17.55 per hour. Median hourly wage is \$15.27.

■ Related Careers

Medical assistant, physician assistant, dental assistant, perfusionist (cardiopulmonary technician), and dialysis technician

■ Differences in Training

Programs vary in length from nine months to two years and are offered by technical and community colleges and hospitals. Educational programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).

The following schools in Illinois offer CAAHEP-accredited surgical technology programs:

College of DuPage - Glen Ellyn
College of Lake County - Grayslake
Elgin Community College - Elgin
Illinois Central College - East Peoria
John A. Logan College - Carterville
John Wood Community College - Quincy
Malcolm X College - Chicago
Parkland College - Champaign
Prairie State College - Chicago Heights
Rend Lake College - Ina
Richland Community College - Decatur
Rock Valley College - Rockford
Shawnee Community College - Ullin
Southeastern Illinois College - Harrisburg
Trinity Medical Center - Moline
Triton College - River Grove

■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/>. You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.

[Surgical Technology](#)

■ Skill Standards

One way to prepare for employment in this occupation is through meeting the standards endorsed by the Illinois Occupational Skill Standards and Credentialing Council (IOSSCC). Through the combined efforts of business, industry and education leaders, skill standards are developed for those occupations critical to the Illinois economy. *Skill standards define what you must know and be able to perform in order to pass a credentialing examination and obtain and keep a job in this field.* For more information regarding skill standards, contact the guidance counselor at your local high school or community college, visit your local Illinois Employment and Training Center (IETC), or access skill standards information at www.ioes.org/cte_curr/oss/index.html.

The IOSSCC has endorsed skill standards for surgical technology organized around the following performance areas for surgical technologist:

- Fundamental skills such as: wash hands (medical asepsis), use universal precautions, transport patient using stretcher/wheelchair, change sterile dressing, use principles of communication.
- Preoperative skills such as: check and obtain instruments, supplies and equipment required for procedure, perform surgical scrub of hands and arms, gown and glove self.
- Intraoperative skills such as: perform counts, prepare the client/patient, prepare and pass instruments, supplies and equipment, maintain accurate records during the procedure.
- Postoperative skills such as: transport the patient to recovery, clean and prepare instruments for terminal sterilization, assist with the terminal cleaning of the room, prepare the room for the next patient.

■ Credentials

The Liaison Council on Certification (LCC) awards the designation Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) to those who graduate from a CAAHEP-accredited program and pass a national certification exam. Certification is optional, however, most employers prefer to hire certified technologists.

■ Resources

Association of Surgical Technologists
7108-C South Alton Way
Englewood, CO 80112
Phone: 303.694.9130
E-mail: ast@ast.org
<http://www.ast.org>
Select "The Profession" then "General Information."
Click on "Career Details."

Up to five scholarships ranging in amounts from \$500 to \$2,000 are awarded annually to students who are enrolled in a CAAHEP-accredited surgical technology program. A 3.0 GPA is required.

Liaison Council on Certification for the
Surgical Technologist
7790 East Arapahoe Rd., Suite 240
Englewood, CO 80112-1274
Phone: 800.707.0057
E-mail: info@lcc-st.org
<http://www.lcc-st.org>