

Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all health care providers (HCP) and staff present a professional image to the public and maintain a clean appearance with respect to their dress. Described in this policy is best practice and evidence based on infection prevention protocols and compliance with WorkSafe BC standards for the HCP, staff and the patient/visitor/client. All information is provided also in the context of the global pandemic of COVID-19 and alignment with the Ministry of Health [COVID-19 Emergency Prioritization in a Pandemic Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Allocation Framework](#)

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all HCPs and support staff. Additional requirements may be department specific.

Policy

All HCPs and staff will ensure:

- Hair is neat and tidy. When delivering [direct patient care](#), hair will be tied back or styled off the collar to prevent risk of contamination to patient, dressing, etc.
- Clothing must be clean and appropriate for the work area.
 - Warm up jacket/vest is permitted for comfort but must be removed before entering the [direct patient care environment](#). It is the expectation that these are properly laundered. PPE items such as yellow gowns are not acceptable for this use.
 - When hospital supplied uniforms are available, please refer to unit specific guidelines. [Hospital supplied scrubs](#) are provided and to be worn only within the specific clinical area. Hospital supplied scrubs are not to be worn in hospital areas where they are optional. Hospital supplied scrubs must be returned to laundry services at the end of work shift. Hospital supplied scrubs should not be worn home, laundered at home or worn into the clinical environment from home.
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic hospital supplied scrubs are to be reserved and used by staff providing [direct patient care](#) only, specifically:
 - in ORs, ACUs, Procedures, Urgent Care Centre, single room maternity care and labour and delivery
 - Note: medical imaging physicians and staff only required to wear green scrubs when attending ORs and procedures
 - in designated clinical care areas: ED, PICU, NICU, postpartum and inpatient care areas
 - When hospital-supplied scrubs are not available due to limited supply:
 - Personal scrubs or appropriate clothing may be brought from home to change into at work. At end of shift, staff change out of these and into clothes for home. All scrubs or clothing must be laundered prior to next use.
 - Staff working in all other areas of the hospitals are expected to wear their own clean professional attire for their work environment.
- For effective hand hygiene, rings and watches must be removed. Rings often harbour more than an acceptable level of bacteria after hand hygiene. Rings also put staff and patients at risk for blood borne infections, as they have the potential to scratch and cause holes in gloves. Jewellery is not to be worn by HCPs and staff working in direct patient care environments.

- Nails are short, clean, healthy, and free of nail polish. Chipped nail polish and false nails can harbour microorganisms. Nail enhancements such as artificial nails, shellac, wraps, tips, acrylics, and gels are not to be worn by HCPs who provide direct patient care or handle patient care products. Numerous studies have shown that HCPs with nail enhancements have more bacteria on their nails both before and even after effective hand hygiene.
- Footwear is clean, in good repair, and has non-skid soles. HCPs involved in direct patient care will wear footwear of a design, construction, and material appropriate to the protection required (e.g. closed toe, and closed heel).
- Identification badges are worn at all times to maintain both security and professionalism.

Responsibilities

3.1 To Self

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they adhere to the Dress Code for their own protection and the protection of others.

3.2 To Others

If you observe non-adherence to the Dress Code, there is a concern, speak directly to the colleague and offer a reminder.

3.3 For Leaders

It is the leader's responsibility to ensure their department/program adheres to the Dress Code. Concerns with non-adherence to the Dress Code should be followed up with the HCP or staff directly.

Compliance

All HCPs and staff members are responsible to adhere to this policy and monitor their attire and appearance in accordance with the policy. HCPs and staff members should discuss with another if they observe a violation of this policy directly to the individual. Failure by HCPs and staff to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, services or privileges.

Definitions

Direct patient care is defined as hands on physical patient care or that you are within two metres of the space surrounding the patient. See patient environment definition below.

Patient environment is defined as any area within 2 meters of the patient as well as their belongings and bathroom, or the immediate space around a patient that may be touched by the patient AND may also be touched by the healthcare provider when providing care or performing tasks. Note: the patient environment moves with the patient when they are moving.

References

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) (2017). [Routine Practices - Hand Hygiene](#).

BC Ministry of Health (July 2012). *Best Practices for Hand Hygiene in all Healthcare Settings and Programs*. Retrieved April 1, 2020 from https://www.picnet.ca/wpcontent/uploads/BC_Best_Practices_for_Hand_Hygiene_2012.pdf

PHSA – BC Cancer (2017). *Dress Code for Breast Screening Staff*. Retrieved March 30, 2020 from <http://shop.healthcarebc.ca/phsa/BCcancer/Breast%20Screening/70122.pdf>

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BC Ministry of Health. Provincial COVID-19 Task Force. March 25, 2020. *COVID-19 Emergency Prioritization in a Pandemic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Allocation Framework*.

Version History

DATE	DOCUMENT NUMBER and TITLE	ACTION TAKEN
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