



UNIFORM AND PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION POLICY

RATIONALE

Whether a Northland District Health Board (NDHB) staff member wears a uniform or civilian clothing, a professional standard of presentation enhances client/public confidence and acceptance of healthcare workers. It is also seen as a reflection of professional pride and positive morale. The requirements of health and safety, and infection control principles in relation to any form of clothing worn at work must also be maintained.

Note: The term civilian clothing encompasses any clothing worn at work that is not a uniform required to be worn by an employee by the employer.

This policy outlines NDHB's expectations of staff wearing NDHB uniform (including the issue and replacement of uniforms) and surgical attire/scrubs. It also covers the standards for professional presentation.

This policy must be read in conjunction with collective employment agreements relevant for respective employees and the respective entitlements and obligations on both employers and employees with regard to uniforms and personal clothing allowances.

POLICY STATEMENT

All staff must maintain a professional standard of dress when at work. Whether wearing uniform or civilian clothing, dress will be appropriate to the work situation.

Managers, in conjunction with the chair of the Uniform Committee and the Director of Nursing and Midwifery (for nursing and midwifery), will authorize any variation to the standards of dress and uniforms. The Uniform Committee and the Director of Nursing and Midwifery will consult with relevant stakeholder / professional groups when considering any request for changes to uniforms.

STANDARD

All staff, whether wearing uniform or civilian clothing will present a professional image with clothing and footwear consistent with their respective workplace, health and safety, infection control, and security requirements.

METHOD

Staff whose work primarily involves direct clinical care must wear an authorized uniform as approved by the Uniform Committee unless advised otherwise in writing. Consideration may be given to staff working in the community where civilian clothing is appropriately worn in this work environment. Also refer to the 'Code of Dress policy for the Operating Theatre Suite' (2014).

Authority to provide uniforms and the wearing of civilian clothing outside this policy is the responsibility of the relevant Service Manager in consultation with the chair of the Uniform Committee and Director of Nursing and Midwifery (for nursing and midwifery uniforms).

Northland District Health Board provides a selection of uniform garments for staff. Outside of the work environment staff are **directed not to wear the NDHB uniform in public** due to infection control considerations and public perception. If this is not practical then the uniform should be covered ensuring the NDHB logo and staff identification are not visible.

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AUTHORISED BY: Operational Management Committee			



PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION STANDARDS

Civilian / mufti or Personal Clothing

Staff wearing civilian clothing must present an appropriate and professional image, wearing clothing appropriate to the workplace and consistent with the expectations of professionals and the clients/community. Revealing clothing and excessive accessories are not appropriate or acceptable for any staff.

Clothing worn by all staff must meet health and safety requirements and be neat, tidy and clean each day.

The manager of each unit is responsible for monitoring the suitability of the personal clothing worn by staff and to discuss this with the staff as necessary.

Failure to present a professional image or meet an appropriate standard of presentation in the employee's area of work may result in disciplinary action.

Identification

All staff are required to wear the official Northland District Health Board proximity/identification card and be clearly visible at all times whilst at work.

Personalised name badges should be limited to reduce the risk of harm to the patient when moving or handling. Personal name badges will not include any reference to the DHB or the staff member's job title. The NDHB official ID card is the only acceptable form of identification.

Registration medals or other insignia should be kept to a minimum.

Lanyards

The wearing of lanyards in the clinical environment and in direct patient contact is not supported due to patient/staff safety and infection control considerations.

Retractable clips are the preferred option and can be acquired via Facilities Management.

Costumes and festive attire

Wearing of costumes or festive attire must first be approved by the manager of the service to ensure appropriateness for wearing in the workplace.

Smokefree Environment

NDHB staff must not smoke on NDHB grounds and environments or publicly while in their health professional role.

NDHB staff must not smoke on NDHB grounds and environments and/or in public when wearing NDHB uniform or any other means of identification which may identify that staff member as being a NDHB employee. This section is to be read in conjunction with the Smokefree Policy.

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Jewellery and finger nail polish

(also refer to the Hand Hygiene Policy)

Jewellery, if worn, must be discreet and not worn in excess, especially by those working in direct patient contact. Jewellery must not be worn by staff if their area of work place has a service specific policy restricting the wearing of jewellery.

