

FRAMEWORK FOR MIDWIFE CERTIFICATION FOR Surgical First Assist for Cesarean Section¹

Entry-level midwives in British Columbia manage labour and delivery under their own responsibility. When a cesarean birth is required, entry level midwives transfer care to an appropriately trained physician and assume a supportive care role. Experienced midwives² with special training in surgical first assist who are certified by the College of Midwives of British Columbia (CMBC) and privileged to use this skill by their hospital may assume the first assist role to assist the surgeon in ensuring timely access to care in an emergency and contribute to 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 *Bylaws for the College of a Midwives of BC* 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, and that is approved by the CMBC. 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. CMBC recommends that midwives consider the overall clinical context when assuming the role as a surgical first assist for their own clients during the clinical experience portion of their training.

Upon successful completion of the certification process, proof of competence and a letter of recommendation from the supervising obstetrician or general surgeon must be submitted to CMBC before certification is granted.

Where competence in this area of specialized practice has been acquired in a jurisdiction outside of British Columbia, CMBC may assess the certification program for equivalency in meeting CMBC requirements. Evaluation by an obstetrician in a BC hospital and a letter of recommendation is required.

Specialized Practice Certification must include:

Demonstration of theoretical and practical knowledge of proper procedures and protocols for Surgical First Assist at cesarean birth will take place 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.

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

² Only midwives who have completed their New Registrants year and can document a significant volume of clinical experience will be considered for certification.

Demonstration of safe practice and competence in the required skills for Surgical First Assist at cesarean birth in the clinical setting will take place through a clinical practicum with a qualified obstetrician or general surgeon. Competency will be confirmed through:

- 1) Attendance in the role of surgical first 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
 - Perioperative follow-up in the community

The certification process must include successfully performing sufficient **surgical first 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.

Recertification

A recertification process may be needed if a midwife has not attended a minimum number of cesarean births as first assist over the course of a year. The need for recertification will depend on the number of first assists performed by the midwife in the preceding 12 months. CMBC recommends recertification where the midwife has managed fewer than two first assists over that period, although hospital specific requirements may vary. Registrants must keep a log of the number of first assist births they have performed and must submit the log to CMBC at time of annual registration renewal for specialized certification eligibility.

References

American College of Nurse-Midwives, Department of Professional Services. (2006). *First Assist in Surgery*. Silver Spring, MD: ACNM.

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World Health Organization, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, Family and Community Health. (2003). *Managing complications in pregnancy and childbirth - A guide for midwives and doctors*. Geneva, CH: WHO.