



**MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL  
OF NEW ZEALAND**

TE KAUNIHERA PŪTAIAO HAUORA O AOTEAROA



## ANAESTHETIC TECHNICIANS; YOUR SCOPE OF PRACTICE AND SEDATION



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# ANAESTHETIC TECHNICIANS; YOUR SCOPE OF PRACTICE, AND SEDATION

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THE MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE TO THE MINISTER OF HEALTH FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE HEALTH PRACTITIONERS COMPETENCE ASSURANCE ACT 2003 IN RESPECT OF THE PROFESSIONS OF MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE AND ANAESTHETIC TECHNOLOGY.

THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUNCIL IS TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE NEW ZEALAND PUBLIC BY ENSURING PRACTITIONERS REGISTERED IN THE PROFESSIONS OF MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE AND ANAESTHETIC TECHNOLOGY ARE COMPETENT AND FIT TO PRACTISE.



## BACKGROUND

Anaesthesia Technicians were registered under the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act by the Minister of Health in 2012.

The registration of Anaesthesia Technicians like all professions covered by the Act, was driven by the requirement to ensure safety of the public; the scope of practice of anaesthesia technicians involving the provision of intravenous access, administration of medications and the preparation and checking of “life supporting” equipment was viewed as a potential risk to public safety.

Taken into consideration was the need to ensure a registered and trained workforce should have the flexibility to ensure good health outcomes for all New Zealanders.

The Council has also considered the need for flexibility and has introduced the ability for anaesthetic technicians to be registered with an expanded scope of practice.

At present there are 2 expanded scopes of practice; PACU and the placement of PICC lines. This is by no means the limit of expanded practice and the Council welcomes other roles that allow technicians to fill a need in service provision and will give consideration to any role that falls under the competencies and processes of perioperative care.

## DEFINITION


The Council has adopted the following definition of the profession of anaesthetic technology:

*Anaesthetic technology is the provision of perioperative technical management and patient care for supporting the provision of quality health care and safe anaesthetic services in New Zealand accredited health facilities. Tasks included in this definition, but not limited to, are:*

- *anaesthetic related research and development*
- *applied science and anaesthetic technology education*
- *advanced patient monitoring*
- *collection of samples for diagnostic investigation*
- *management*

The profession of anaesthetic technology contains one scope of practice:

- Anaesthetic Technician.



An Anaesthetic Technician is a member of an anaesthetic care team, working collaboratively with other health professionals.

An Anaesthetic Technician:

- Utilises technical and clinical judgement to assess peri-operative requirements and provide patient care and assistance during all aspects of anaesthetic administration and during anaesthetic related procedures
- Cannot independently prescribe or administer agents used for general anaesthesia and/or sedation. Administration of anaesthetic agents can only occur in an assisting role under the direction of a medical anaesthetist<sup>1</sup> or intensive care specialist
- Provides support to the medical anaesthetist or intensive care specialist and collaborates and works alongside other health professionals during peri-operative, interventional and investigative procedures
- Provides anaesthetic assistance in operating departments, radiology and MRI units, intensive care, obstetric and emergency departments, and any other areas where anaesthesia is administered
- Provides support for the safe transportation of patients, both within the hospital environment and/or between other hospitals or healthcare facilities
- Works as a team member alongside other health workers<sup>2</sup>
- Provides physical and emotional support to the patient to enhance the safe outcome of anaesthetic procedures
- Anticipates and prepares the equipment, monitoring and other requirements specific to each anaesthetic procedure

***The Council's Competencies for Anaesthetic Technicians describes the skills and activities of an anaesthetic technician.***



<sup>1</sup> In this context 'medical anaesthetist' includes anaesthetists in training  
<sup>2</sup> This may include working alongside people who are unregistered

The Anaesthesia technician's scope of practice has been deliberately written to allow flexibility within the work force.

The Council, wishing to have a flexible workforce sees the technician's role in assisting with sedation as important to the provision of health care to as wide a section of the community as possible.

There has been some confusion within the profession and other disciplines involving the role of the anaesthesia technician who is assisting with the provision of sedation.

### ***As defined in the scope of practice and under the current Act, an anaesthetic technician cannot prescribe drugs***

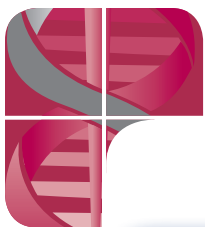
In anaesthesia the act of prescription of a drug and delivery is a simultaneous event that is limited under the current and appropriate Acts to a registered Medical Practitioner.

