



ACFAS Position Statement on Privileging Guidelines for Total Ankle Surgery

Approved by ACFAS Board of Directors, November 2023

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) is a surgical specialty society of just more than 8,000 foot and ankle surgeons. Founded in 1942, ACFAS seeks to promote the art and science of foot, ankle, and related lower extremity surgery; address the concerns of foot and ankle surgeons; and advance and improve standards of education and surgical skill; and advance and advocate for the highest standards of patient care and safety. Foot and ankle surgery is a subspecialty of podiatric medicine (Doctors of Podiatric medicine or DPM). Podiatric foot and ankle surgeons conduct medical history and physical examinations, diagnose, and perform medical and surgical management of all diseases, deformities, injuries and defects of the foot, ankle, and related lower extremities, as governed by appropriate state statute(s).

The granting of clinical privileges for a foot and ankle surgeon with a DPM degree should be based on fair and objective analysis that follows the same requirements as set forth in evaluating other physicians consistent with The Joint Commission (TJC) standards and/or Medicare Conditions or Participation (CoP).

ACFAS members perform complex reconstructive foot and ankle procedures including Total Ankle joint Replacement (TAR). Prosthetic joint replacement of the ankle, much like other joints in the body, is a highly complex and technically demanding surgery that requires specialized training to perform well. To that end, it is recommended that TAR privileges be granted to those who meet the following criteria:

Board Certified Applicants:

1. Must be Board Certified in “Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle (RRA) Surgery” or in “Foot and Ankle Surgery” if Certified prior to 1991 by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery.
2. Must have completed formal surgical skills training for a United States Food and Drug Administration approved/cleared TAR system.
3. Must have privileges and/or performed osseous rear foot and ankle procedures determined to be of equal complexity by the hospital’s credentials committee (at any institution) in the previous three (3) calendar years indicating the applicant as the primary surgeon of record.

Board Qualified Applicants:

1. Must be Board Qualified in “Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle (RRA) Surgery” by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery.
2. Must have completed a formal surgical skills training for a United States Food and Drug Administration approved/cleared TAR system.
3. Must have privileges and/or performed osseous rear foot and ankle procedures determined to be of equal complexity by the hospital’s credentials committee (at any institution) in the previous three (3) calendar years.

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons strongly recommends that these guidelines, or their equivalence, be utilized for all surgeons performing TAR procedures at all institutions.