Divisions of Health Professions
Surgical Technology Academic Department
www.bergen.edu/surgtech

Student Consumer Information

OCCUPATIONAL RISKS

The operating room is an environment of precision, speed, and vital interprofessional teamwork. The primary focus is always patient safety and quality patient care, but acknowledging the hazards involved with the profession is the foundational first step toward protecting yourself in the operating room. Physical and environmental demands include:

- Musculoskeletal Injuries- It is important to understand ergonomic safety.
  - You are on your feet for long periods of time.
  - You must be able to resist bathroom breaks and nutrition for a few hours.
  - Lifting, pulling, and pushing.
- Exposure to bloodborne pathogens and bodily fluids.
  - HIV, Hepatitis B and C…
- Injury to instrument handling
- Needle sticks, blades, accidental punctures.
- Exposure to:
  - Radiation
  - Anesthetic gases
  - Chemicals
  - Unpleasant odors,
  - Airborne Irritants [smoke plume]
  - Electrical exposure
- Psychological and Emotional Stress
- Potential Allergies:
  - Latex
  - Betadine [Iodine]

Prioritizing the physical well-being of surgical technologists is essential to maintaining high standards of surgical care. Preventing professional burnout, retaining skilled healthcare staff, mandating safety protocols, and using ergonomic technology are critical steps in protecting those who dedicate their careers to surgical technology.