



Allied Ophthalmic Personnel Ophthalmic Assistant, Technician, and Medical Technologist Scope of Practice

Overview of the Scope of Practice

The purpose of this document is to define the Scope of Practice for Allied Ophthalmic Personnel (AOP) and to specify their roles as members of the ophthalmic health care team. Allied Ophthalmic Personnel are employed in a multi-specialty field that is comprised of Ophthalmic Assistants, Technicians and Technologists (with subspecialties in surgical assisting, imaging, biometry, and ultrasound) and other mid-level eye care team members. The scope of practice as outlined below will evolve as ophthalmic technology changes.

The knowledge, skills, and interpersonal behaviors required of Allied Ophthalmic Personnel include the following core competency domains:

- Patient care
- Medical knowledge
- Professionalism, interpersonal and communication skills
- Technical and scientific skills
- Community and health services

Definition of the Allied Ophthalmic Personnel Profession

Allied Ophthalmic Personnel are eye health care professionals working under the supervision of a physician who is qualified or licensed to practice medicine and surgery specializing in ophthalmology. AOP (assistant, technician, medical technologist) are qualified to assist in the diagnostic evaluation, treatment and management, and care of patients with deficiencies and abnormalities that affect vision and the visual system. The AOP scope of practice allows an assistant, technician, and medical technologist to perform tasks in accordance with laws and regulations that permit the physician to delegate.

Allied ophthalmic health professionals use evidence-based practices to optimize patient outcomes. Allied ophthalmic health professionals must also attempt to prevent disease and management of patients with chronic diseases. Thus, the scope of allied ophthalmic health covers the individual, the family, and the community; many allied health professionals specialize in the promotion of optimum eye function and health, and the improvement of eye health-related quality of life. Allied Ophthalmic Personnel also work in health care administration and health systems management.

Scope of Practice of the AOP Profession

Allied Ophthalmic Personnel are individuals qualified through academic and clinic experience to provide patient care and assistance to ophthalmologists and may hold professional credentials.

The responsibilities of Allied Ophthalmic Personnel include assisting in the diagnostic evaluation, management, treatment, education, and care of patients with medical and surgical conditions affecting the visual system. Their scope of practice includes the application of technology and the use of protocols across all health care delivery sites including, but not limited to, the hospital, the clinic, and the physician's office. They enter acquired clinical data and dictated information from the physician into paper or electronic medical records. These activities are supported by education, research, and administration.

Allied Ophthalmic Personnel perform assigned duties. AOP may not diagnose or treat eye disorders and may not prescribe medications; they are not independent practitioners. They can provide diagnostic information and clinical data in the ophthalmic exam to the physician, who is treating patients, and may assist in surgery, patient education, and compliance with prescribed treatment. It is not within the AOP scope of

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practice to perform any injection technique or similar invasive procedures that involve the placement of needles, trocars, cannulas, or instillation devices within and beneath tissue surfaces.

Patient and family education activities are to promote knowledge and understanding of the eye disease process, medical therapy and self-help. Public education activities focus on the promotion of visual and eye health and wellness.

Assisting in the performance of clinical and diagnostic activities may include but is not limited to:

1. Obtaining and documenting patient histories
2. Maintaining and repairing equipment and instruments
3. Determining visual acuity including: pupillary assessment and visual acuity assessment
4. Performing tests, evaluations, and studies of the visual system including: visual fields, keratometry, ocular motility, PAM, and Osmolarity
5. Performing automated and subjective refraction without prescribing
6. Performing ophthalmic imaging
7. Administering eye drops, ointments, and irrigating solutions to the eye, and knowledge about oral medications and non-invasive techniques
8. Assisting with corrective lenses including: spectacles and contact lenses (i.e. lensometry, etc.)
9. Performing supplemental testing
10. Performing office duties and clinical tasks – entering data into the EMR
11. Providing patient services

Assisting with patient treatments, interventions, procedures and management may include but is not limited to the application and monitoring of:

1. Administration of pharmacological agents related to eye care procedures as prescribed and supervised by the physician, including but not limited to topical anesthetics, fluorescein and other topical dyes, dilating agents, miotics, and pressure lowering eye drops
2. Acquisition and processing of microbiological specimens. Preparation and labeling of microscope slides and culture media for cultures obtained by the physician
3. Measurement of intraocular pressure (tonometry).
4. Performing automated and manual refraction for diagnostic purposes
5. Performing amblyopia treatment: patching, drops, prisms, etc.
6. Performing surgical procedures

Assisting in the performance of ophthalmic surgical activities may include but is not limited to:

1. Pre-operative preparation of the patient
2. Preparation of surgical instruments and equipment
3. Proper aseptic technique
4. Induction of ophthalmic anesthesia
5. Surgical procedures
6. Surgical complications
7. Ophthalmic surgical pharmacology
8. Minor surgical and therapeutic procedures
9. Post-operative education

Performing imaging and other activities that may include but is not limited to:

1. Examination techniques: fundus photography, external photography, Optical Coherence Tomography, A-Scan and B-Scan, ultrasonography, ultrasound biomicroscopy
2. Proper maintenance of instruments
3. Intraocular lens power calculations

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