



National Emergency Nurses Association
Leaders in Emergency Nursing *Leaders pour les Soins Infirmiers d'Urgence*

EMERGENCY NURSING
SCOPE AND STANDARDS OF CANADIAN PRACTICE
SIXTH EDITION

Scope and Standards of Canadian Practice
National Emergency Nurses Association

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PREFACE

The National Emergency Nurses Association (NENA) was founded in 1982 and is the Canadian professional nurses association dedicated to quality emergency care. The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) recognizes NENA as the professional association of national emergency nurses. Emergency nursing was designated as a speciality in 1991. Canadian provinces, territories, and individual members around the world comprise our membership.

The National Emergency Nurses Association is the national voice for the highest standards and practices in emergency nursing and emergency departments across Canada. NENA promotes emergency nursing as a vital specialty in the field of health care. NENA has demonstrated commitment to excellence in emergency nursing by: publishing evidence informed position statements on a wide range of topics pertaining to emergency nursing and the operation of emergency departments; promoting emergency nursing research with special bursaries and publication of results; offering educational exchange and networking in conferences; publication of the *Canadian Journal of Emergency Nursing*; and supporting and administering internationally-recognized courses such as the Emergency Practice, Interventions and Care-Canada (EPICC), the Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC), the Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course (ENPC), and the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale (CTAS).

Nursing has become a diverse profession, encompassing many discipline-specific practices and academic curricula. The specialization of nursing skillsets and disciplines is supported by academic streams which reflect a multiplicity of nuanced practices. This is reflected in the ENA development of nursing specialties related to their expression in one of the following:

- Specific body system
- Specific disease process/problem
- Specific age group
- Specific patient population, such as women's health care or mental health

Unlike many nursing specialties, emergency nursing transcends any narrow confines and includes the provision of care that ranges across all demographics and physiologic processes: from birth to death; health promotion to end of life care; behavioral health to infectious illness; chronic disease to sudden health collapse; intermittent crises to progressive decline in health. The application of the nursing process to patients of all ages requiring stabilization and/or resuscitation for a variety of illnesses and injuries defines the nature of emergency nursing practice. Addressing the need or perceived need, for unplanned emergent care in an unscheduled manner, with an expanded potential for a stressful, chaotic environment defines the character of emergency nursing.

The services provided by emergency nurses must be directed and structured to maximize the limited time, space, and resources within which the nurses function. This document is intended for emergency nurses working in a variety of settings (emergency departments, pre-hospital and

military settings, ambulatory care centres and clinics/other health environments providing care to emergency patients).

The scope of emergency nursing includes:

- Triage and prioritization
- Stabilization and resuscitation
- Assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, and implementation of interventions where limited data may be available, followed by evaluation of patient response
- Provisions of care in uncontrolled and/or unpredictable situations
- Crisis interventions to meet the needs of unique patient situations
- Emergency operations preparedness
- Education of the patient and community to facilitate attainment of an optimal level of wellness
- Wellness initiatives directed to patient and community, particularly related to disease and injury prevention
- Research
- Management
- Education and mentorship
- Advanced practice
- Forensic nursing

Standards express “expected and achievable levels of performance against which actual performance can be compared...” and define “...the minimum level of acceptable performance”. (College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia, 2012). Déry, D’Amour and Roy (2017) identified established standards of practice as an essential component of the professional practice model. NENA recognizes that standards provide the lens by which the public views and evaluates nursing performance and to which nurses are held accountable.

Having a body of defined standards enhances the accountability of the nursing profession to the public by articulating and promoting safe nursing. NENA believes that this edition of the *Emergency Nursing: Scope and Standards of Canadian Practice* provides an essential tool to all emergency nurses. These standards have contributed to the development of the Canadian Emergency Nursing Certification Exam (ENC(C)).

The specialized body of knowledge and skills inherent in emergency nursing practice provides a unique opportunity for the emergency nurse to serve as a focal point at the intersections of primary, secondary and tertiary care on the disease-wellness continuum. This multifaceted role enables the emergency nurse to affect the processes and outcomes of concerns such as bioethical issues, humanism, bio psychosocial and spiritual needs of patients, and alternative care modalities in the nurse’s role as patient and/or family advocate.

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PROFESSIONALISM

STANDARD I. QUALIFICATIONS

The emergency nurse shall be competent and current, adhering to established standards of nursing practice.

1.1 Staff Emergency Nurse

The staff emergency nurse shall meet specified qualifications for employment.

- Minimum TWO years acute care, medicine/surgery experience in an active treatment setting is preferred
- Emergency nursing recognizes the need to develop and train new graduates in the skills and knowledge needed to become specialized as an emergency nurse
- Competence in:
 - Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS) protocols
 - Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) protocols
 - Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) protocols
- Additional Courses recognized by NENA :
 - Emergency Practice, Interventions and Care-Canada (EPICC)
 - Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC)
 - Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course (ENPC)
 - Course on Advanced Trauma Nursing (CATN II)
 - Emergency Nurse Certification Canada (ENC(C))
- Current registration (RN) with Provincial/Territory Body
- Successfully completes a comprehensive orientation program to ensure competency in the care of the patient

1.2 Triage Nurse

The triage nurse shall meet specified qualifications for employment (in addition to standard 1.1 stipulated above).

- Minimum TWO years recent emergency nursing practice
- Demonstrated competence in emergency nursing practice
- Displayed acquisition of advanced assessment, interviewing and interpersonal skills
- Trained in current CTAS (Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale)

1.3 Clinical Nurse Educator

The clinical nursing educator shall meet specified qualifications for employment (in addition to standards 1.1 and 1.2 stipulated above).

