

Healthcare Attire Scrubs and Uniforms

Best practice recommendations

Purpose

The aim of this document is to reduce the risk of cross-transmission of pathogens on healthcare attire.

1 Application

These instructions should be followed by all Alberta Health Services (AHS) staff, medical staff, volunteers, students and other persons acting on behalf of AHS.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Alberta Health Services (AHS) issued attire, including AHS provided scrubs, uniforms, lab coats and warm-up jackets, is provided to users in authorized areas by exchange cart, through linen rooms, scrub dispensing equipment or a combination of these methods.
- Don freshly laundered attire upon entry to the unit, e.g., attire is protected from contamination and changed if contamination occurs.
 - Determine the use of cover-up attire, e.g., lab coats based on the practice setting. For example:
 - Within surgical settings non-scrubbed personnel wear a closed long-sleeved jacket to confine bacterial shedding. The jackets are changed and laundered daily.
 - Visitors spending a limited time in the operating room don one-piece coveralls or cover gowns before entry.
 - When attire is visibly soiled and at the end of each shift:
 - Discard single-use attire.
 - Place reusable attire into a designated soiled laundry hamper.
 - Do not wear or take AHS issued attire outside of the facility premises.
 - Change attire worn outdoors, for any reason, upon re-entry to restricted or semi-restricted surgical areas due to potential contamination of the attire.
- 2.2 Follow [routine practices](#) including [hand hygiene](#), [point-of-care risk assessment](#), and [personal protective equipment](#).
- Wear clean attire.
 - Protect attire from exposure to blood and body fluids by wearing a gown during activities likely to cause splashes of fluids or contact with blood or body fluids.
 - Make sure the gown covers from neck to knees to wrist.
 - Tie gown at the back of neck and waist.
 - Remove soiled gown after use and:

- Place in waste container if disposable
- Place in linen bag if reusable, and
- Perform hand hygiene.

2.3 Regularly launder personal attire in a hot water wash cycle, followed by a cycle in the dryer.

For example:

- Launder uniforms or lab coats that come in contact with the patient or **patient environment** after daily use and when visibly soiled.
- Launder lab coats with no contact with the patient, or the patient environment weekly and when visibly soiled, e.g., hang lab coats before contact with the patient on a designated coat hook.

3 Definitions

AHS issued attire means attire issued for performing duties within the Alberta Health Services facilities and includes scrubs, uniforms, lab coats and warm-up jackets. Staff wear AHS issued attire in designated areas as required by department policy, including, but not limited to:

- Surgical settings and sterile supply
- Critical care including all ICUs, e.g., NICU, PICU
- Cardiac catheterization/angiography/neurovascular invasive procedure labs
- Medical device reprocessing departments
- Endoscopy
- Nutrition, Food, Linen and Environmental Services
- Emergency rooms
- Respiratory
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Morgue.

Patient environment means the space extending about 2 metres around the patient, wherein microorganisms are predominantly from the patient.

Personal attire means attire, excluding AHS issued attire, worn by healthcare providers to perform duties within a healthcare setting.

Clean means laundered for each shift, free of visible contamination and in good repair.

4 References

- 4.1 Bearman, G., Bryant K., Leekha S., Mayer J., Munoz-Price L.S., Murthy R., Palmore T., Rupp ME., White J. 2014. Expert Guidance: Healthcare Personnel Attire in Non-Operating Room Settings. *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*. 35(2): 107-121. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4820072/>
- 4.2 Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC). 2017. The ORNAC Standards, Guidelines, and Position Statements for Perioperative Registered Nurses. 13th Edition. Author. Toronto.
- 4.3 Palmore T., Bearman G. 2018. Guide to Infection Control in the Hospital: Chapter 60: Healthcare Personnel Attire in Non-Operating Room Settings. International Society for Infectious Diseases. Retrieved from https://www.isid.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ISID_InfectionControl_Chapter60.pdf
- 4.4 Spruce L. 2016. Surgical Attire- A Matter of Preference or Evidence? *ORNAC Journal*. March 2016. 34(1):14-9, 25-31.

AHS documents available on insite

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- Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital. 2018. Site Dress Code Information Sheet & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
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- South Health Campus. 2013. Service Expectations for Linen Services. Director Linen Services. Calgary Zone.

5 Version History

IPC Document no./ID <i>(file name)</i> hi-ipc-hlthcare-attire-scrubs-uniforms-info-sht-z0-bpr-pt-care		Revision Description/Comment <i>(Brief description of issue purpose, e.g., Issued for information, Minor change / Major change with applicable details)</i>
Version	Revision date <i>(YYYY-MM-DD)</i>	
V5	2025-03-14	Minor change. BPR revised to reflect AHS branding 2024 and IPC visual identity formatting updates.
V6	2025-05-21	Minor change. Updated formatting



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