Nurses and Midwives
Dress Code

Guideline

May 2013
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

- The purpose of this guideline is to assist nurses and midwives in presenting a professional image and supporting safety through an approved standard of dress.

2. **GUIDELINE STATEMENT**

- Nurses and midwives represent the Tasmanian Health Organisations or the Department of Health and Human Services and must present a professional image to patients, clients and the Tasmanian community as well as dress appropriately in order to safely perform their duties.

3. **DEFINITIONS**

- Fair wear and tear – the amount of damage a garment could realistically sustain as a result of normal use in the workplace, from laundering, operation of natural forces (e.g. sunlight and rain), and from changes to the garment through ageing.
- Workplace - any place in which duties are performed.
- Work stream tag – an embroidered tag attached to an upper garment which assists patients/clients and health professionals in identifying the employee as an Enrolled Nurse, Registered Nurse, Midwife or Nurse Practitioner.

4. **PRINCIPLES**

- Nurses and midwives who are required to wear a uniform will be provided with the approved uniform in accordance with the *Nurses and Midwives Heads of Agreement 2010*.
- Nurses and midwives must present a workplace appropriate professional standard of dress.
- Nurses and midwives who are not required to wear a uniform must present a professional image through their standard of dress.
- Nurses and midwives must comply with the Tasmanian *Work Health and Safety Act (2012)* and infection control policies, standards and guidelines current for their place of employment.
- The corporate uniform will reflect the *Tasmanian Government Communications Policy* and *Tasmanian Government Style Guide and Logo Policy* to ensure consistent corporate branding.
- This guideline incorporates the principles of the *DHHS Uniform Policy*.
- Where specific guidelines exist in a health setting, such as the Australian College of Operating Room Nurses (ACORN) standards in operating suite, those guidelines will take precedence and guide the use of clothing worn in that particular setting.

5. **IMPLEMENTATION**

**Standard of Dress**

- Where nurses and midwives are provided with a uniform, it must be worn at all times while on duty. Uniforms are supplied to nurses and midwives through a contracted supplier. The range of approved garments in the DHHS uniform range can be viewed at [Nursing and Midwifery Unit website](http://www.naming.org.au). Please refer to [Frequently Asked Questions - New Uniforms for Nurses and Midwives](http://www.naming.org.au) for further information on the replacement of uniforms on a fair wear and tear basis.
• Nurses and midwives who provide direct care delivery to patients and clients are required to have a work stream tag on their shirt or scrub top. This is for the benefit of patients/clients and other health professionals. The nurse or midwife must order their uniform items from the appropriate range via the online ordering system, to ensure that the tag is attached to the garment prior to delivery. The Identification Badge remains the official method of identifying employees in the workplace.

• Nurses and midwives working in perioperative (or similar) areas must obtain clean theatre scrubs (or similar) from their workplace at the beginning of each shift. These scrubs are to be returned to the hospital laundering system at the end of each shift. Nurses and midwives wearing the above hospital supplied theatre scrubs (or similar) must not wear these items outside the hospital building.

• Nurses and midwives working in non-theatre environments may wear uniform scrubs if permitted by their manager. This may vary between workplaces. These scrubs are part of the individual nurse or midwife’s uniform entitlement, and are to be ordered through the online ordering system. Nurses and midwives may wear the uniform scrubs to and from work. The nurse or midwife is responsible for laundering of these garments.

• Nurses and midwives, with the exception of those working in the perioperative (or similar) areas, are permitted to wear uniforms to and from work.

• Nurses and midwives must ensure that their uniforms are clean and neatly presented.

• Modesty must be maintained for the comfort of the patients, clients and other staff. Garments must not be semi-transparent or transparent.

• Nursed and midwives must not wear hospital gowns over uniforms as a method of keeping warm.

• As stated in the DHHS Uniform Policy, any employee who is experiencing difficulties wearing all or part of the uniform should consult with their manager regarding modification of the uniform. The basic principles will still apply, however consideration may be given to:
  o Staff who have a disability and are unable to wear the standard uniform;
  o Staff who have religious or cultural beliefs which require certain dress.

• Where a uniform is not required to be worn, as agreed by management, staff should be aware of the following guides to maintain a workplace appropriate professional appearance:
  o No jeans are to be worn (except if required for fundraising purposes)
  o Skirts and shorts must reach at least to the lower thigh
  o Shirts/blouses/ tops – must allow free range of movement and ensure modesty when leaning forward or reaching upwards.
  o Casual or beachwear is not acceptable.

• Subsidised uniforms bearing the Tasmanian Government logo remains the property of the Agency and must be returned to the manager upon cessation of employment. Self purchased items bearing the Tasmanian Government logo must not be worn in public places following cessation of employment. The logo should be removed or covered, or the garment destroyed.

