

National Entry, Education, Training & Maintenance Criteria for Aeromedical Nurses in New Zealand

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 on 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 with the view to establishing and maintaining 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 employer's 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 ambulance (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).

There are some components of this document that will be applicable 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 3 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/neonatal resuscitation or equivalent.
- To have a level of physical capability commensurate to the unique demands of aeromedical nursing, including safe egress in an emergency situation.

Prior to entering the aeromedical nursing role, COASTN recommends the following are completed:

- Baseline auditory testing
- Medical check

Introductory training & orientation to aeromedical nursing in New Zealand

Successfully fulfilling the requirements of 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 into 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 80 hours 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 yearly land and water survival training
- Maintain a level of physical fitness that is commensurate to the unique demands of aeromedical nursing and safe egress in an emergency situation
- Crew resource management and human factors training
- Education pertaining to altitude physiology and effects on crew and patient

Clinical Mandatory training

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

Recommended aeromedical safety training/health and fitness

- Annual "Fit to fly" medical, auditory and physical fitness baseline check

Recommended clinical training

- Certifications or training applicable to 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); Neonatal Basic Life support (NBLS), Advanced Paediatric Life Support (APLS)

New Zealand aeromedical nursing ongoing education

- Refer education calendar on COASTN website

Employer responsibilities

- Endorse the recommendations and mandatory criteria outlined within this framework as a robust method of risk mitigation for their institution, aeromedical nurses, and the patients within their care.
- To facilitate aeromedical nurses to obtain and maintain these recommendations and mandatory training criteria.
- 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 pertaining to flight nurse role (PDRP)
- Attend mandatory safety training and education opportunities to maintain their currency as an aeromedical 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 2:

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