



Dress Code Policy

1. Background

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) is committed to a dress code that takes into account:

- The WA Health Code of Conduct which requires employees to “*dress in a way that is appropriate for the work staff do and comply with any dress or uniform policies and procedures.*”
- The professional and public image of staff.
- Patient safety and consumer expectations.
- Compliance with Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) practices.
- Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) policies.

It is the responsibility of all staff to dress in a professional manner. Standard of dress is determined by the nature of duties, the area in which the work is performed and the degree of contact with both patients and the general public. It is expected that attire will be culturally appropriate and not cause offence or discomfort to other members of staff, patients or visitors. WACHS line managers are responsible for the supervision and ongoing monitoring of dress code compliance.

2. Policy Statement

Uniforms

- Compulsory uniforms will be worn, if directed by the service area.
- Health Care Facilities are to ensure Health Care Workers (HCW) have access to adequate uniform supplies to enable a clean uniform to be worn each shift.
- In areas of clinical practice where there is a high risk of exposure to blood and body fluids, uniforms should be worn as well as the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- There is some evidence from several small prospective trials, that the uniforms of HCWs can become contaminated with a variety of pathogens and therefore HCWs should avoid wearing their uniforms home. If the uniform has been contaminated with blood or body fluid, the hospital laundry facility should be used wherever possible. If home laundering, removal of any blood or body fluids initially, followed by a hot wash is preferred.
- Uniforms should be laundered separately from other household linen utilising a hot wash at the maximum temperature the fabric can tolerate and/or the washing machine can accommodate. The uniform should then be ironed or tumble-dried as recommended in the garment care label.

- Recommended PPE is designed to protect HCWs clothing. Clothing exposed outside of PPE e.g. shoes, trousers, are not considered a significant transmission risk unless contaminated with blood or body fluids. Any footwear needs to be appropriate to wear in a health care facility (HCF) i.e. cleanable and enclosed.
- If clothing outside of PPE coverage becomes contaminated with blood or body fluids, the HCW needs to change out of soiled items at once.
- It is recommended that staff travel directly home or change out of any identifiable uniform or clothing before using public transport or if planning to visit a public facility (e.g. shopping centre) due to the public perception of a perceived high risk of contamination from healthcare worker's clothing.
- In settings where healthcare workers are expected to change at work (e.g. perioperative settings) healthcare facilities should provide changing rooms/areas and shower facilities.

Standards

- Clothing must not constitute a hazard (for example when moving equipment or machinery).
- As required, protective clothing and equipment will be supplied and staff must comply with use.
- Attire is to be clean, tidy, in a good state of repair, culturally sensitive, reflect a professional image and appropriate for the work the staff member performs. In general, the following items are not acceptable:
 - Shoe-string tops/dresses, midriff tops or low-cut tops.
 - Jeans, tracksuits, leggings, short shorts, hipsters and mini-skirts.
 - Clothes with overt commercial advertising and offensive pictures or writing.
- Footwear must be clean, in a good state of repair, non-slip and appropriate to the duties performed. Footwear suitable to the duties being undertaken must be worn and preferably be designed to minimise the risk of injury from dropped sharps, as well as minimise risk of exposure to blood and body substances Footwear must meet safety requirements for the work environment in accordance with the [WACHS Personal Protective Equipment Procedure](#).
- Nursing and Midwifery uniforms are not to use regionally designed uniforms with the name of region (for example, Kimberley).
- The name of the specific unit is not to be printed or embroidered onto the garment.
- The positions professional title (e.g. Doctor, Registered Nurse, Physiotherapist) should be printed on scrubs so that patients can identify professional roles.
- Uniform artwork should reflect the local community and area and should be designed in consultation with staff and relevant Aboriginal community representatives, where applicable.

- All requests for branded, locally designed artwork require approval by the Regional Director or Executive Director.
- Clothing worn, including for religious or cultural reasons, must comply with IPC principles.
- Visible tattoos must be inoffensive to others. Where tattoos are deemed to be offensive e.g. symbolism or racism, they must be appropriately covered.
- Identification badges must be worn and clearly visible whilst on duty in accordance with the Staff Identification Procedure.

Clinical Staff Uniforms

Clinical Staff specific guidelines – all staff

- Staff must comply with the 'Bare below the elbows' principles as outlined in the WACHS [Hand Hygiene Policy](#).
- Earrings, preferably studs, must be kept to a minimum. Pendant, drop or hoop earrings are not permitted, as they pose a risk of injury to staff.
- Facial piercing jewellery must be kept at a minimum and removed when working in clinical areas.
- In clinical settings, hair should be secured to ensure it does not impede appropriate use of standard precautions, including the use of PPE as required. Staff in clinical settings must also address any concerns with facial hair in the context of wearing Particulate Filter Respirators (PFRs).
- Closed in, non-slip shoes must be worn at all times.
- Head coverings worn for cultural or medical reasons must comply with IPC principles (i.e. must be secured to the side or back of the head to prevent the need for frequent adjustment). Like uniforms, these must be changed daily and laundered appropriately.
- ID badges must be worn at all times. ID badges are to be secured / attached a to pocket during care delivery. The method of attachment should ensure that there is no choke hazard or IPC risk.
- Long sleeved tops, jumpers, cardigans, etc. are prohibited whilst providing clinical care, in keeping with 'Bare below the Elbow' principles.
- Long sleeved tops worn for cultural or religious reasons may be permitted in non-clinical settings where no direct patient contact occurs.

