Dress Standards

Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals requirements for dress standards.

Purpose of this procedure

• To reduce the risk of healthcare associated infections and to improve hand hygiene this facility will observe a dress standard which incorporates the ‘bare below the elbow’ program.

Scope and target audience

• Staff who provide clinical care to patients.
• Staff who enter the patient zone. Patient zone is defined by the curtained area in a shared room or the walls in a single patient room.

Procedure / process

Appropriate dress standards are essential for:
• Work place health and safety
• Patient safety
• Infection Control
• Creating a professional and positive public image
• Comfort and security
• Identification of staff
• Positive non-verbal communication to patients, clients and visitors

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff comply with the requirements of this procedure. If a potential breach of the procedure is observed, the line manager must:
• Request the staff member to wear the correct uniform or appropriate style of clothing for the work unit
• Request the staff member observes the requirements of these dress standards as outlined in this procedure.

Staff working in clinical areas who are in direct contact with either the patient or the patient’s environment are to practice ‘bare below the elbow’.
Dress Standards

**Uniform Condition and Cleanliness**

- Employees are to maintain high standards of cleanliness and neatness of dress in order to project a professional image. They should at all times, be conscious of their appearance and the image they portray to the public generally.
- Staff who wear a uniform are to wear a clean laundered uniform each shift. It remains the responsibility of the individual employee to ensure his/her uniform is laundered and maintained at all times, to an acceptable standard.
- Unless visibly soiled with blood or body fluids, no restrictions need apply to wearing a uniform directly to and from work.
- Staff working in operating theatres who are required to wear “theatre blues” must not wear theatre clothing outside of the operating theatre suite. However if an emergency situation requires members of the theatre staff to leave the department in their theatre attire a gown must be donned prior to leaving the department. A fresh laundered set of theatre clothing must be donned prior to re entering the theatre complex.

**Dress Standards**

- Dress standards should be appropriate to the functions being performed, workplace health and safety, cultural diversity, local community standards and climate.
- All staff to wear a readily visible hospital issued identification badge.

**Footwear**

- Footwear should provide personal protection and support appropriate to the area of work and with consideration for Workplace Health and Safety Requirements. Eg. When working in clinical areas where there is potential for body fluid splashes suede or fabric footwear should not be worn in the interest of staff protection.
- Footwear must match the corporate uniform (where uniform is worn).
- Healthcare Professionals should wear enclosed footwear that can protect them from injury or contact with sharp objects (eg if sharps are accidentally dropped).

**Hair**

- Hair is to be worn clean and tidy as per infection control guidelines and long hair is to be tied back when working in clinical areas where there is potential for cross infection.
- Beards and moustaches should be well maintained (i.e. groomed).
Jewellery
- When providing direct patient care only a plain ring may be worn. Rings with stoned settings are not to be worn by staff that are providing direct patient care.
- When performing a routine/social hand wash, plain ring must be moved during the hand washing procedure to allow cleaning of the skin under the surface of the ring.
- Ring must be removed for an aseptic/clinical hand wash and surgical scrub in accordance with the infection control guidelines.
- In areas where there is no risk of infection, jewellery that is worn should promote a professional image.

Body Piercing
- Body piercing within the workplace must be covered whilst on duty. Ear piercing is permitted consistent with Health and Safety requirements.

Tattoos
- Tattoos of an offensive, violent or pornographic nature must be covered whilst on duty.

Nails
- Nails should be clean, short and neatly trimmed as per infection control guidelines.
- No nail varnish or false nails are to be worn by clinical staff with direct patient contact, as they may contribute to increased bacterial counts.

Note:
Artificial nails have been implicated in a number of outbreaks of health care associated infections and should be avoided by all Health Care Workers with direct patient contact, particularly those who perform or assist in invasive procedures (Hedderwick et al 2000, Mollenaar et al 2000).

Religious Beliefs & Cultural Requirements
- Queensland Health is sensitive to the requirements of individual employees in the wearing of modified uniforms or adopting particular grooming habits because of religious or cultural beliefs. A common sense approach will be taken to all requests for wearing modified uniforms or adopting particular grooming habits. Clinical staff must request approval through the line manager of their work unit to adopt modified dress or grooming habits on genuine religious or cultural grounds and reasonable requests will be accepted in accordance with Anti-discrimination legislation.

Compliance monitoring and outcome evaluation
- Hand Hygiene Audits
- Auditing of compliance with Bare Below the Elbows – pre and post implementation audit

Legislation and other Authority

Supporting documents
- Bare Below the Elbows Resources - CHRISP
- Hand Hygiene Australia 5 Moments for Hand Hygiene
References and benchmarking

- Bare Below the Elbows Resources - CHRISP
- Hand Hygiene Australia 5 Moments for Hand Hygiene.

Document history

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure custodian</th>
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| Compliance evaluation and audit | Hand Hygiene Audits in acute bed areas as required by Hand Hygiene Australia  
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AUTHORISATION

Signature……………………………………………………………  Date…………………………………………
Chair, Infection Control Committee, Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals

Signature……………………………………………………………  Date…………………………………………
Executive Director, Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals

The signed version is retained by the Safety, Quality and Performance Unit.

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