

# College of Air and Surface Transport Nurses (COASTN) National Entry, Education, Training and Maintenance Criteria for Aeromedical Nurses in New Zealand

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## Purpose

- (1) Based on collated information obtained from international and national flight services standards and policies:
  - To define the *entry criteria* recommended by the New Zealand College of Air and Surface Transport Nurses (COASTN).
  - To define the *minimum training* required for entry into the New Zealand aeromedical nursing role.
- (2) To provide a suggested framework for the education, training and re-certification pathway for aeromedical nurses to establish and maintain a national standard of knowledge, skill and training for all aeromedical nurses across New Zealand (NZ).
- (3) To support district health boards (DHBs') and private employers' compliance with Ambulance, Paramedicine and Patient Transfer Services (NZS 8156: 2019) and Ambulance NZ: NZ Aeromedical & Air Rescue Standard Version 3.0 (2018).
- (4) To provide a framework for DHBs and private employers to mitigate identified risks involved in air ambulance operations through a standardised training and re-certification process.
- (5) To highlight the occupational health and safety legislative and training responsibilities of DHBs and private employers whose employees perform their clinical duties in the high-risk environments of helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft and road ambulances (Appendix 1: The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, & subsequent relevant amendments to the Act; NZS 8156:2019 and Ambulance NZ: NZAARS Version 3.0:2018).

Some components of this document will apply to surface transport nurses. However, COASTN does wish to acknowledge that this work concentrates on aeromedical nursing.

## Entry Criteria to Become a New Zealand Aeromedical Nurse

- NZ Registered Nurse/NZ Registered Comprehensive Nurse/NZ Registered Nurse Practitioner
- Current NZ Registered Nurse practicing certificate
- Minimum of five years post-graduate high acuity experience, with at least three years recent cumulative nursing in emergency, high dependency or critical/intensive care nursing in a secondary or tertiary hospital (appendix 2).
- For adult services, current NZ Resuscitation Council CORE advanced rescuer certification.
- For paediatric and neonatal services, currency in APLS/NPLS or equivalent.
- To have a level of physical capability proportional to the unique demands of aeromedical nursing, including safe egress in an emergency situation.
- Level 4 PDRP or working towards

## Before entering the aeromedical nursing role, COASTN recommends the following are completed:

- Baseline auditory testing
- Medical check

## **Introductory Training and Orientation to aeromedical nursing in New Zealand**

Successfully fulfilling the requirements of the clinical support crew as defined by:

- Ambulance NZ: NZ Aeromedical and Air Rescue Standard (NZAARS) Version 3.0: 2018
- Successful completion of flight service-specific requirements to enter aeromedical nursing.

COASTN acknowledges that the various flight services throughout NZ will have service and aircraft-specific emergency procedure training, service-specific orientation programmes and service-specific competencies.

Aim to complete and pass a structured, formal aeromedical training course that meets the current NZ industry standards.

### **Maintenance Criteria**

- Ongoing employment in a high acuity setting (Appendix 2)
- Minimum of 96 hours of clinical practice *OVER* the previous 12 months

### **Aeromedical Mandatory training**

- Annual service-specific emergency procedure training
- Two yearly HUET for services with rotary wing operations
- Two annual land and water survival training
- Maintain a level of physical fitness proportional to the unique demands of aeromedical nursing and safe egress in an emergency.
- Crew resource management and human factors training
- Education about altitude physiology and its effects on crew and patients.
- ALS as per NZRC standards
- Neonatal Basic Life support (NBLS), Advanced Paediatric Life Support (APLS)

### **Clinical Mandatory training**

- To complete relevant resuscitation courses as scheduled by their DHB, appropriate to their scope of practice within their flight service.
- To complete and maintain any service-specific clinical competencies defined by individual flight services.

### **Recommended clinical training**

- Certifications or training applicable to the role, e.g., simulation, Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC); Early Management of Severe Trauma (EMST); Early Management Severe Burns (EMSB); Management of Obstetric Emergency Trauma (MOET); Practical Obstetric Multi-Professional Training (PROMPT)

### **New Zealand aeromedical nursing ongoing education**

- Refer education calendar on the COASTN website

## **Employer responsibilities**

- Endorse the recommendations and mandatory criteria outlined within this framework as a risk mitigation method for their institution, aeromedical nurses, and the patients within their care.
- To facilitate transport nurses to obtain and maintain these recommendations and mandatory training criteria.
- The job description should clearly include and represent the aeromedical nursing component

## **NZ aeromedical nurse professional responsibilities**

On entering the role, the flight nurse should be aware of the following:

- To maintain a record of training and re-certification about the transport nurse role (PDRP)
- Attend mandatory safety training and education opportunities to maintain their currency as a transport nurse.
- Maintain the required clinical practice hours in a high-acuity setting (Appendix 2)
- Maintain a transport log.

## **References**

- 1) Ambulance New Zealand: New Zealand Aeromedical and Air Rescue Standard (NZAARS) Version 3.0:2018.
- 2) New Zealand Standards for Ambulance, Paramedicine, and Patient Transfer Services (NZ 8156 2019).

## **Appendices**

### *Appendix 1*

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (and subsequent amendments)

### *Appendix*

Identifies high acuity areas in secondary and tertiary hospitals:

- Critical care/intensive care units - adult, paediatric and neonatal
- Emergency departments
- Coronary care units
- Post anaesthesia care units
- High dependency units
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