

-NORTHWEST HOSPITAL - Seattle, Washington
 Non-Physician SURGICAL ASSISTANTS

ROLES AND LIMITATIONS OF PRACTICE
Department of Surgery

Based upon state licensure, documented education, training and experience, Surgical Assistants may be granted privileges in the following categories:

Category I	Category II	Category III
Dental Assistant Certified Surgical Technician RN Scrub	Physician Assistant-Surgical Assistant (PA-SA) Certified RN First Assistant (CRN-FA) RN First Assistant (RN-FA)	Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) Physician Assistant-Certified (PA-C)

1. It is the surgeon’s responsibility to assess the competency of the Surgical Assistant and to seek out the Surgical Assistant best suited to the individual surgical case.
2. Ultimately it is the surgeon’s responsibility to assure the technical competency of the Surgical Assistant in order to assure patient safety.
3. All Surgical Assistants, regardless of category, shall be expected to abide by the following:
 - Surgical Assistants must be identified as such at all times.
 - If the Surgical Assistant is in the role of the scrub nurse, he/she shall establish and maintain a sterile field, sterilize instruments, and hand instruments to other staff members in accordance with NWH Operating Room Standards.
 - The Surgical Assistant is NOT to independently perform any surgical procedure, even under the direct supervision of the surgeon.
 - The roles and limitations of practice for each category of Surgical Assistant are further defined as follows:

CATEGORY I

Surgical Assistants credentialed in this category may ONLY assist the surgeon in positioning tissue, irrigation, and function as a scrub nurse, under direct supervision.

Surgical Assistants in this category may not write orders on hospitalized patients and have no prescriptive authority.

CATEGORY II

Surgical Assistants in this category may perform the additional following procedures/functions:

Provide exposure under direct supervision of the surgeon using: retractors, endoscopic instrumentation, and/or endoscopic camera positioning;

Control bleeding under direct supervision of the surgeon by: clamping, cautery, suture ligatures, tying, and clipping of blood vessels;

Assist surgeon in closing of incisions under direct supervision by the following methods: suture, staples, or other as specified;

The surgeon is to **remain scrubbed and in attendance** until the surgical procedure is complete when working with Surgical Assistants in this category.

Surgical Assistants in this category have no prescriptive authority and may not write orders on hospitalized patients. Surgical Assistants in this category who are RNs may inscribe verbal orders only from their sponsoring physicians. They may write progress notes.

CATEGORY III

The Surgical Assistant credentialed in this category may perform functions described for Categories I and II and, may have the following extended responsibilities and privileges:

Surgical Assistants who are licensed as Physician Assistants or Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners may perform additional perioperative and intraoperative functions as granted to the individual by the Board of NWH. These functions may include but are not limited to:

- Prescriptive Authority:
- Pre and Post-op assessment:
- Select post-operative clinical procedures; and
- Documentation responsibilities

The Surgeon utilizing the Surgical Assistant in this category:

- is to *remain in the surgical suite* until the surgical procedure is complete. *The surgeon does not need to remain gowned and gloved;*
- is responsible for review and co-signature of documentation, according to Medical Staff Rules and Regulations;
- continues to be responsible for seeing the patient on a daily basis while hospitalized, and documenting such visit.

Additional procedures and duties may be granted:

- on written request by the Surgical Assistant and sponsoring surgeon;
- with demonstration of training and competence; and
- and approval of privileges by the Board of Northwest Hospital as set forth in the Medical Staff Bylaws.

None of these privileges shall be granted without the direct written approval of the sponsoring/supervising physician and the Board of Northwest Hospital.

The sponsoring physician(s) shall have primary responsibility for all care provided by the Surgical Assistant and must document supervision of patient care according to Medical Staff Rules and Regulations.

APPROVALS:

Surgical Audit Committee:	September 29, 1998
Credentials Committee:	November 6, 1998
Executive Committee:	November 9, 1998
Quality Standards:	February 19, 1999