



## DC Surgical Assistant Licensure Act

Title 17

District of Columbia Municipal Regulations

# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MUNICIPAL REGULATIONS for SURGICAL ASSISTANTS

## **Chapter 80: SURGICAL ASSISTANTS**

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### **8000 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

8000.1 This chapter shall apply to applicants for and holders of a license to practice as a surgical assistant.

8000.2 Chapter 40 (Health Occupations: General Rules) and 41 (Health Occupations: Administrative Procedures) shall supplement this chapter.

### **8001 TERM OF LICENSE**

8001.1 Subject to § 8001.2, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of December 31 of each even-numbered year.

8001.2 If the Director changes the renewal system pursuant to § 4006.3 of chapter



40 of this title, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of the last day of the month of the birthdate of the holder of the license or other date established by the Director.

### **8002 RENEWAL OF LICENSE**

8002.1 The holder of a license to practice as a surgical assistant shall renew his or her license by submitting a completed application on the forms required by the Advisory Committee on Surgical Assistants and paying the required fees prior to the expiration of the license.

8002.2 A licensed holder applying for renewal of a license to practice as a surgical assistant shall submit evidence of current national certification as a surgical assistant, as applicable, by the National Surgical Assistant Association or the American Board of Surgical Assistants or, their successors.

### **8003 LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS**

8003.1 An applicant shall furnish proof satisfactory to the Board in accordance with § 504 of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.04 that the applicant has met one of the following requirements:

(a) Earned a degree or certification from a surgical assistant program accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs, or by the commission's successor; or

(b) Successfully completed a dedicated training program for surgical assistants in the armed forces; or

(c) Demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Board the completion of fulltime work experience performed in the United States under the direct supervision of a physician licensed in the United States and consisting of at least 1,300 hours of performance as a surgical assistant within the 3 years preceding the date of the application

8003.2 Additionally, an applicant shall submit proof satisfactory to the Board in accordance with § 504 of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.04 that the applicant was certified as a surgical assistant by at least one of the following:

(1) The National Surgical Assistant Association; or

(2) The American Board of Surgical Assistants.

### **8004 TRANSITION TO LICENSURE**

8004.1 All references to surgical assistants shall be deemed to refer to persons meeting the requirements for licensure in the District, regardless of whether they are licensed in fact, until March 6, 2009.

### **8005-8007 [RESERVED]**



## **8008 CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

8008.1 This section shall apply to applicants for the renewal, reactivation, or reinstatement of a license for a term expiring December 31, 2008, and for subsequent terms.

8008.2 An applicant for renewal of a license to practice as a surgical assistant shall submit proof pursuant to § 8008.6 of having completed during the two-year (2) period preceding the date the license expires approved continuing education units (CEUs) constituting fifty (50) hours of CEU credit as specified in § 8009.2.

8008.3 A continuing education credit may be granted only for a program or activity approved by the Board in accordance with § 8009.

8008.4 A surgical assistant who is required to obtain continuing education units pursuant to § 8008.2 may, in lieu of meeting the requirement of that section through the completion of CEUs approved by the Board pursuant to § 8009, furnish proof satisfactory to the Board that the surgical assistant holds a current valid certification from the American Board of Surgical Assistants or the National Surgical Assistant's Association and has completed fifty (50) hours of CEUs over a two-year (2) period as part of that certification.

8008.5 An applicant for reactivation of an inactive license or reinstatement of a license to practice as a surgical assistant shall submit proof pursuant to § 8008.6 of having completed during the two-year (2) period immediately preceding the date of application approved CEUs.

8008.6 An applicant under this section shall furnish proof of having completed required continuing education units by submitting with the application the following information:

- (a) The name of the program and its approval number;
- (b) The dates on which the applicant attended the program or performed the activity;
- (c) The hours of credit claimed; and
- (d) Verification by the applicant of completion.

## **8009 APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

8009.1 The Board, in its discretion, may approve continuing education programs and activities that contribute to the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a surgical assistant uses to provide services to patients, the public or the profession and that meet the other requirements of this section.

8009.2 The Board may approve continuing education programs and activities for credit that are as follows:

- (a) Sponsored, co-sponsored, or accredited by:
  - (1) The National Surgical Assistants Association, the American Board of Surgical Assistants, the Association of Surgical Technologists/Association of Surgical Assistants, or the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting;
  - (2) The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education;



- (3) Designated for AOA Category 1-A credit approved by the American Osteopathic Association; or
- (4) A state medical society.

8009.3 An applicant shall have the burden of verifying whether a program or activity is approved by the Board pursuant to this section prior to attending the program or engaging in the activity.

