

Technician Training and Roles in Institutional Pharmacy Practice

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Learning Objectives:

- To understand Washington State laws regarding the training, certification, licensure and utilization of Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacy Assistants in hospital/institutional practice.
- To become familiar with types of training programs and competencies for technicians in hospital practice.
- To understand the role of pharmacy technicians in hospital practice.
- To understand the role of the pharmacist in working with and supervising technicians.

1) What does the Washington State Board of Pharmacy have to say?

a) Let's check the **WAC (246-901) and RCW (18.64A)**

- i) **Pharmacy Technicians** (formerly known as Level A Pharmacy Assistants) may assist in the manipulative, ***non-discretionary*** functions associated with the practice of pharmacy under the immediate supervision of a licensed pharmacist.
(1) Requires completion of certified training program and **licensure**

- ii) **Pharmacy Assistants** (formerly known as Level B Pharmacy Assistants) may complete clerical work including but not limited to stocking, filing, profiling, delivery, nonprofessional phone inquiries, and typing prescription labels.
(1) Does not require formal training or licensure, only **certification** application

b) **A pharmacist shall not delegate...WAC 246-863-095**

- i) The pharmacist retains responsibility for any acts performed by ancillary personnel in the course of employment.

c) **What CAN'T technicians do?**

- i) Receive verbal orders for prescriptions
- ii) Consult with patients
- iii) Consult with providers regarding patients
- iv) Interpretation and identification of contents of prescription document
- v) Determine the product required for the prescription
- vi) Interpretation of data in patient medication record system
- vii) Final check on completed prescriptions and assumption of responsibility for the filled prescription
- viii) Dispense prescriptions to patient with proper patient information as required.

d) What CAN technicians do in a hospital?

- i) Medication dispensing
- ii) Medication preparation
- iii) Medication inventory management
- iv) Information management
- v) Train other technicians

2) What does ASHP (American Society of Health-System Pharmacists®) have to say?

- a) **ASHP definition of a pharmacy technician:** “. . .someone who, under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist, assists in the various activities of the pharmacy department not requiring the professional judgment of the pharmacist.” Technician support allows pharmacists to spend more time engaged in activities requiring professional judgement, such as patient care.
- b) **ASHP Technical Assistance Bulletin on Outcome Competencies and Training Guidelines for Institutional Pharmacy Technician Training Programs.**
 - i) Provides guidelines that address the areas in which a technician should be trained to be able to function in most hospital settings.
 - ii) Objectives include:
 - Knowledge of health-care institutions and the pharmacy department
 - Knowledge of responsibilities as described in job description, including ethics governing pharmacy practice
 - Knowledge of pharmaceutical and medical terms, abbreviations, and symbols
 - Knowledge of general chemical and physical properties of all drugs handled in the pharmacy department
 - Demonstrate calculations required for determining dosages and preparing solutions
 - Demonstrate essential functions relating to purchasing and inventory control of drugs
 - Demonstrate knowledge of drug dosages, routes of administration and dosage forms
 - Knowledge of procedures for manufacturing, packaging and labeling drug products
 - Knowledge of procedures and techniques related to sterile compounding of parenteral products
 - Demonstrate functions related to drug distribution system
 - Demonstrate recordkeeping functions associated with dispensing prescriptions for ambulatory patients

3) How do people become a Pharmacy Technician in Washington?

- a) Community College programs
- b) Trade or technical school
- c) Military training
- d) On the job training in a State Board approved program at a hospital or other facility

- e) Many states require no formal training/certification or licensure
- f) Basic competencies achieved
 - i) Chemistry and Pharmacology
 - ii) Drug classes, names (Brand, generic), dosages, dosage forms, routes, etc.
 - iii) Interpretation of medication orders
 - iv) Drug preparation and distribution
 - v) Inventory control
 - vi) Safety and infection control procedures
 - vii) Pharmacy law
 - viii) Professional development
- 4) National Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination offered by Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)
 - a) Closed book exam of 125 multiple choice questions on three broad based functions
 - b) Assisting the pharmacist in serving patients (50%)
 - c) Medication distribution and inventory control systems (35%)
 - d) Operations (including administrative activities—pharmacy operations, human resources, facilities, equipment, information systems) (15%)

5) Specialized and developing roles for technician

- a) Investigational Drug Services
- b) Tech check Tech
- c) Automated distribution manager
- d) Unit Pharmacy Technicians
- e) Pharmacy Benefits Managers (PBMs)
- f) Computer information systems
- g) Billing

6) The Pharmacist - Technician relationship

- a) The law book tells us the technician works *under the supervision of the pharmacist* and the pharmacist is liable for the performance of the technician and ultimately responsible for all aspects of the completed prescription order.
- b) The pharmacist is **supervisor, preceptor, mentor**
- c) The pharmacist—technician relationship is as much about *teamwork* as it is about supervision
- d) Basic rules for working with and supervising technicians
 - i) Learn their names and use them
 - ii) Use common courtesies—“please” and “thank you”
 - iii) Provide clear instructions—Ask if they understand
 - iv) Hold technicians accountable for their work—criticize the work not the person
 - v) Praise a job well done!
 - vi) Interns: Thank your technician instructors