



HEALTH CAREER CONNECTION

OCTOBER, 2026

HEALTH CAREER SPOTLIGHT

STERILE PROCESSING TECHNICIAN

A **sterile processing technician** is a healthcare professional who cleans, decontaminates, inspects, assembles, sterilizes, and distributes surgical instruments and medical equipment. They work behind the scenes in hospitals, surgical centers, and clinics to prevent healthcare-associated infections and ensure that surgeons have safe, properly functioning tools. They ensure that every instrument is properly decontaminated, sterilized, well-functioning, organized and available when needed. They document reprocessing steps to ensure safety and compliance.



“The most rewarding part of being a sterile processing technician is that we work hard behind the scene to ensure all of our products are safe, sterile and ready to use.”
-Rachael Russell, STP, WCCHS

Medical Equipment Preparer | AAW: \$ 47,410 | Surgical Care

JOB DUTIES

- ✓ Clean & inspect medical equipment.
- ✓ Examine and test equipment to detect leaks, worn or loose parts, or other indications of disrepair.
- ✓ Sterilize medical equipment.
- ✓ Operate and maintain steam autoclaves, keeping records of loads completed, items in loads, and maintenance procedures performed.
- ✓ Store medical equipment.
- ✓ Organize and assemble routine or specialty surgical instrument trays or other sterilized supplies, filling special requests as needed.
- ✓ Deliver devices needed for surgery in a healthcare facility.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

High School Diploma or equivalent required by virtually all employers and national certification bodies before starting formal training or sitting for exams.

Formal Training Program (Recommended): While not always legally mandatory, completing a certificate or associate degree program (lasting from a few weeks up to 8 months) greatly improves job prospects.

Hands-On Experience / Externship: National certification tracks typically require **400 hours** of verified workplace or clinical experience in a central sterile department

Click on the image for sterile processing technician career info



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gospSXYMNXM>



This organization is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer
20 Duncan St. Warsaw, NY 14569 | 585-786-6275 | info@r-ahec.org | <https://www.r-ahec.org>



HEALTH CAREER CONNECTION

OCTOBER, 2026



CAREER CLOSE-UP

Rachael Russell, Sterile Processing Technician at Wyoming County Community Health System Hospital (WCCHS) shares her professional insights and experience in sterile processing.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

"Well that's easy, the most rewarding part of being a sterile processing technician is that we work hard behind the scene to ensure all of our products are safe, sterile and ready to use in any emergency or planned procedure. Knowing that we also help save lives."

What is the most challenging?

"The most challenging part of my job is that we are a smaller community hospital with lots of sudden add on cases. Sometimes that makes it more difficult for us having to turn over trays rapidly for a following case. We will also sometimes receive a large load of vendor trays very late in the day for an add on the next morning. This makes it difficult for us to make sure everything is ready in a timely manner."

What advice would you give to someone starting out in this field?

"I would say prioritize accuracy and safety over speed. It's a lot to learn but you can do it, speed will come. And ALWAYS double check your work."

Anything else you want to share?

"Buy high quality supportive shoes because we will be on our feet running around all day!"



RESOURCES



For more information on Sterile Processing Technician visit
<https://myhspa.org/about/what-is-sterile-processing/>



This organization is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer
20 Duncan St. Warsaw, NY 14569 | 585-786-6275 | info@r-ahec.org | <https://www.r-ahec.org>



HEALTH CAREER CONNECTION

OCTOBER, 2026



D'Youville University &
WNY R-AHEC
Partner to Offer



**Summer Health Careers
Opportunity Program (HCOP)**
Six Week Summer Program
Tuesday-Thursday, Starting July 6, 2027 & Ending August 12, 2027
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**Health Career Exploration Summer Camp for Rising
Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors in Western NY**



Applications Open January 5, 2027

- Located at WNY R-AHEC (20 Duncan St. Warsaw, NY 14569) and paid opportunity for students.
- Experience hands-on learning, exposure to health profession careers, and skill building.
- Become First Aid & CPR Certified, learn Stop the Bleed, Teen Mental Health First Aid, Simulation Education Training, Social Determinants of Health Course & much more.
- Opportunities to tour, shadow, volunteer in the community (local healthcare facilities, non-profits, businesses, etc.)
- Overnight opportunity at DYU campus, college experience and additional health profession exposure and experiences.
- Health career pathways and college enrollment education.

Paid Opportunity!



THIS PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED BY THE HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (HSA) OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) AS PART OF AN AWARD TOTALING \$2,740,000 TO WNY R-AHEC WITH OTHER PARTNERS WITH NON-ENVIRONMENTAL SOURCES. THE CONTENTS ARE THOSE OF THE AWARDING AGENCY AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE OFFICIAL VIEW OF HSA OR HHS, OR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT [HSA.GOV](https://www.hrsa.gov).

Questions? Contact WNY R-AHEC: info@r-ahec.org | 585-786-6275



**Career
Resource Guide**