



S. 31 RN Circulators

Danielle Glover, MPA

Government Affairs Manager, AORN

Association of periOperative Registered Nurses

AORN is a non-profit membership association based in Denver, Colorado that represents the interests of more than 160,000 perioperative nurses by providing nursing education, standards, and clinical practice resources – including the peer-reviewed, monthly publication *AORN Journal* – to enable optimal outcomes for patients undergoing operative and other invasive procedures.

Our members manage, teach, and practice perioperative nursing, are enrolled in nursing education, or are engaged in perioperative research. **We define and advance best nursing practices for surgical patients by researching and distributing scientifically based guidelines.**

Our Mission

Our mission is to **promote safety and optimal outcomes for patients undergoing operative and other invasive procedures** by providing practice support and professional development opportunities to perioperative nurses.

RN Circulators

Coordinate all nursing care within the operating room, observe the surgical team from a **broad perspective**, and assist the team to create and maintain a safe, comfortable environment for the patient's surgery.

As the patient advocate, **RN Circulators speak for the patient when they can speak for themselves** – a time when the patient is most vulnerable.

RN Circulators are responsible for:

- Completing and verifying surgical documents
- Ensuring **correct site, correct procedure surgery**
- Assessing the patient for allergies and other
- Preparing the patient for surgery (positioning and skin antiseptics)
- Maintaining **infection control** throughout the procedure
- Monitoring the performance of electrosurgical and laser devices, video equipment used in laproscopic procedures, and robotic devices as well as overall high-tech equipment functionality
- Performing **counts of surgical items** prior to the operation and after **to ensure none are retained in the patient.**
- **Coordinating emergencies**

Air Traffic Control

RN Circulators are like Air Traffic Control

- Outside sterile field
 - Putting all the pieces together / looking at the big picture
 - Other team members are task focused
 - Goal is keeping patients safe
- Surgeon → in charge of / focused on surgery
 - Anesthesia → in charge of / focused on anesthesia & airways
 - Scrub role → in charge of instruments / focused on passing
 - RN Circulator → in charge of room & patient safety



RN CIRCULATOR

SCRUB ROLE

FIRST ASSIST

SURGEON

Improving patient safety & outcomes

Lead the team in preventing:

- surgical site infections
- medication errors
- wrong site/wrong patient/wrong procedure surgeries
- retained surgical items



RN Circulator leading the Time-Out, where they check for patient name, procedure, site, and go over risks.

Self-regulation is not enough

- Patients are a vulnerable population
- RN Circulators go beyond a standard of care
- 30+ other states felt the need to address the importance of the RN Circulators in patient safety
- Nurses should not be put in positions where they are asked to compromise their ethics and responsibility to patients
- Vermont patients deserve a guarantee they will have an advocate in the OR

Best practice

- Having an RN as Circulator is best practice
- ANA, ANA-Vermont, AORN all maintain there should be 1 RN Circulator for every operating room for the duration of the procedure

Reactive is too late

- S. 31 is proactive, patient-safety centered
- Waiting for a sentinel event to happen and become public is too late
 - By that time a patient has suffered from infections, additional surgeries, loss of time at work or with their family, increased time in the hospital and/or on medications
- Recognizing the complexity and the inherent risk in the OR is a first step toward creating a culture that promotes safety in health care

AORN supports S. 31

AORN and our Vermont periop nurse members strongly support Senate bill 31.