



3.11 Staff professional conduct and attire

The health workforce are representing the facility and therefore need to ensure professional behaviours and appearances are maintained. Staff should always be professional and culturally appropriate in accordance with their role, duties and the community/resident cohorts which they are working with. This also aligns with being safe in relation to infection, prevention and control expectations. These expectations will support residents and staff to feel safe, confident and comfortable whilst respectfully recognising that they are working with people from a range of diverse backgrounds.

In alignment with the expectations on staff attire and behaviours the site has a responsibility to:

- Implement positive workplace culture programs strengthening organisational culture and ethical, safe, respectful and compassionate workplace.
- Provide employees with flexible work options to help them meet their personal, cultural and family needs and obligations.

A policy to clearly present these expectations is required, and this may be the policy in place by the Department of Health or a new site policy may be introduced. This section presents a number of recommendations for site policy formation on staff attire and behaviours.

The quarantine facility will be employing staff across all levels of experience and therefore a standard expectation of professional conduct and practice ensures all staff are aware of the workplace expectations.

Recommendations are for all staff to have a staff site identification card and they should always carry this with them. Unlike other areas where staff are required to wear their identity card in a noticeable location (for example clipped to their shirts) due to IPC practices staff should not have their card on their uniform and it should therefore not be on display in resident zones. Lanyards must not be used in quarantine areas as they are considered an infection risk.

3.11.1 Staff professional conduct, confidentiality and conflicts of interest

It is important that all employee involvement with residents, other site staff, contractors, visitors and other personnel is professional at all times. Employees are representatives of the facility and it is expected they conduct themselves in a manner which reflects positively; this includes comments, remarks or opinions in social media.

The characteristics of good conduct include:

- Loyalty
- Trust
- Confidentiality
- Respect
- Commitment
- Teamwork.

Employees have a legal obligation not to disclose confidential matters arising from their employment with others. This includes putting information about their resident interactions on social media or discussing this with anyone external to the direct care of the resident.

It is anticipated that staff will be accountable for their own actions and decisions, and be respectful to others. Additionally, staff conduct for the quarantine facility is recommended to align with the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993 as adapted and presented in the Code of Conduct for the Northern Territory Public Sector.¹⁰

3.11.2 Media

It is likely the quarantine facility will attract media attention at various times. It is important staff understand they are not to engage with media, and any requests from media are to be forwarded to the media department via the site Health Leadership Team. As staff are representing the quarantine facility they need to understand they are not to make any media comments unless authorised to do so. This extends to handling official information for which they are not permitted to disclose any official information acquired through their role.

Comments published via social media platforms are considered public statements and are subject to the same conditions as comments made in any public forum or to the media. Official comments or comments that may be perceived as official must only be made by a person authorized to comment.

3.11.3 Staff attire

At CNR the staff uniforms were provided in the form of scrubs, this suited the climate staff were working in, and aligned with IPC standards of practice, particularly for those staff working directly with COVID-19 positive residents. Staff were required to change into their scrubs at work with the scrubs laundered for them.

Signage used in orientation to ensure new staff are aware of site expectations regarding uniforms and grooming.

The following are the required actions relating to personal attire within the quarantine facility.

- All site staff working in active quarantine zones are to change into allocated scrubs on arrival to work and change again prior to leaving the facility.
- Scrubs are laundered by the site and separately to other laundry through contract arrangements.
- Closed footwear is to be worn at all times. Shoes worn into red and orange zones are required to be left onsite for this purpose.
- Police, contractors and other uniformed staff not changing their footwear onsite must clean shoes with disinfectant wipes at the end of the doffing procedure when leaving the zones.
- Arms are required to be bare below the elbows when entering the quarantine zone to enable good hand hygiene if interacting with residents, their laundry, or their waste.
- All jewellery needs to be removed, including earrings when entering the orange or red zones.
- Hair must be off the shoulder and tied back when onsite.
- Beards should be trimmed to improve effectiveness of PPE.
- Hats for wearing within the zones are available at the zone entrance – no hats worn into the zone can leave the zone without being disinfected in bleach solution.

The wearing of items arising from particular religious/cultural norms (e.g. saris, turbans, skullcaps, niqaab, kippahs etc.) can generally be accommodated onsite. However, consultation with the IPC Health Professional will be required to see how this can be incorporated with safe wearing of PPE as the health and safety of the employee must take precedence.

3.11.3.1 Clothing on arrival

Staff are to arrive onsite in their own cloths and change into their site scrubs before they commence their shift. On their shift completion they are to change back into their own clothes and leave their work scrubs in the allocated place for laundering. Changing rooms are provided for staff as are spaces for them to change and safely store their clothes and belongings.

The following clothing is not considered appropriate to wear to work.

- Clothing (sheer/revealing, casual, scruffy, untidy or not in good repair or dirty) that may attract negative attention or that could be perceived as inappropriate to visitors or colleagues is not considered to meet the required standard to attend work.
- Clothing which overtly promotes alcohol, tobacco or drugs, or food and drinks which contradict healthy eating.
- Clothing with slogans or symbols which may attract negative attention and/or could be perceived as inappropriate to residents or colleagues e.g. swear words, gang affiliation, racist or religious statements.



3.11.3.2 Shoes

Staff are asked to leave a pair of shoes onsite and therefore travel to and from work in a different pair of shoes. For staff who must take their shoes home, it is recommended they clean these with alcohol/disinfectant wipes to ensure they are safe.

- Onsite staff should wear appropriate, safe, suitably enclosed footwear whilst on duty. Where there is uncertainty regarding the appropriateness of certain footwear, a risk assessment should be undertaken by the appropriate Workplace Health and Safety officer/adviser and the IPC Health Professional.

3.11.4 Personal grooming

As staff will often be entering zones where they are required to wear PPE, personal grooming recommendations need to take into account the activities being performed and the climate staff are working in.

Recommendations for infection prevention and infection control highlight that beards can impair the effectiveness of masks and therefore place the staff member at risk. A guide for beard styles aligned with safe mask wearing has been provided in *Section 2: Infection prevention and control*.

Employees will be well groomed and ensure personal cleanliness.

Employees with facial hair will ensure it is kept trimmed with regard to considerations for health and safety standards in keeping with the occupation of the employee such as the requirement to wear face masks.

Perfumes and aftershaves have the potential to become an irritant to some and should be used with discretion.

Hair must be off the shoulder and tied back when onsite.

Staff working in red or orange zones must not wear nail polish, artificial nails, tips, wraps, gels, appliques, shellac and any other additional items or products applied to the nail surface (in compliance with Hand Hygiene and Infection Prevention and Control Standards these are not considered to be aligned with site IPC requirements and pose a risk to PPE integrity).

3.11.4.1 Jewellery, body piercings and body art

Jewellery presents an IPC risk for staff who are required to wear PPE, this can cause tears in PPE, and often jewellery cannot be cleaned effectively when leaving the zones and jewellery can impair the effectiveness of PPE. Body art of a genuinely cultural nature e.g. facial Ta Moko worn by a woman of Maori descent is not considered unprofessional or inappropriate.

- Jewellery, visible body piercings and visible tattoos that may attract negative attention and/or could be perceived as inappropriate to residents or colleagues may be required to be removed or concealed.
- All jewellery needs to be removed, including earrings when entering the orange or red zones.