



ORNAC POSITION STATEMENTS

STAFFING THE SURGICAL SUITE

For the patient undergoing surgical intervention, one of the most critical periods of care occurs in the surgical suite. Every patient has a right to a high level of nursing care, and each facility has the responsibility to ensure that the surgical suite is staffed appropriately in order to:

- Meet individual patient's needs.
- Maintain acceptable levels of safety for both patients and staff.
- Function within legal limitations as set forth in provincial licensure standards.

To promote excellence in perioperative nursing care, the position of the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC) is:

- The surgical patient in each theatre must be under the direct supervision of a perioperative Registered Nurse who is physically present in each theatre, and who is immediately available to respond to emergencies, i.e. Circulating Role.
- Each case or surgical procedure must be staffed by a **minimum** of two perioperative Registered Nurses. The circulating nurse role must be assigned to a perioperative Registered Nurse. Depending on the acuity level of the patient and/or the complexity of the procedure, it may be necessary for additional perioperative Registered Nurses to be present in the theatre to provide care.
- Documentation should clearly identify who provided direct patient care.
- The surgical suite must be managed by an experienced perioperative Registered Nurse.

Note: Where other health care workers are utilized as part of the surgical team, they must function in the scrub role or as an assistant to the circulating Registered Nurse and may not relieve the circulating Registered Nurse for coffee, lunch, or other duties.

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