

Sterile Processing Technician

Technical Standards

Standard 1: Healthcare Foundations

Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of the healthcare environment and the role of the sterile processing technician.

Performance Indicators

- Describe the organization and workflow of a healthcare facility.
- Explain the role and responsibilities of the sterile processing department.
- Identify members of the surgical and perioperative healthcare team.
- Demonstrate professional communication and teamwork.
- Apply ethical and legal responsibilities, including patient confidentiality (HIPAA).
- Demonstrate professionalism, accountability, and employability skills.

Standard 2: Medical Terminology and Anatomy

Students will apply medical terminology and basic anatomy as they relate to sterile processing.

Performance Indicators

- Interpret common medical prefixes, suffixes, and root words.
- Identify major body systems and anatomical structures.
- Recognize surgical procedures associated with each body system.
- Use proper medical terminology in verbal and written communication.

Standard 3: Microbiology and Infection Prevention

Students will apply principles of microbiology to prevent disease transmission.

Performance Indicators

- Differentiate between bacteria, viruses, fungi, spores, and prions.
- Explain the chain of infection.
- Describe methods for breaking the chain of infection.

- Apply Standard Precautions and Transmission-Based Precautions.
- Explain aseptic technique.
- Identify healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and prevention strategies.

Standard 4: Safety and Regulatory Compliance

Students will demonstrate safe work practices while complying with healthcare regulations and standards.

Performance Indicators

- Demonstrate proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Apply OSHA safety standards.
- Explain bloodborne pathogen requirements.
- Describe hazardous material handling procedures.
- Interpret Safety Data Sheets (SDS).
- Demonstrate emergency response procedures.
- Identify regulatory agencies including HSPA, AAMI, ANSI, OSHA, CDC, FDA, EPA, Joint Commission, and CMS.

Standard 5: Decontamination and Cleaning

Students will safely perform decontamination procedures according to industry standards.

Performance Indicators

- Receive and transport contaminated instruments safely.
- Sort instruments according to manufacturer instructions.
- Perform manual cleaning procedures.
- Operate ultrasonic cleaners.
- Operate washer-disinfectors.
- Identify appropriate detergents and cleaning chemicals.
- Inspect instruments following cleaning.
- Document decontamination activities.

Standard 6: Surgical Instrument Identification

Students will identify, inspect, and safely handle surgical instruments.

Performance Indicators

- Identify common surgical instruments by name and function.
- Classify instruments by specialty.
- Inspect instruments for cleanliness and functionality.
- Identify damaged instruments requiring repair.
- Demonstrate proper instrument handling techniques.
- Differentiate between disposable and reusable devices.

Standard 7: Instrument Inspection, Assembly, and Packaging

Students will prepare instruments and procedure trays for sterilization.

Performance Indicators

- Interpret count sheets and tray recipes.
- Assemble instrument trays accurately.
- Select appropriate packaging materials.
- Wrap instrument trays using approved techniques.
- Package peel pouches correctly.
- Label packages according to facility standards.
- Inspect assembled trays for completeness and accuracy.

Standard 8: Sterilization Processes

Students will perform sterilization procedures following manufacturer instructions and industry standards.

Performance Indicators

- Explain principles of sterilization.
- Compare steam and low-temperature sterilization methods.
- Select appropriate sterilization cycles.
- Load sterilizers correctly.
- Demonstrate proper unloading procedures.
- Apply manufacturer Instructions for Use (IFU).
- Identify sterilization failures and corrective actions.

Standard 9: Sterilization Monitoring and Documentation

Students will verify sterilization effectiveness using monitoring systems.

Performance Indicators

- Perform mechanical monitoring.
- Interpret chemical indicators.
- Perform biological monitoring.
- Document sterilization records accurately.
- Maintain sterilization logs.
- Identify failed sterilization loads and implement corrective actions.
- Demonstrate recall procedures.

Standard 10: Storage and Distribution

Students will maintain sterile inventory and distribute sterile supplies safely.

Performance Indicators

- Store sterile items according to industry standards.
- Maintain event-related sterility.
- Rotate inventory using First-In, First-Out (FIFO).
- Inspect packages before distribution.
- Transport sterile supplies while maintaining package integrity.
- Manage inventory using tracking systems.

Standard 11: Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Students will apply quality management principles within sterile processing.

Performance Indicators

- Conduct quality assurance inspections.
- Document quality indicators.
- Participate in process improvement activities.
- Identify common causes of sterilization errors.
- Utilize data to improve department performance.
- Demonstrate accountability through accurate documentation.

Standard 12: Specialty Instrumentation

Students will identify and process specialty instruments and complex medical devices.

Performance Indicators

- Identify orthopedic instruments.
- Identify laparoscopic instruments.
- Identify robotic surgical instruments.
- Process powered surgical equipment.
- Explain care of flexible endoscopic accessories.
- Follow manufacturer instructions for specialty devices.

Standard 13: Documentation and Information Systems

Students will accurately complete sterile processing documentation.

Performance Indicators

- Complete instrument tracking records.
- Document biological and chemical monitoring.
- Record equipment maintenance activities.
- Complete sterilization logs.
- Maintain traceability documentation.
- Utilize computerized instrument tracking systems when available.

Standard 14: Professional Skills and Employability

Students will demonstrate workplace readiness expected of entry-level sterile processing technicians.

Performance Indicators

- Demonstrate effective communication.
- Work collaboratively as part of the healthcare team.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving.
- Manage time and prioritize workload.
- Exhibit professionalism and ethical behavior.
- Demonstrate cultural competence and respect for diversity.
- Participate in mock interviews and resume development.