

**Virginia Board of Nursing**  
**RNs or LPNs as First Assistants in Surgery**

A registered or licensed practical nurse may serve as first assistant in surgery in cases compatible with their preparation and experience.

The medical staff, hospital administration and nursing service department of any hospital that permits registered nurses or licensed practical nurses to serve as first assistant in surgery shall have mutually agreed upon written policies under which the nurse may safely act as a first assistant. The policies should include qualifications of nurses who may act in this capacity, the types of surgical procedures in which they may act in this capacity, and any prohibitions. The safety and welfare of parties must be given primary consideration in the development of such policies.

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