Additional guidelines specific for Nursing and Midwifery staff

- Nursing and midwifery uniforms will not have region or site designation.
- The WACHS corporate logo will not be used due to small font size requirements.
- Embroidery on left chest provided in Appendix A.
- Right chest embroidery will have role designation.
- Collar and TRIM colours relate to role designation (See Appendix A).

Special events (fundraising) and/or casual days

Authorised dress up fundraisers (e.g. Jeans for Genes Day) or regular casual Friday events are examples of when wearing jeans is acceptable in the workplace. Staff should be mindful of meetings with patients/families/management and ensure their presentation is in keeping with the WACHS professional image.

WACHS nurses and midwives participating in fundraising or casual dress days (fun scrubs event or Christmas holiday period) are still expected to wear attire that conveys a positive and professional image for WACHS in accordance with the minimum requirements specified in the WACHS Dress Code policy. Employees should be mindful of this, particularly when participating in meetings. Wearing alternate scrubs outside of these events is considered non-compliant with the required dress standards.

Supply of Nursing Uniforms

WACHS supply uniform to enrolled nurses as per WA HEALTH SYSTEM – UNITED WORKERS UNION (WA) –INDUSTRIAL AGREEMENT 2022.

WACHS will provide the approved nursing uniform free of charge to all Registered Nurses and Midwives employed at WACHS sites.

The includes the following:

- The provision of up to 5 uniforms pro rata, free of charge
- Hospital scrubs will be able to be replaced every two years to maintain uniform professional appearance.
- Uniforms maybe resupplied prior to 2 years at the discretion of the manager due to wear and tear.

3. Definitions

Clinical Area	An area in which examination, investigations, intervention, care, management and/or treatment of patients or clients is undertaken in a WACHS Health Service.
Clinical HCW	The medical, nursing, mental health, allied health and support services workforce who provide patient care.
Health Care Worker	Any person employed or contracted by WACHS, either on a permanent, temporary, casual, volunteer or agency basis to deliver or support healthcare services.
Non-Clinical HCW	This includes all employees and volunteers who may enter patient areas, but do not provide care for patients. This may include those working in management, administration, education or research.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Staff members are responsible for ensuring their compliance with the minimum dress code requirements.

Managers must monitor compliance with minimum dress code standards and directly address incidents of non-compliance, with support from HR, if required.

5. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a breach of the [WA Health Code of Conduct](#) (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (WA) and is binding on all WACHS staff as defined by the Code.

Failure to wear or utilise Personal Protective Equipment will be managed in accordance with the [WA Health Discipline Policy - MP0127/20](#).

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

6. Records Management

All WACHS corporate records must be stored in the approved Electronic Documents and Records Management System.

[Records Management Policy](#)

7. Evaluation

Evaluation of this policy is to be carried out by the Director Human Resources (or delegate). The review is to be undertaken in five years.

8. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards - 1.25 and 3.2](#)

9. Legislation

[Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#)

[Health Services Act 2016](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)

10. References

[WA Health System Industrial Instruments](#)

[Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare 2019](#)

[COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control in WA Healthcare Facilities.](#)

11. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Hand Hygiene Policy](#)

WACHS [Infection Prevention and Control Policy](#)

WACHS [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Procedure](#)

WACHS [Staff Identification Procedure](#)

12. Related WA Health System Policies

[Discipline Policy – Integrity Policy Framework – MP 0127/20](#)
[Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment Policy – MP 0118/19](#)
[Code of Conduct MP0124/19](#)

13. Policy Framework

[Integrity Policy Framework](#)

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Appendix A: Nursing Uniforms Standards

Left chest embroidery will have



Colour - Trim and Collar by designated roles:

Role	Colour - Trim & Collar
Enrolled Nurse	Sky Blue
Advanced Skilled Enrolled Nurse	Split trim - Sky Blue and Dark Sky Blue
Registered Nurse	White
Clinical Nurse	Cherry
Clinical Nurse Manager	Split trim - Cherry and White
Clinical Nurse Specialist	Split trim - Cherry and White
Staff Development Nurse	Emerald
Nurse Educator	Split trim - Emerald and White
Midwife	Lilac
Clinical Midwife	Violet
Endorsed Midwife	Dark Purple
Clinical Midwifery Manager	Split trim - Violet and White
Clinical Midwifery Specialist	Split trim - Violet and White
Staff Development Midwife	Emerald
Midwifery Educator	Split trim - Emerald and White