However drugs may be prescribed by an appropriate health practitioner and delivered by an Anaesthesia Technician.

*Prescription of drugs is limited to prescribers as authorised under Regulation 39, as substituted by section 14, 2011 under the **Medicines Regulation Act 1984** and **Medicines amendment Regulations 2011**;*

(39) Conditions under which authorised prescribers and veterinarians may prescribe prescription medicines:

- “(1)An authorised prescriber (including a designated prescriber) may only prescribe a prescription medicine if the authorised prescriber—
  - “(a)is prescribing the prescription medicine—
    - “(i)for the treatment of a patient under the authorised prescriber's care; and
    - “(ii)within, and in accordance with all conditions (if any) stated in, the authorised prescriber's scope of practice, as determined by an authorisation granted under section 21 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 by the authority responsible for the registration of the authorised prescriber; and
  - “(b) is not prohibited by a notice under section 48(1) of the Act from prescribing that prescription medicine or any prescription medicines of a class or description that includes that prescription medicine.
- “(2) An authorised prescriber who is a designated prescriber may only prescribe a prescription medicine if—
  - “(a)the prescription medicine is of a class or description that the designated prescriber is authorised to prescribe by regulations made under the Act; and
  - “(b) The requirements specified in or imposed under those regulations are satisfied.
- “(3) A veterinarian may only prescribe a prescription medicine that is for the treatment of an animal under the veterinarian's care.
- “(4) Subclauses (1) does not apply to an authorised prescriber who is acting in the course of his or her employment by the Crown.”



Providing the Anaesthesia Technician is working under the supervision of an authorised prescriber they may administer drugs via the intravenous or oral route for the purposes of procedural sedation.

***The prescriber must be present and takes full responsibility for the prescription of the drug, including the correct dose, the correct drug and the correct patient***

There must be a written record of the drugs administered. The Anaesthesia Technician may administer on verbal orders but must keep a record of the drugs given, and those verbal orders must be signed by the prescriber as is required by the Medicines Regulations.

*Drugs used for sedation cover a wide spectrum but are generally considered to include;*

Benzodiazepines (midazolam most frequently)

Narcotics:

- Morphine
- Pethidine
- Fentanyl.

And by inhalation

- Nitrous Oxide in no more than 50% concentration.



In the absence of an anaesthetist or intensive care specialist sedation is limited to the provision of Conscious Sedation, which is a condition in which patients are able to respond purposefully to verbal command or light tactile stimulation.

The Council would expect all practitioners involved in the provision of procedural sedation to be aware of and be guided by the document PS09 Guidelines on Sedation and/or Analgesia for diagnostic and Interventional medical, Dental or Surgical Procedures 2014. (The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists.)



## ***The administration of anaesthesia drugs MUST ONLY occur under the direct supervision of an Anaesthetist or an Intensive care specialist.***

*These drugs include but are not limited to:*

- All intravenous induction agents with the exclusion of midazolam
- All depolarising and non-depolarising muscle relaxants
- All Volatile anaesthesia agents
- The high potency Narcotics:
  - Alfentanil
  - Remifentanil.

Anaesthetic Technicians who work in these roles should ideally be credentialed by their unit for the administration of drugs but providing they are directly supervised (over the shoulder), the administration of drugs as described above is an important part of the Anaesthesia Technicians role.

Although the Anaesthetic Technician works under supervision in this area, they as a registered Health Practitioner are responsible for ensuring that they are working within their skill set and take all measures to ensure the safety of patients. Provision of sedation should be provided under the appropriate guidelines as promulgated by the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists.



## **LINKS AND REFERENCES**

ANZCA: (PS07) recommendations for the pre-anaesthesia consultation

[Click here to view](#)

ANZCA: (PS09) Guidelines on Sedation and/or Analgesia for Diagnostic and Interventional Medical, Dental or Surgical Procedures.

[Click here to view](#)

ANZCA: (PS18) Recommendations on Monitoring During Anaesthesia

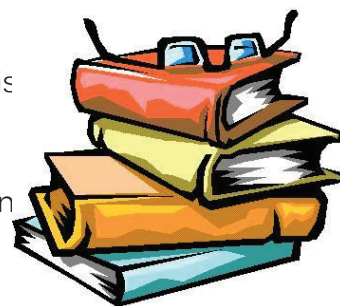
[Click here to view](#)

ANZCA: (PS19) Recommendations on Monitored Care by an Anaesthetist

[Click here to view](#)

ANZCA: S51 Guidelines for the Safe Administration of Injectable Drugs in

[Click here to view](#)





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