

Sterilization Room Worker Role Description

Sterilization is an important role on a surgical mission trip. Those who work in the sterilization room will clean and re-sterilize surgical instruments in a timely fashion so that they are always clean instruments ready for upcoming surgical cases.

Cleaning the instruments involves scrubbing instruments, using both soap and/or chemical baths as well as rinsing with water before organizing, packaging and using a steam autoclave to sterilize the clean instruments. Volunteers who work in the sterilization room will also be asked to familiarize themselves with the surgical instruments available so that when asked they can quickly locate an instrument needed for a surgical case.

No prior knowledge of surgical instrumentation is needed for this job. Bins in the cabinets are often labeled with what instruments they hold and a sterilization room worker only need to familiarize themselves with those labels and more or less what the instruments look like.

Running the autoclaves is much like working a dishwasher with a few more steps. There are clear directions in the sterilization room for how to start up the boilers, how to sterilize the instruments and how to clean out or shut down the boilers at the end of the day.

Those working in the sterilization room will also work to sterilize re-useable materials such as towels, gowns and drapes as they have time. This helps with the flow of the clinic and keeps the surgeons and OR staff with plenty of available materials for their surgical cases.