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PRACTICE STANDARD

Certified Midwives: Surgical First Assist for Cesarean Section

Introduction

The *Certified Midwives: Surgical First Assist for Cesarean Section* practice standard applies to midwives who meet BCCNM certification requirements for Surgical First Assist for Cesarean Section.

Under the *Regulated Health Practitioners Regulation* and the *Nurses and Midwives Regulation*, midwives are authorized, if certified, to insert an instrument, finger, or hand…into an artificial opening into the body for the purpose of assisting in the surgical delivery of a baby.

Midwives in British Columbia manage labour and delivery autonomously. When a cesarean birth is required, they must transfer care to an appropriately trained physician and assume a supportive care role. However, midwives with special training in surgical assist, who are certified by the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM) and privileged to use this skill by their hospital, may assume the surgical assist role during a cesarean section.

A practicing midwife licensee who holds certification may use the titles certified midwife, midwife (certified), or the abbreviation RM(C). If a certified midwife wishes to note their specific certification, they may append the term Surgical First Assist Certified.

Standards

1. Certified midwives:
    a. Follow relevant legislation and regulations,
    b. Follow BCCNM's ethics standards and practice standards including any applicable limits and conditions on performing the activity,
    c. Follow organizational, policies, processes, and restrictions, and
    d. Practise within their individual competence.

NOT YET IN EFFECT

Limits & conditions

1. Midwives who want obtain certification in Surgical First Assist for Cesarean Section:
    a. Successfully complete the relevant certified practice course(s) recognized by BCCNM[1] or equivalent.[2]
    b. Successfully perform 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.
2. Certified midwives obtain the necessary hospital privileges before providing surgical first assist for cesarean section.
3. Certified midwives act in the surgical first assist role only when they have obtained the theoretical and clinical experience needed to maintain the competence to perform the activity safely.

Revision history

Version #	Approved by board	Bylaw in-force	Description
1.0	March 1, 2026	April 1, 2026	Initial publication
2.0	Nov. 18, 2026	Dec. 18, 2026	Removed names of recognized education programs; added "or equivalent" to L&C #1

Effective April 1, 2026, this practice standard, and any amendments to it, is made a bylaw under the authority of the *Health Professions and Occupations Act, B.C.*

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NOT YET IN EFFECT

[1] BCCNM recognized certified practice courses can be found here.
[2] For further information, contact Licensing at registermidwives@bccnm.ca.