

Guidelines for Employees' and Students' Work Attire and Hygiene

Summary

This guideline applies to all health and social care units in the Satakunta wellbeing region that provide care for patients, residents, or clients. Infection prevention is a significant aspect of the safe treatment of patients/clients/residents. Responsible and professional conduct includes proper hand hygiene, correct use of work and protective clothing, and personal health and cleanliness.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that staff adhere to good hand hygiene and use appropriate work and protective clothing. Hygiene guidelines for personnel working directly with patients/clients/residents or in patient/client/resident care areas are more detailed than those for other staff.

Work and Protective Clothing

Work attire includes task-appropriate workwear and suitable protective equipment. Work clothing conveys a reliable and safe image of the professional. Work attire must be suitable for the tasks performed and hygiene purposes. It is the supervisor's duty to ensure proper attire. The recommendation is for employers to provide work and protective clothing for use at the workplace. Employers are responsible for cleaning and maintaining the provided workwear. Employees working in hospitals or care facilities must not wear work clothes outside these premises.

If the employer does not provide workwear, select short-sleeved clothing that can withstand temperatures of at least 60 degrees Celsius.

Workwear must be clean. It should be changed daily if possible and more frequently as needed when soiled, and always if contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids.

Unit-specific work attire is used in operating rooms, procedural units, intensive care units, as well as sterile areas for equipment and medication preparation.

Such attire is changed daily and as needed during the day if it becomes soiled.

Workwear must cover any personal clothing underneath (e.g., a doctor's coat should be fastened when treating or examining patients). Long-sleeved attire must not be used in patient care or examination situations. The sleeves of a doctor's coat must be rolled up to the elbow

unless a short-sleeved coat is used. For warmth, it is recommended to use a half-sleeved model.

When selecting work shoes, consider safety and occupational health guidelines. Socks must be worn with work shoes. Employees are responsible for keeping their work shoes clean. Employees or students using hijabs may use their own scarves. If employer-provided scarves are available, they must be laundered following the principles for work clothing. Personal scarves are washed at home. Scarves should be changed if soiled or at least three times a week.

In aseptic work areas (operating rooms, equipment sterilization, medication preparation), employees use disposable head covers provided by the employer. Employees must be provided with a designated area for changing into work attire. In or near the changing room, there should be a place to leave soiled clothing. Before placing work clothes in the laundry, ensure pockets are emptied, and badges, pens, etc., are removed.

Hand Hygiene and Use of Jewelry in Patient, Resident, and Client Work

Healthy and disinfected hands are an essential tool for workers in daily tasks. Good hand hygiene is crucial, and the condition of the skin on the hands must be maintained. High-quality hand hygiene requires that hands are easily disinfectable.

Hands must be bare up to the elbows, and there must be no factors on the hands, wrists, or forearms that hinder disinfection. Rings, watches, activity trackers, bracelets, and artificial nails prevent proper hand hygiene. Nails must be kept short and clean. Nail polish, nail jewelry, and artificial or gel nails are not permitted.

Barriers to hand disinfection may include splints, supports, kinesiology tapes, bandages, or adhesive tapes located in the disinfection area, as well as recent tattoos less than 1–2 weeks old. Prescribed splints, compression sleeves, or gloves extending below the elbow that cannot be adequately maintained in terms of hygiene cannot be used in physical patient care. For these tasks, consultation with occupational health or the infection prevention unit is recommended.

In patient and social care work, large necklaces and earrings must not be worn as they increase the risk of accidents and infections. Even small jewelry items must be cleaned frequently. Use of piercings should be professional and considerate of occupational safety aspects. Oral and nasal piercings should not be worn if they compromise the required aseptic practices (e.g., leaking or secreting piercing sites). Avoid touching facial piercings during work hours. If touched, good hand hygiene must be observed.

Personal Hygiene

Maintaining personal hygiene is important. Hair must be kept neat and clean. Long hair should be tied back in patient and social care work. Men's beards and mustaches must be neat. Fragrance-free hygiene products are recommended for all professional groups to prevent allergic reactions.

Pia Lahtinen

Chief Physician, Interim Medical Profession Director

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