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Industry Snapshots

Surgical Technologist Tools for the Career Counselor

This data was prepared for California Community Colleges and pertains to community college-level coursework as a resource for counselors to share with students.



The Bottom Line

In hospital settings, the shortage of operating room nurses has contributed to a higher demand for Surgical Technologists who are performing more highly skilled tasks under the supervision of operating room nurses. A shift toward performing minor surgery on an outpatient basis contributes to a further need for Surgical Technologists. Furthermore, the growing complexity of surgical procedures results in a need for more staff in the operating room. Technological advances [like fiber optics and laser technology] are also creating new surgical procedures and increasing the demand for surgery in general. Operating rooms will soon incorporate computers, lasers, fiber optics, electronics and robotics to carry out routine patient care. As a key member of the surgical team, the Surgical Technologist must be prepared to handle these advanced tools.

The volume of surgical procedures is expected to continue to increase as the population grows and ages, because older people tend to require more surgeries. In California, people over the age of 65 are the fastest growing population group. The state's elderly population is expected to increase by 75 percent from 2000-2020. Along with the aging of patients and the general population, the allied health workforce (including Surgical Technologists) is also aging, resulting in increased numbers of retirements.



SOC Code & Fundamental Job Description

(More detailed job descriptions and occupational information can be accessed at ONET Online <http://online.onetcenter.org/find/>)

29-2055	Surgical Technologists	Surgical Technologists are commonly known as scrubs or operating room technicians. They work as part of a team with doctors and nurses in all aspects of a wide variety of operative settings. Their job is to see that the operative procedure is conducted under optimal conditions. Before surgery, they may prepare the patients, facilities, and instruments. During surgery they may assist by passing instruments, checking vital signs, and handling specimens. After surgery they may help clean the operating room and move patients to recovery rooms.
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Industry Trends

Description	Jobs in L.A. County	Growth in job openings (5 yrs)	2009 Median Hourly Earnings	Licenses/ Certification Required
Surgical Technologists	2419	15%	\$20.75	<p>Certification is voluntary, not required in California. Two certifications are available:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) from the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA). 2. Technologist in Surgery – Certified (TS-C) from the National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT).

Student Tips

■ Skills Employers Seek:

- Willingness to learn
- Anatomy and physiology
- English composition
- Sciences with labs
- Accredited course work
- Previous hospital experience
- Team spirit
- Technical inclination
- Troubleshooting
- Attention to instructions
- Know how to anticipate
- Common sense
- Relevant clinical experience
- Work experience
- Multiple specialties

■ **Moving Up the Career Ladder:** Surgical Technologists usually advance by specializing in a particular area of surgery, such as neurosurgery or open heart surgery. They also may work as Circulating Technologists. With additional training, some Technologists advance to First Assistant. Some Surgical Technologists manage central supply departments in hospitals, or take positions with insurance companies, sterile supply services, and operating equipment firms. Surgical Technologists can also become nurses with the appropriate education.

Educational Track

California Community Colleges Model Surgical Technology Programs

College	Degree Programs
Mira Costa College	Certificate of Achievement – Surgical Technology



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