## **8010-8012 [RESERVED]**

## **8013 SCOPE OF PRACTICE**

8013.1 A surgical assistant shall, in accordance with this chapter and the Act, have the authority to perform the following tasks:

- (a) Provide local infiltration or the topical application of a local anesthetic and hemostatic agents at the operative site;
- (b) Incise tissues;
- (c) Ligate and approximate tissues with sutures and clamps;
- (d) Apply tourniquets, casts, immobilizers, and surgical dressings;
- (e) Check the placement and operation of equipment;
- (f) Assist in moving and positioning the patient;
- (g) Assist the surgeon in draping the patient;
- (h) Prepare a patient by cleaning, shaving, and sterilizing the incision area;
- (i) Retract tissue and expose the operating field area during operative procedures;
- (j) Place suture ligatures and clamp, tie, and clip blood vessels to control bleeding during surgical entry;
- (k) Use cautery for hemostasis under direct supervision;
- (l) Assist in closure of skin and subcutaneous tissue;
- (m) Assist in the cleanup of the surgical suite; and
- (n) Check and restock the surgical suite.

8013.2 A surgical assistant shall not perform the following tasks;

- (a) Perform any surgical procedure independently;
- (b) Prescribe any medications or controlled substances; or
- (c) Write any progress notes or orders on hospitalized patients, except operative notes.

## **8014 SUPERVISING SURGEON**

8014.1 To be authorized to supervise a surgical assistant, a physician must be currently licensed as a physician in the District. The license must be unrestricted and active.

8014.2 A supervising surgeon shall perform the critical portions of a surgical procedure. Supervision shall be continuous, and shall require that the delegating physician be immediately available in the surgical suite for delegated acts that the surgical assistant performs and to respond to any emergency until the patient is released from the surgical suite



and care has been transferred to another physician, or until the surgical assistant has completed his or her tasks and has been excused by the supervising surgeon. Telecommunication is insufficient for supervision purposes or as a means for directing delegated acts.

8014.3 It is the responsibility of each team of physician(s) and surgical assistant(s) to ensure that:

- (a) The surgical assistant's scope of practice is clearly defined;
- (b) Delegation of medical tasks is appropriate to the surgical assistant's level of competence;
- (c) The relationship between the members of the team is defined;
- (d) That the relationship of, and access to, the supervising surgeon is defined; and
- (e) A process for evaluation of the surgical assistant's performance is established.

### **8015 TITLE PROTECTION**

8015.1 Unless authorized to practice as a surgical assistant under this act, a person shall not use or imply the use of the words or terms "surgical assistant", or "S.A.", or any similar title or description of services with the intent to represent that the person practices as a surgical assistant.

### **8016 DUTIES OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL ASSISTANTS**

8016.1 The Advisory Committee on Surgical Assistants shall consist of five (5) members appointed by the Mayor. One member of the Committee shall be a surgeon licensed in the District with experience working with surgical assistants, three members shall be surgical assistants licensed in the District, and one shall be the Director of the Department of Health, or his or her designee. The Committee shall advise the Board on all matters pertaining to this chapter and shall meet at least annually to review the guidelines for the licensing and regulation of surgical assistants and shall make necessary revisions for submission to the Board.

8016.2 Upon request of the Board, the Committee shall review applications for a license to practice as a surgical assistant and make recommendations to the Board.

8016.3 Upon request of the Board, the Committee shall review complaints regarding surgical assistants referred by the Board and make recommendations to the Board regarding what action should be taken.

### **8099 DEFINITIONS**

8099.1 As used in this chapter the following terms have the meanings ascribed:

**Board** – the Board of Medicine, established by § 203(a) of the Act, D.C. Official Code § 3-1202.03(a) (1) (2001).

**Committee** – the Advisory Committee on Surgical Assistants, established by § 203 (c-3) of the Act. D.C. Official Code § 3-1202.03(c-3) (2001).



**Immediately available** – physically present in the surgical suite and capable of responding to the surgical assistant and the patient as medically appropriate.

**Practice by surgical assistants** – means the provision of aid by a person who is not a physician licensed to practice medicine, under the direct supervision of a surgeon licensed in the District, in exposure, hemostasis, closures, and other intraoperative technical functions that assist a physician in performing a safe operation with optimal results for the patient.

**Surgical assistant** – a person licensed to practice as a surgical assistant under the Act, or meeting the requirements for licensure in the District, regardless of whether he or she are licensed in fact, until March 6, 2009.

**Surgical suite** – includes the operating room as well as contiguous recovery rooms.

**Supervising surgeon** – a surgeon licensed by the Board who delegates to a licensed surgical assistant surgically assisting and oversees and accepts responsibility for the surgical assisting. 8099.2 The definitions in § 4099 of chapter 40 of this title and the Act are incorporated by reference into and are applicable to this chapter.