• Uniform items bearing the Tasmanian Government logo must not be donated to charities due to the potential security risk.
Infection Prevention and Control

- Staff must be ‘bare below the elbows’ when providing clinical care/performing hand hygiene to meet their infection control and hand hygiene obligations. Please refer to the DHHS Hand Hygiene Policy. This means:
  - Bracelets, wrist watches and rings with stones or ridges must not be worn when providing clinical care. A single flat ring/band may be worn but must not interfere with effective hand hygiene practice.
  - Long ties, lanyards and long sleeved shirts must not interfere with effective hand hygiene practice. Retractable (or similar) identification card holders are recommended in place of lanyards and should be cleaned regularly. Long sleeves must be rolled up above the elbow when providing direct patient care.
  - Nails should be kept short and clean and nail polish should not be worn. Artificial nails (gel or acrylic) must not be worn by any staff member with direct patient contact.
  - Any breached skin (cuts, dermatitis or abrasions) must be covered with a waterproof film dressing. Staff with dermatitis should report for evaluation as per local protocols.
  - Items that are not laundered daily (e.g., cardigans and vests) must not be worn during direct patient care.
  - Protective barrier clothing (e.g. aprons, shoe covers) must be removed before leaving the workplace.

Personal Hygiene

- Staff must maintain personal hygiene for the purposes of infection control and the comfort of patients, clients and other staff.
- Perfume and aftershaves must be kept to a minimum for patient comfort and to prevent triggering of allergies in susceptible patients and staff.

Hair

- Hair above the collar should be neat. Longer hair must be tied back and clear of the face.
- Hair accessories must be functional and kept to a minimum.
- Beards should be neatly maintained to comply with policies and procedures (eg. wearing of masks). Facial hair must not interfere with the effectiveness of personal protective equipment.

Footwear

- The Work Health and Safety Policy (2013) states that workers must “take care of their own health and safety”. Nurses and midwives must consider the potential hazards of their work environment when choosing suitable footwear. This includes the risk of spills of contaminated fluids onto shoes, and the risk of heavy object falling on or being rolled over shoes. Appropriate footwear must be worn that will protect or minimise the harm to feet.
- Sports shoes must not be worn unless they offer adequate protection from the risks noted above. For example, sport shoes with mesh inserts do not protect feet from fluid spills or heavy objects.
- Footwear must be appropriate for the task performed and suitable for the floor surfaces where the work is being conducted.
- Footwear should have an enclosed toe and heel, non-slip sole, made of a sturdy fluid resistant material (such as firm leather) that can be easily cleaned.
• Footwear must be navy blue or black in colour.

**Hosiery/Socks**

• Hosiery and socks must be unpatterned and skin coloured, navy blue or black in colour.

**Jewellery**

• Jewellery should be kept to a minimum and must not present an occupational health and safety or infection control risk.

• Jewellery must comply with DHHS Hand Hygiene Policy and therefore only a single flat ring/band may be worn which must not interfere with hand hygiene practices. Wrist watches must not be worn when providing clinical care.

• Body piercings must not pose a safety risk and must be:
  - Removed for the duration of the shift, or
  - Covered with an appropriate dressing for the duration of the shift, or
  - Discreet in size and style.

**Body Art / Tattoos**

• Body art and/or tattoos of an offensive nature (either picture or wording) must be covered. Offensive body art / tattoos on the forearms and hands must be covered using a suitable method so as not to breach hand hygiene practices.

• Newly acquired body art and/or tattoos must be covered if the skin surface is not intact.

• If an employee believes, or receives feedback from another source, that an employee’s body art / tattoo is offensive, a discussion between the nurse / midwife, the manager and HR Team must occur to resolve the issue.

**Identification Badges**

• Staff must ensure that clothing allows identification badges to be clearly visible at all times. Please refer to Tasmanian Health Organisation specific policy and guidelines regarding identification badges. Please also refer to comments within the Infection Control section above.

**Personal Equipment Pouches/ Mobile Phones**

• Personal equipment pouches should be avoided due to the risk of being contaminated with pathogenic organisms.

• Personal private mobile phones must not be carried whilst on duty.

**Occupational Health and Safety**

• Staff must adhere to occupational health and safety policies and guidelines current in their place of employment.

• Clothing must not restrict the range of movement required for clinical care.

6. **Rationale / Evidence Base**

• The Tasmanian community expects to receive a high standard of professional care. The patients and clients may view the presentation of a health care professional as a reflection the standard of care they will receive by that person and by the organisation as a whole.
Staff must adhere to the *Work Health and Safety Act (2012)* and the *DHHS Hand Hygiene Policy* to ensure that safety is maintained for both patients/clients and staff.

### 7. Outcomes

- Nurses and midwives will present a consistent and professional image to patients, clients, other health care workers, and members of the Tasmanian community.
- Nurses and midwives will ensure that clothing and accessories will minimise safety risks.

### 8. Responsibilities/Delegations

- Nurses and midwives must ensure that they wear appropriate standard of dress in accordance with this guideline.
- Managers must encourage staff to be compliant with the guideline so that the attire reflects the principles of the dress code.

### 9. Audit and Compliance

- The managers will monitor for compliance of this guideline.
- Managers will address issues of breaches of this guideline through relevant DHHS processes.

### 10. Related Documents/Useful Resources

- [DHHS Uniform Policy](#) (Human Resources).
- [Corporate Uniform for Nurses and Midwives](#) (Nursing and Midwifery Unit website).
- [DHHS Hand Hygiene Policy](#)
- [RHH Identification Badges and Lanyards Policy](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions - New Uniforms for Nurses and Midwives](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act (2012)](#).