

Having worked as a CST for many years, the thought of working in the OR with an individual that has NOT been formally trained at the college level on the importance of sterile technique is appalling. This day and age people can look up their providers and facility reviews (health grades, infection level, etc.) to see if they would feel comfortable trusting someone with their life. Would you trust someone who doesn't have a clue or formal training at the college level about the importance of sterile technique to work on you or your loved ones? I guarantee you that if I needed surgery, I would make sure the team working on me was formally trained at a college level. And to be quite honest, I believe if most people who needed surgery knew the importance of what CST's do, they would also want this individual formally trained and certified at the college level. CSTs play a crucial role. I have helped save many lives by knowing what I am doing and knowing WHY I am doing it. We are going through a Pandemic now and everyone can see the importance of knowing how to stay clean and wear appropriate PPE in order not to catch nor pass a virus. Can you imagine allowing some of these people to work on you in surgery? Teaching someone sterile technique in the operating room with an actual person laying there is NOT the place to do so. By then, the individual being trained may have already contaminated the sterile field and placed the patient's health in harm.

I am an instructor and know the importance of teaching students WHY and not just do as I say. I actually worked at a facility that allowed this type of on the job training this bill suggests where one week the individual was serving coffee from the stand at the hospital entrance to the next week they were training her to work in the OR. I went into the decontamination area where she was working to clean bloodied instruments and she was NOT wearing any PPE. I asked her why she wasn't. She wasn't told to by the person training her. The person training her was also NOT formally trained at college level. Then I told her how important it was to protect herself from Hep C or other bloodborne pathogens. She had NO idea what I was even talking about. Also, I was one of the first college trained techs to work there in years. I noticed the other techs weren't sterilizing instruments that should have been. I brought this up to the OR manager and because I was FORMALLY TRAINED AT A COLLEGE LEVEL I knew they weren't doing this right so I questioned it which SAVED LIVES. They realized they had been doing things wrong for several years because that type of training was never appropriate. This lead them to having to publicly tell the county that many people may have been exposed to bloodborne pathogens during a certain time (1,000's of patients).

Without formal training, this could be very detrimental to the Surgical Technology field but most importantly it could end up killing many. The cycle for the lack of training would continue to deteriorate and potentially put people's lives at risk. Hospitals are doing this to be selfish. It is cost effective for them to pay someone very little but want them to play such an important role. Also, it will then limit the mobility of that individual to move to another facility that requires certification therefor almost keeping them to work there...and pass on terrible work practices. This is just ridiculous. Trust me, a lot of medical professionals carry with them a list of who they would allow to work on them and who they absolutely DO NOT want to touch them in emergency situations. A non-college trained tech is ALWAYS on my list.