



Policies and Procedures

Subject: Resident Operating Room Assistance	
Created: April 2020	Revised: June 2023
Reviewed and approved by the Residency Program Committee: April 2026	Next review date: April 2029

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the position on behalf of the Dalhousie Family Medicine Postgraduate program of the role of family medicine residents as assistants in the operating room.

Family Medicine Residents (any level of training)

- Refer to the policy on resident supervision for further clarification on resident supervision at each level of training regarding general supervision.
- For surgical assists, the attending physician (surgeon) has the final decision regarding who is permitted to be primary and secondary assist for the surgery.
- As a family medicine resident in any stage of training, it is appropriate to be the primary assist or secondary assist for any surgical procedure. Competence in assisting in the operating room is an important skill that should be attained during family medicine training. Trainees are capable of performing this task after graduation from medical school.
- If there is any question as to whether or not the resident is an appropriate primary assistant for a case, this can be discussed with the operating surgeon.
- If the resident is participating in dictations of the operative report, this must be reviewed and signed off by the responsible surgeon.
- Any financial reimbursement for the surgical assistance is not covered by this policy. The resident receives compensation through their salary, as outlined in the MaRDocs collective agreement. Residents who assist are not compensated beyond their salary, per the Maritime Resident Doctors (MaRDocs) collective agreement.