

Perioperative Nursing Duties – Circulating Role (SPH/MSJ)

Site/Unit Applicability

Operating Room (OR), Surgical Procedure Rooms (SPR) (SPH) and Operating Rooms, Delia Tetrault (DT) Procedure Rooms (MSJ)

Practice Level

RNs and LPNs who have completed a post-basic perioperative nursing course

To input and adjust the settings on the laser, RNs and LPNs must complete “laser nurse operator” course on Learning Hub and “hands-on workshop” delivered by the OR CNLs annually.

Need to Know

- RN and LPN responsibilities in the circulating role are outlined to reflect appropriate scope of practice, define roles, and maintain an efficient flow.
- Collaborative responsibilities are within the scope of both RN and LPN practice. Both the RN and LPN are responsible for ongoing communication to ensure completeness.
- At PHC, the LPN may be assigned to the second circulator role.
- The RN always assumes the role of primary circulator and is responsible for overseeing the safe and efficient running of the theatre.
- The RN is responsible for managing the nursing aspects of any perioperative emergency.
- The LPN cannot relieve the RN for breaks.

Procedures:

Operating Room Preparation: Beginning of the Day	
RN Responsibilities	LPN Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the slate. Consult with surgeon, anesthesiologist, and other members of the team re pertinent information. Plan care accordingly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the slate in preparation for assignment. Participate in planning activities.

Operating Room Preparation: First and Subsequent Procedures	
Collaborative Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure breathing circuits are connected to the anesthetic machine, suction is set up and working. • Prepare OR according to Doctor's Preference Card (DPC). Ensure all required equipment is in place. • Check and sort case cart. Pick items from Core. • Print required documents. 	

Patient Admission/Anesthesia	
RN Responsibilities	LPN Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admit the patient to the theatre. • Act as the primary assistant to the anesthesiologist during induction, unless this role is assumed by an anesthetic assistant or resident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with transfer of the patient to the OR table.
Collaborative Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attach arm boards; apply safety straps. • Apply ECG leads, BP cuff, and oxygen saturation monitor. • Assist with insertion of lines (e.g., IV, arterial, CVP). • Obtain anesthetic equipment and supplies as needed or requested. • Participate in the briefing component of the Surgical Safety Checklist. 	

Sterile Set Up	
RN Responsibilities	LPN Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform the surgical count if the scrub nurse is an LPN. (See link below.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May perform the surgical count if the scrub nurse is an RN. (See link below.)
Collaborative Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open sterile supplies for scrub nurse. • Organize PRN items. • Prepare and deliver medications and solutions to the sterile field. 	

Position/Prep/Drape	
RN Responsibilities	LPN Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assume nursing responsibility for patient positioning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist surgical team with patient positioning.
Collaborative Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insert urinary catheter. (See link below.) Apply and operate pneumatic tourniquet. (See link below.) Apply sequential compression devices (SCDs). Perform hair removal. (See link below.) Apply cautery pad(s). Perform skin prep. Assist surgical team with gowning. Monitor draping process. Connect and turn on surgical equipment. Confirm settings. Each nurse documents the care they provided. 	

Intraoperative	
RN Responsibilities	LPN Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform closure count(s) if the scrub nurse is an LPN. (See link below.) May hang blood products. (See link below.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May perform closure count(s) if the scrub nurse is an RN. (See link below.)
Collaborative Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the time-out component of the Surgical Safety Checklist. Provide items for sterile set-up, surgical team, anesthesiologist. Input and adjust the settings on the laser console. (One circulating nurse is assigned to this task alone.) Select, confirm, and open implants. Manage specimens. (See link below.) Perform checks on blood products with the transfusionist. (See link below.) Participate in the debriefing component of the Surgical Safety Checklist. 	

Immediately Post-Op	
RN Responsibilities	LPN Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with extubation and airway management, as required. Accompany patient to post-op destination. 	
Collaborative Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn off and disconnect equipment, remove cautery pad(s), drapes. Perform skin assessment. Provide comfort measures and clean patient, as needed/appropriate. Assist with transfer of patient to post-op bed. Finalize Periop Doc in Cerner. Participate in room clean up and change over. Report instrument issues to MDRD, other repair issues to Biomed. 	

Related Documents

- [B-00-11-10019](#) –Surgical Safety Checklist – SPH & MSJ Surgery
- [B-00-13-10069](#) – Surgical Count Protocol SPH
- [B-00-13-10134](#) – Surgical Count MSJ
- [B-00-12-10053](#) –Tourniquet: Use in Operating Room (OR)
- [B-00-12-10099](#) – Urinary Catheterization
- [B-00-13-10102](#) – Hair Removal: Appropriate Clipping (no shaving)
- [B-00-12-10065](#) – Blood/Blood Product Administration
- [B-00-13-10042](#) – Surgical Specimen Handling and Management in the Operating Room

Reference

ORNAC. (2021). *The ORNAC standards, guidelines, and position statements for perioperative registered nurses* (15th ed).

Persons/Groups Consulted

Practice Consultant –Scope of Practice, Professional Practice, PHC

Developed By

OR Consultant

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