Jewellery must not be worn if it may be at risk of catching clothing, being pulled or scratching a patient. If jewellery is worn it must allow for proper hand washing.

Wrist watches are to be removed for direct patient contact or procedures such as dressings, catheterization.

Staff Wearing Uniforms

The wearing of jewellery in the clinical environment and in direct patient contact is limited to plain single bands and simple ear/nose rings/studs (i.e. not dangling, or large-sized). Any body piercing other than ear/nose rings/studs should be removed or covered while at work.

Taonga and other items of cultural significance may be worn on the outside of clothing where culturally appropriate such as at official functions.

When wearing uniforms finger nail polish and false nails are not to be worn if providing direct patient contact.

Tattoos

Tattoos that contain expletive, offensive, or content not suitable for the health environment are to be covered up while at work. Managers will seek guidance from the Uniform Committee in determining what is not appropriate.

Hair

Hair will be maintained in a clean, neat and tidy style at all times while at work. For those providing direct patient care, hair below jaw level must be secured back from the face.

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UNIFORM STANDARDS

NDHB Uniform Committee

The NDHB Uniform Committee is responsible for:

- The development and monitoring of uniform and professional presentation policy and standards across NDHB
- The review, approval and standardisation of all NDHB uniforms
- Being the point of contact for uniform suppliers
- Working in collaboration with service managers/GMs, and professional groups for approving uniform changes or requests.

Eligibility for Uniform

A uniform will be provided to employees working in front-line and clinical positions where

- protective clothing or a corporate front-line image is required; and
- it is approved by the manager of the service and relevant professional leader

All other staff are required to wear civilian clothing appropriate to the setting and to the presentation standards.

Uniform decisions

A uniform is provided by NDHB for use on duty and remains the property of NDHB at all times.

Uniform items may include tunics; 'scrub style' uniforms; polo shirts; shirts; pants and other issued items that are worn during working hours.

Some uniform items are generic to all health care workers and some may be discipline or service specific to aid identification.

Any changes to uniform design and/or entitlement must be approved by the NDHB Uniform Committee.

Requests for uniform changes must include the following information:

- Why the change is being requested
- Details of uniform request including costs involved

Uniforms need not be worn at study days or meetings where there is no patient contact.

If for any reason a uniform cannot be worn, approval will be required for any exemption from the staff member's Service Manager.

Uniform embroidery

All uniform tops are to be embroidered with the following identifiable features on the left hand side of the chest:

- NDHB logo
- Unit / ward
- Role / Designation of staff member

Example:



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Any variations to the above standard need to be approved by the Uniform Committee.

A service can also embroider their respective service logo on the uniform following approval from the Uniform Committee.

Whangarei uniform embroidery requests are to be managed through the Laundry services via the Hotel Services Manager. District Hospitals to manage locally.

Uniform allocation

Unless otherwise stated - full time staff will be allocated a maximum of 4 changes of uniform. (Due to laundry turnaround times, District Hospital staff will be allocated with 5 sets). Part time staff will be allocated uniforms on a pro-rata basis.

Maternity options

NDHB will explore maternity options for staff as required.

Expectations when wearing uniform

- Where a uniform is worn at work, it must be worn without modifications.
- Uniforms may not be worn in public places except during travel directly to and from work or if formally representing NDHB.
- Theatre scrubs may only be worn in the designated clinical areas and not out of the hospital.
- Ongoing breaches in uniform compliance will be considered misconduct and may result in a formal warning and disciplinary action in accordance with NDHB disciplinary policy.
- At the completion of employment with Northland District Health Board all uniforms issued must be returned to the laundry or manager.

Care of uniform provided

General clinical areas (excluding ICU and Theatre)

- Staff in general clinical areas may launder their uniform. Uniforms should be washed separately from general household laundry.
- Uniforms should be washed according to the manufacturer's instructions – see Laundry services for details.
- Individual services can negotiate with laundry services to wash individual items.

Heavily soiled uniforms

- Please refer to the manufacturer's instruction or Laundry services for details.

