



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.
- Infection control compliance.
- Occupational health and safety 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.
- Whilst no clinical studies have demonstrated cross-transmission of healthcare associated pathogens via standard apparel, a number of small prospective trials have demonstrated that the uniforms of healthcare professionals can become contaminated with a variety of pathogens.
- In areas of clinical practice where there is a high risk of repeated exposure to blood and other body substances, it is recommended that uniforms be worn as well as the appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Healthcare workers should wear a clean uniform for each shift.
- 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 workers.
- 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.
- If the uniform has been contaminated with blood or body substances, the healthcare worker should change out of the soiled items as soon as practical and the hospital facility laundry should be used where possible.
- Additionally, during an outbreak, pandemic or in a setting where there is a high risk of exposure to blood and other body substances, healthcare workers may consider not wearing their uniform home and utilising the healthcare facility laundry where possible.
- 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 \(PPE\) Procedure](#).
- Regionally designed uniforms must be branded with the WACHS corporate logo (which is available from WACHS communications) and 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 infection control principles, during the provision of care.
- 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 P2 respirators.• Closed in, non-slip shoes must be worn at all times.• Head coverings worn for cultural or medical reasons must comply with infection control 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 attached to pocket during care delivery. The method of attachment should ensure that there is no choke hazard or infection control risk.• Long sleeved tops, jumpers, cardigans, etc. are prohibited whilst working in acute care areas, such as inpatient wards and emergency departments. In keeping with 'Bare below the Elbow' principles, when delivering direct clinical interventions to patients long sleeve garments must not be worn.• Long sleeved tops worn for cultural or religious reasons may be permitted in non-clinical settings or where staff are not delivering direct clinical interventions to patients. In clinical settings or where staff are delivering direct clinical interventions to patients, 'Bare below the Elbow' principles are to be adhered to.
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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.

3. Definitions

<p>Clinical Staff</p>	<p>A Health Care Worker as defined in (Health Care Worker Immunisation Policy: Operational Directive OD 0388/12) Health Care Worker (HCW) refers to doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, students on clinical practice, laboratory staff and mortuary attendants, clerical staff, volunteers, support staff such as cleaners, orderlies and other staff who may have contact with patients or with a patient's blood or body substances as a result of their workplace activities.</p> <p>Those involved in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hands-on care of patients e.g. washing/toileting/examining • manual handling or transferring of patients • completion of medical procedures and/or surgical procedures <p>This may include (but is not limited to) the following staff groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing Staff • Allied Health • Population Health • Support Services • Mental Health Staff • Medical Staff • Patient Care Assistants (PCAs).
<p>Non-Clinical Staff</p>	<p>Those staff not involved in the direct hands-on care of patients, or have only minimal contact. This may include (but is not limited to) the following staff groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerical and secretarial staff • Consultants and Contractors • Corporate staff • Infrastructure and Support Services staff • Administration • Management

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. 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.

7. Standards

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

8. Legislation

[Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#)

[Health Services Act 2016](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)

9. 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, Version 8, 31 August 2020](#)

10. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Hand Hygiene Policy](#)

WACHS [Infection Prevention and Control Policy](#)

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

WACHS [Staff Identification Procedure](#)

11. Related WA Health System Policies

[Discipline Policy – Integrity Policy Framework – MP 0127/20](#)

[Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment Policy – MP 0118/19](#)

[National Hand Hygiene Initiative in Western Australia Hospital OD 0429/13](#)

[Code of Conduct MP0124/19](#)

12. Policy Framework

[Integrity Policy Framework](#)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats
on request for a person with a disability**

Contact:	Director Human Resources		
Directorate:	People, Capability and Culture	EDRMS Record #	ED-CO-14-50041
Version:	3.00	Date Published:	23 June 2021

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