

Florida Statutes

458.3475 Anesthesiologist assistants.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Anesthesiologist” means an allopathic physician who holds an active, unrestricted license; who has successfully completed an anesthesiology training program approved by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education or its equivalent; and who is certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology, is eligible to take that board’s examination, or is certified by the Board of Certification in Anesthesiology affiliated with the American Association of Physician Specialists.

(b) “Anesthesiologist assistant” means a graduate of an approved program who is licensed to perform medical services delegated and directly supervised by a supervising anesthesiologist.

(c) “Anesthesiology” means the practice of medicine that specializes in the relief of pain during and after surgical procedures and childbirth, during certain chronic disease processes, and during resuscitation and critical care of patients in the operating room and intensive care environments.

(d) “Approved program” means a program for the education and training of anesthesiologist assistants which has been approved by the boards as provided in subsection (5).

(e) “Boards” means the Board of Medicine and the Board of Osteopathic Medicine.

(f) “Continuing medical education” means courses recognized and approved by the boards, the American Academy of Physician Assistants, the American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants, the American Society of Anesthesiologists, or the Accreditation Council on Continuing Medical Education.

(g) “Direct supervision” means the onsite, personal supervision by an anesthesiologist who is present in the office when the procedure is being performed in that office, or is present in the surgical or obstetrical suite when the procedure is being performed in that surgical or obstetrical suite and who is in all instances immediately available to provide assistance and direction to the anesthesiologist assistant while anesthesia services are being performed.

(h) “Proficiency examination” means an entry-level examination approved by the boards, including examinations administered by the National Commission on Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants.

(i) “Trainee” means a person who is currently enrolled in an approved program.

(2) PERFORMANCE OF SUPERVISING ANESTHESIOLOGIST.—

(a) An anesthesiologist who directly supervises an anesthesiologist assistant must be qualified in the medical areas in which the anesthesiologist assistant performs and is liable for the performance of the anesthesiologist assistant. An anesthesiologist may only supervise two anesthesiologist assistants at the same time. The board may, by rule, allow an anesthesiologist to supervise up to four anesthesiologist assistants, after July 1, 2008.

(b) An anesthesiologist or group of anesthesiologists must, upon establishing a supervisory relationship with an anesthesiologist assistant, file with the board a written protocol that includes, at a minimum:

1. The name, address, and license number of the anesthesiologist assistant.
2. The name, address, license number, and federal Drug Enforcement Administration number of each physician who will be supervising the anesthesiologist assistant.
3. The address of the anesthesiologist assistant's primary practice location and the address of any other locations where the anesthesiologist assistant may practice.
4. The date the protocol was developed and the dates of all revisions.
5. The signatures of the anesthesiologist assistant and all supervising physicians.
6. The duties and functions of the anesthesiologist assistant.
7. The conditions or procedures that require the personal provision of care by an anesthesiologist.
8. The procedures to be followed in the event of an anesthetic emergency. The protocol must be on file with the board before the anesthesiologist assistant may practice with the anesthesiologist or group. An anesthesiologist assistant may not practice unless a written protocol has been filed for that anesthesiologist assistant in accordance with this paragraph, and the anesthesiologist assistant may only practice under the direct supervision of an anesthesiologist who has signed the protocol. The protocol must be updated biennially.

(3) PERFORMANCE OF ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANTS.—

(a) An anesthesiologist assistant may assist an anesthesiologist in developing and implementing an anesthesia care plan for a patient. In providing assistance to an anesthesiologist, an anesthesiologist assistant may perform duties established by rule by the board in any of the following functions that are included in the anesthesiologist assistant's protocol while under the direct supervision of an anesthesiologist:

1. Obtain a comprehensive patient history and present the history to the supervising anesthesiologist.
2. Pretest and calibrate anesthesia delivery systems and monitor, obtain, and interpret information from the systems and monitors.
3. Assist the supervising anesthesiologist with the implementation of medically accepted monitoring techniques.
4. Establish basic and advanced airway interventions, including intubation of the trachea and performing ventilatory support.
5. Administer intermittent vasoactive drugs and start and adjust vasoactive infusions.
6. Administer anesthetic drugs, adjuvant drugs, and accessory drugs.
7. Assist the supervising anesthesiologist with the performance of epidural anesthetic procedures and spinal anesthetic procedures.
8. Administer blood, blood products, and supportive fluids.

9. Support life functions during anesthesia health care, including induction and intubation procedures, the use of appropriate mechanical supportive devices, and the management of fluid, electrolyte, and blood component balances.

10. Recognize and take appropriate corrective action for abnormal patient responses to anesthesia, adjunctive medication, or other forms of therapy.

11. Participate in management of the patient while in the postanesthesia recovery area, including the administration of any supporting fluids or drugs.

12. Place special peripheral and central venous and arterial lines for blood sampling and monitoring as appropriate.

(b) Nothing in this section or chapter prevents third-party payors from reimbursing employers of anesthesiologist assistants for covered services rendered by such anesthesiologist assistants.

(c) An anesthesiologist assistant must clearly convey to the patient that he or she is an anesthesiologist assistant.

(d) An anesthesiologist assistant may perform anesthesia tasks and services within the framework of a written practice protocol developed between the supervising anesthesiologist and the anesthesiologist assistant.