Damaged/worn out uniforms must be returned to the linen room or service manager for repair or disposal. The relevant manager is advised by the staff member requesting a replacement. District Hospitals to manage locally.

Theatre, Sterile Services Unit and ICU uniforms

(also refer to Code of Dress in Operating Theatre Policy)

Theatre, Sterile Services Unit and ICU uniforms are imprest linen items worn in sterile and non-sterile surgical areas and are laundered by NDHB to promote high standards of hygiene and infection control.

Theatre/ICU uniforms are not to leave the hospital environment and are not to be self laundered unless under exceptional and approved circumstances.

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Staff working in the Operating Theatres and Sterile Services Unit are provided on an imprest system with a surgical light blue coloured pool scrub.

ICU wear teal coloured scrubs. The Rapid Response team as the ICU outreach team cover the organisation and can wear these uniforms outside of ICU.

These uniforms

- may only be worn by staff in these areas
- may not to be worn to and from work or outside of the hospital

Thermal tee-shirt / Spencers

Thermal spencers or a thermal tee-shirt can be worn underneath scrub tops or tunics for additional warmth.

Plain black or navy blue spencers or thermal tee-shirts are to be no longer than elbow length. This is to ensure that the sleeves can be rolled up to wash hands when delivering direct patient care.

Jackets, cardigans and vests

For warmth a washable black or navy blue jacket/vest/cardigan may be worn with the NDHB provided uniform. Long sleeved jackets or cardigans are to be taken off before direct patient contact.

Trousers / scrubs and shorts

Staff will be provided uniforms in accordance with the relevant professional MECA, or by agreed variation as follows:

- Staff who wear uniforms will be provided with a scrub/tunic/blouse/shirt or polo shirt depending on the employee's role and service.
- Staff wearing Tytex scrub tops are provided with matching scrub pants. For staff who wear the Fashion Uniforms scrub and tunic tops, a black trouser or shorts option is provided. Staff have the option to purchase their own black trousers/shorts which meet professional standards and are consistent with the ward/unit uniform choice.
- Where staff are not covered by a MECA and a uniform top is provided, staff are to wear their own trousers that meet professional standards and are consistent with the ward/unit uniform choice.
- No denim, corduroy, cargo or sports shorts/trousers or tights/leggings to be worn for clinical staff wearing uniform.

Footwear

- All staff must wear footwear appropriate to the workplace and in accordance with accepted policy and standard unless medical reasons (and supported by relevant documentation) deem it necessary to wear other footwear.
- Employees who are supplied with a uniform (exception in Theatre and ICU), are to wear black footwear. Minor colour highlights or contrasts on the shoe are permissible, however the predominant colour must be black.
- All footwear worn at work must be able to be cleaned, able to be polished or washable, give appropriate support and protection, and have a non-slip sole to minimize potential injury.

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- Sandals need to be fitted with a filled in toe-cap and a heel back strap or an inset strap.
- 'Croc' style shoes are not acceptable footwear.
- Operating Theatre footwear such as clogs are only to be worn by Theatre or ICU staff, as these provide anti-static protection for these areas.
- When working in the community and in respect of clients' homes, where appropriate, shoes are to be removed before entering clients' homes. In doing so, staff need to be aware of any health and safety issues.

Personal Protective Footwear

NDHB will provide suitable footwear to employees working in hazardous conditions in compliance with the Health & Safety in Employment Act 1992.

OH&S must approve any protective footwear purchased by procurement for use in NDHB.

Monitoring

All staff are responsible for ensuring the observance of this policy.

Any enquiries regarding uniform changes or new uniforms are to be directed to the Uniform Committee via the Nursing and Midwifery Directorate, who can provide a catalogue of styles upon request.

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REFERENCES / ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

2014-2015 ACORN Standards for Perioperative Nursing. Adelaide, Australia: The Australian College of Operating Room Nurses Ltd.; 2014: 218-224. *(Copy also available in Theatre).*

Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practices. Denver, USA: Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN); 2012: Section 11: 57-72. *(Copy also available in Theatre).*

NDHB Code of Dress within the Operating Theatre Suite Policy (2014).

Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, regulations and amendments.

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If printed, this protocol is valid only for the day of printing or for the duration of a specific patient's admission 29/03/2020