TITLE: VIRGINIA ENDOSCOPIC TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (VETS)
TECHNICIAN ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS

PURPOSE: To define role of the VETS technician in the Operating Room and how they interact with OR staff members. In general, the hospital is responsible for the sterilization of the instrumentation, while VETS is responsible for the proper cleaning, maintenance, reassembly of the laparoscopic/endoscopic instrumentation and equipment and readiness for sterilization.

SKILL LEVEL: R.N., O.R.T., PCT, VETS Technician (scope tech)

SUPPORTIVE DATA: VETS insures the quality and safety of service is maintained by instructing new VETS technicians to their appropriate responsibilities and the limitations of service as documented in their JDPA and OCAE forms

EQUIPMENT: Laparoscopic and endoscopic instrumentation/equipment

CONTENT: Activity guidelines to be followed by the VETS technician:

1. Bringing equipment into the OR and assisting with the set-up of equipment in the OR, including suction irrigation, video equipment (towers/carts, integrated video systems), scopes, laparoscopic/endoscopic instrumentation, cautery units.

2. Retrieving sterile instrumentation and disposables during the procedure for the circulator. A VETS technician may open these items for the scrub nurse only after determining they are not to be included in an instrument or supply count. If they are counted items, the VETS technician is to retrieve the item and give it to the circulator to open, so that it may be counted when placed on the sterile field.

3. VETS technicians may retrieve and open disposables, such as Ethicon and US Surgical, when requested by the surgeon, but only if these items are not included in any type of intraoperative count during the procedure. If it is a counted item, it is to be given to the circulator by VETS to open and count with the scrub nurse.
4. VETS technicians may retrieve physician specific laparoscopic/endoscopic instrument trays or peel-packed laparoscopic/endoscopic instrumentation for the circulator or scrub nurse, but must insure that these are not counted items before opening them onto the field. Again, if they are, the technician should give these items to the circulator to open onto the sterile field.

5. Upon request by the scrub nurse or circulator, the VETS technician may retrieve other instrumentation, such as general soft tissue sets, but only before the physician enters the OR, and only if the technician has completed his/her other responsibilities for the case and is ready to begin the case.

6. General supplies may be retrieved by the technician before the patient actually enters the room. These should be given to the scrub nurse or the circulator to open. **VETS staff may not open general supplies onto the sterile field, including sponges (raytec and dressing), suture, laps, packs, needles, knife blades, etc. Gowns and gloves are the only exception, and they can be opened onto the sterile field only with the scrub technician or circulator observing.**

7. No VETS technician should retrieve or open fluids or drugs or additives of any sort, except for irrigation solution. When retrieving fluid for irrigation, the VETS technician should be labeling the bag with the patient sticker and having the circulator initial the label to witness the correct fluid is being used for irrigation. **This reduces VETS liability in regard to an incorrect irrigation fluid being given to the patient.**

8. VETS technicians are not allowed to adjust any equipment settings, except for the video equipment and insufflator. **The insufflator settings should be communicated to the surgeon at the time the insufflator is turned on and the pressure settings verified when the abdomen is entered.** VETS technicians cannot turn on or adjust any electrosurgery or laser settings at any time (includes bipolar, bovie, Harmonic scalpel, Ligasure).

9. The VETS technician should strive to remain in the room during the scheduled procedure. The technician should ensure that all VETS responsibilities are completed before assisting the OR staff with other activities. **NOTE: VETS increases physician and OR staff satisfaction by striving to perform our contracted responsibilities before, during, and after OR procedures, and before assisting with miscellaneous tasks requested by the OR staff.**
10. VETS technicians may change or take responsibility for sterilization solutions either in Cidex soaking containers or in Steris equipment. The technician may place equipment for which VETS is responsible in the Steris unit, only if he/she has been properly inserviced by the hospital on the operation of the unit or if the technician has attended a Steris inservice. The completion of this inservice can be verified on the OCAE form in the technician’s education file.

11. VETS technicians may operate flash autoclaves in urgent/emergent circumstances. Instrumentation needed emergently may be cleaned and flash sterilized by the VETS technician after he/she has been appropriately inserviced on the correct use of the flash autoclaves. VETS techs must meet the flash autoclaving documentation requiring 2 signatures verifying the flash autoclave run met all parameters.

**DOCUMENTATION:** Record VETS technician presence in the Perioperative Record on the staff screen in a role of “scope technician”.

**REFERENCE:** OR Policy “Virginia Endoscopic Technology Services (VETS) Activities”

**APPROVAL:** 07/01 (new)

**REVIEW/REVISION:** 01/12