(e) An anesthesiologist assistant may not prescribe, order, or compound any controlled substance, legend drug, or medical device, nor may an anesthesiologist assistant dispense sample drugs to patients. Nothing in this paragraph prohibits an anesthesiologist assistant from administering legend drugs or controlled substances; intravenous drugs, fluids, or blood products; or inhalation or other anesthetic agents to patients which are ordered by the supervising anesthesiologist and administered while under the direct supervision of the supervising anesthesiologist.

(4) **PERFORMANCE BY TRAINEES.**—The practice of a trainee is exempt from the requirements of this chapter while the trainee is performing assigned tasks as a trainee in conjunction with an approved program. Before providing anesthesia services, including the administration of anesthesia in conjunction with the requirements of an approved program, the trainee must clearly convey to the patient that he or she is a trainee.

(5) **PROGRAM APPROVAL.**—The boards shall approve programs for the education and training of anesthesiologist assistants which meet standards established by board rules. The boards may recommend only those anesthesiologist assistant training programs that hold full accreditation or provisional accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs.

(6) **ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANT LICENSURE.**—

(a) Any person desiring to be licensed as an anesthesiologist assistant must apply to the department. The department shall issue a license to any person certified by the board to:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.

2. Have satisfactorily passed a proficiency examination with a score established by the National Commission on Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants.

3. Be certified in advanced cardiac life support.

4. Have completed the application form and remitted an application fee, not to exceed \$1,000, as set by the boards. An application must include:

- a. A certificate of completion of an approved graduate level program.
- b. A sworn statement of any prior felony convictions.
- c. A sworn statement of any prior discipline or denial of licensure or certification in any state.
- d. Two letters of recommendation from anesthesiologists.

(b) A license must be renewed biennially. Each renewal must include:

1. A renewal fee, not to exceed \$1,000, as set by the boards.
2. A sworn statement of no felony convictions in the immediately preceding 2 years.

(c) Each licensed anesthesiologist assistant must biennially complete 40 hours of continuing medical education or hold a current certificate issued by the National Commission on Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants or its successor.

(d) An anesthesiologist assistant must notify the department in writing within 30 days after obtaining employment that requires a license under this chapter and after any subsequent change in his or her supervising anesthesiologist. The notification must include the full name, license number, specialty, and address of the supervising anesthesiologist. Submission of a copy of the required protocol by the anesthesiologist assistant satisfies this requirement.

(e) The Board of Medicine may impose upon an anesthesiologist assistant any penalty specified in s. [456.072](#) or s. [458.331](#)(2) if the anesthesiologist assistant or the supervising anesthesiologist is found guilty of or is investigated for an act that constitutes a violation of this chapter or chapter 456.

(7) ANESTHESIOLOGIST AND ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANT TO ADVISE THE BOARD.—

(a) The chairperson of the board may appoint an anesthesiologist and an anesthesiologist assistant to advise the board as to the adoption of rules for the licensure of anesthesiologist assistants. The board may use a committee structure that is most practicable in order to receive any recommendations to the board regarding rules and all matters relating to anesthesiologist assistants, including, but not limited to, recommendations to improve safety in the clinical practices of licensed anesthesiologist assistants.

(b) In addition to its other duties and responsibilities as prescribed by law, the board shall:

1. Recommend to the department the licensure of anesthesiologist assistants.
2. Develop all rules regulating the use of anesthesiologist assistants by qualified anesthesiologists under this chapter and chapter 459, except for rules relating to the formulary developed under s. [458.347](#)(4)(f). The board shall also develop rules to ensure that the continuity of supervision is maintained in each practice setting. The boards shall consider adopting a proposed rule at the regularly scheduled meeting immediately following the submission of the proposed rule. A proposed rule may not be adopted by either board unless both boards have accepted and approved the identical language contained in the proposed rule. The language of all proposed rules must be approved by both boards pursuant to each respective board's guidelines and standards regarding the adoption of proposed rules.

3. Address concerns and problems of practicing anesthesiologist assistants to improve safety in the clinical practices of licensed anesthesiologist assistants.

(c) When the board finds that an applicant for licensure has failed to meet, to the board's satisfaction, each of the requirements for licensure set forth in this section, the board may enter an order to:

1. Refuse to certify the applicant for licensure;
2. Approve the applicant for licensure with restrictions on the scope of practice or license; or
3. Approve the applicant for conditional licensure. Such conditions may include placement of the licensee on probation for a period of time and subject to such conditions as the board specifies, including, but not limited to, requiring the licensee to undergo treatment, to attend continuing education courses, or to take corrective action.

(8) PENALTY.—A person who falsely holds himself or herself out as an anesthesiologist assistant commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. [775.082](#), s. [775.083](#), or s. [775.084](#).

(9) DENIAL, SUSPENSION, OR REVOCATION OF LICENSURE.—The boards may deny, suspend, or revoke the license of an anesthesiologist assistant who the board determines has violated any provision of this section or chapter or any rule adopted pursuant thereto.

(10) RULES.—The boards shall adopt rules to administer this section.

(11) LIABILITY.—A supervising anesthesiologist is liable for any act or omission of an anesthesiologist assistant acting under the anesthesiologist's supervision and control and shall comply with the financial responsibility requirements of this chapter and chapter 456, as applicable.

(12) FEES.—The department shall allocate the fees collected under this section to the board.

History.—s. 3, ch. 2004-303; s. 3, ch. 2005-4.