

FOR BCCNM REGISTERED MIDWIVES

Framework for midwife certification for surgical assist for cesarean section¹

Midwives in British Columbia manage labour and delivery on their own responsibility. When a cesarean birth is required, they must transfer care to an appropriately trained physician and assume a supportive care role. However, experienced general or temporary registrants² with special training in surgical assist, who are certified by the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM) and privileged to use this skill by their hospital, may assume the surgical assist role during a cesarean section to assist the surgeon in ensuring timely access to care in an emergency and contribute to an efficient use of human resources.

Specialized practice certification in this competency area may be obtained through a course or program established or approved under the authority set out in the BCCNM Bylaws that meets the requirements set out in this framework.

Documentation of specialized practice certification must be provided to and recognized by the hospital in which the midwife holds privileges.

Certification

The certification process must be carried out by the Division of Midwifery in the Faculty of Family Practice at the University of British Columbia or another equivalent midwifery or medical education program affiliated with a hospital that is approved by the BCCNM. Where a BC education program is offering the certification program, the clinical experience portion must take place under the supervision of an obstetrician or general surgeon in a BC hospital. BCCNM recommends that midwives consider the overall clinical context when assuming the role as a surgical assist for their own clients during the clinical experience portion of their training.

¹ An approved certification program is in place. For more information, please contact the BCCNM.

² Only general or temporary registrants who have completed their new registrant requirements and can document a significant volume of clinical experience will be considered for certification.

Upon successful completion of the certification process, proof of competence and a letter of recommendation from the approved medical education program must be submitted to BCCNM before certification is granted.

Where competence in this area of specialized practice has been acquired in a jurisdiction outside of British Columbia, the registrant must submit an *Application for Specialized Practice Certification Equivalency Assessment* to BCCNM for assessment of equivalency in meeting the program content requirements outlined in this framework. The application may be requested from BCCNM. Evaluation by an obstetrician in a BC hospital and a letter of recommendation is required. Specialized practice certification must be received by the registrant prior to independent practice in this competency area.

SPECIALIZED PRACTICE CERTIFICATION TRAINING: COURSE CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

Training courses and/or programs for specialized practice certification in surgical assist for cesarean section must teach and assess theoretical and practical knowledge. This includes proper procedures and protocols for surgical assist at cesarean birth through the completion of self-directed learning study materials and workshops with lab simulation, followed by demonstration of competence by successful completion of written and/or oral and /or simulated practical assessments and a clinical practicum under supervision in hospital.

Training courses and/or programs for specialized practice certification in surgical assist for cesarean section must also assure safe practice and competence in the required skills for surgical assist at cesarean birth. This will take place in a clinical setting through a clinical practicum with a qualified obstetrician or general surgeon. Competency will be confirmed through:

1. Attendance in the role of surgical assist at both primary and repeat cesarean births, including a minimum of one surgical assist where the client has had more than one previous cesarean section, under the supervision of a qualified obstetrician or general surgeon;
2. Successful evaluation of competency by the supervising surgeon based upon a standardized competency framework in which the following knowledge and skills are demonstrated:
 - Recognize clinical indications for cesarean section;
 - Obtain the appropriate physician consultation and review respective roles;
 - Provide support and information to clients and their support person;
 - Complete the required history and physical examination;
 - Apply surgical aseptic technique in the context of the operating room;
 - Listen and respond to surgeon and members of the surgical team;
 - Have well developed situational awareness;
 - Position, prepare and drape the client;
 - Ensure proper exposure of working field;

- Use surgical instruments and devices appropriately that minimizes tissue damage and blood loss;
- Provide timely and effective hemostasis;
- Assist with wound closure and suturing;
- Initiate emergency actions as needed;
- Assist with hysterectomy if required;
- Provide information and support;
- Identify and triage postpartum complications; and
- Perioperative follow-up in the community.

The certification process must include successfully performing sufficient surgical assists at cesarean births under the supervision of an obstetrician or general surgeon for the supervising surgeon to confirm the midwife's competence. A letter of recommendation from the supervising surgeon is required.

Continuing competency and recertification

Evidence-based continuing professional development is a necessary component for maintaining practitioners' knowledge and skill. Midwives are expected to keep up to date with the latest evidence relevant surgical assist for cesarean section. Midwives are expected to seek mentoring or continuing professional development as needed, especially in cases where the skills have not been practiced regularly.

Registrants must log the number of surgical assist births they have performed through [BCCNM's online platform](#) for continued specialized certification eligibility. The log will be reviewed during annual registration renewal. BCCNM requires recertification where the midwife has managed fewer than three surgical assists over the preceding 24 months, although hospital specific requirements may be higher. Recertification may be in the form of a BCCNM-approved refresher course and/or competency reassessment by a surgeon.

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