

Occupational Risks for the Medical Assisting Program

Medical assistants work directly with providers and patients, with the goal of providing health care and ensuring patient safety. They can perform both administrative and clinical services, filling several roles in a variety of health care environments.

As with any health care profession, medical assistants are exposed to certain occupational risks or hazards while performing their duties, including the following:

- Exposure to infectious diseases
- Sharps injuries
- Blood-borne pathogens and biological hazards
- Chemical and drug exposure
- Ergonomic hazards from lifting, sitting and repetitive tasks
- Latex allergies
- Stress

Nevertheless, there are protections set up by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and those protections are particularly important within a health care environment. OSHA has a series of standards that protect the safety of health care workers and patients.

As an accredited program, Ensign College's Medical Assisting program instructs students about the hazards they face on the job and the protocols that can be put into place to ensure a workplace culture that prioritizes safety.

At Ensign College, Medical Assisting students are required to take HP 210/212. Both courses introduce the students to infection and hazard control procedures necessary for the health care worker. Topics include introduction to practical infection control, sterilization and monitoring, chemical disinfectants, aseptic technique, infectious diseases, and applicable Utah laws.

Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of infectious diseases, disease transmission, infection control procedures, biohazard management, OSHA standards and applicable Utah laws.