- THREE years recent emergency nursing experience
- Baccalaureate degree in Nursing or Science of Nursing is preferred
- Experience in instructional methods
- Skilled oral, written, and electronic communication in all learning contexts

- Demonstrated comprehension of specific needs of the adult learner or any other appropriate educational theories and principles

1.4 Emergency Department Manager

The ED unit manager shall meet specified qualifications for employment.

- Minimum of FIVE years emergency nursing experience
- Baccalaureate degree in Nursing or Science of Nursing is preferred
- Demonstrated competence in emergency nursing practice
- Maintained a working knowledge of and supports the dissemination of same in the work environment
- Endorsed NENA courses
- Demonstrated comprehension of nursing management strategies or specific competencies listed by the American Organization of Nurse Executives (2015).
- Demonstrated leadership skills

STANDARD II. PROFESSIONAL STATUS

The emergency nurse shall engage in a variety of activities and behaviors that characterize professionals.

2.1 Ethics

The emergency nurse shall provide nursing care that demonstrates compliance with the Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics and/or the provincial association or provincial order.

2.2 Autonomy

The emergency nurse shall function autonomously to the extent that knowledge skill, judgment, and scope of practice allows.

- Actions are congruent with the provincial nursing associations
- Actions are congruent with institutional policy and procedures
- Participates in case and peer review to evaluate autonomous practice

2.3 Professional Identity

The emergency nurse shall promote understanding of their role and responsibilities.

- Clearly identifies self to patient and significant others (as responsible for patients nursing care)
- Clearly identifies self to colleagues and other health care providers
- Seeks the opportunity to be involved in activities relevant to emergency nursing practice

2.4 Authority

The emergency nurse shall exercise authority congruent with their role and responsibility in accordance with their respective regulatory body Acts.

- Practices in accordance with their respective regulatory body Acts, provincial publications/documents that define and describe the scope of nursing practice
- Practices in accordance with the policies and procedures of the agency in which they are employed
- Practices within the confines of one's knowledge, skill, judgment, and expertise while coordinating the delivery of care given to patients for whom they are responsible

2.5 Legislation

The emergency nurse shall be aware of current legislation that influences emergency care and the practice of nursing.

2.6 Accountability

The emergency nurse shall be accountable for his/her actions.

- Utilizes self-evaluation and evaluations from peers, supervisors, and patients to modify their practice accordingly
- Assumes responsibility for actions
- Participates in the formulation and revision of policies, procedures, and protocols related to all aspects of emergency care

2.7 Professional Image

The emergency nurse shall foster a professional image of nursing.

- Articulates and demonstrates the crucial role of emergency nursing within the health care system, to other professionals, the media, and the public
- Acts as a role model to encourage entry into emergency nursing

2.8 Preceptor

The emergency nurse shall foster a supportive relationship with graduate nurses and new staff in emergency departments.

- Acts as a resource to new learners
- Promotes understanding of policies and procedures that govern their practice as defined by their legislative bodies and institutional practices
- Assists to identify learning needs of new staff

PRACTICE

STANDARD I: TRIAGE

The emergency nurse must triage every patient entering the emergency care system and determine priorities of care based on physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs, as well as factors influencing patient flow through the system. The emergency nurse will have to utilize the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale, which is a valid and reliable triage system, to designate triage acuity.

1.1 Assessment

The emergency triage nurse assessment shall include rapid, systematic collection of data related to the patient's chief complaint. The patient is triaged according to the urgency of his/her presenting problem within the following categories: resuscitative, emergent, urgent, less urgent, and non-urgent. Those categories determine or classify all patients (adults and/or paediatric) consulting the emergency department in the order of urgency based on the need for treatment and the time that a patient can safely wait before being seen by a physician.

- Performs symptom analysis of chief complaint on all patients entering the emergency care system collecting subjective and objective data
- Links patient chief complaint with the assessment findings
- Identifies the appropriate Canadian Emergency Department Information System (CEDIS) presenting complaint based on a holistic nursing assessment
- Assigns a triage level determination based on assessment findings, abnormal vital signs for adult or paediatric populations, applications of 1st and 2nd modifiers, and nursing judgment
- Evaluates the patient in a timely manner according to the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale
- Documents, in a retrievable form, relevant data and triage assessments in succinct, complete fashion, according to agency guidelines
- Reassesses the patients in the waiting area at intervals that are based on CTAS guidelines and re-categorizes as necessary

1.2 Analysis/Plan

The emergency triage nurse assessment shall be analyzed to determine acuity, patient care area, and any appropriate interventions based on triage protocol.

- Informs patient of the plan of treatment based on the assigned triage level and the overall physical condition
- Assigns patients to appropriate patient care area and staff, based on triage assessment and acuity categorization
- Informs emergency care team of the patient's arrival and communicate pertinent information regarding patient's conditions

- Communicates with the healthcare team/administration regarding triage status (workload, potential or actual problems based on assessment and/or ongoing care of the patients within the emergency care setting)

1.3 Intervention

The emergency triage nurse shall function independently within the scope of practice established for professional nurses by provincial or territorial regulatory bodies.

- Implements nursing interventions according to triage protocols
- Documents nursing interventions on patient record
- Facilitates the flow of patients through the emergency care system
- Communicates pertinent information to families or significant others as appropriate
- Mobilizes all resources and follows clinical guidelines as needed for patient or family

1.4 Collaborative Intervention

The emergency triage nurse shall function collaboratively to facilitate timely care of the patients.

- Ensures prompt initiation of resuscitative measures, if indicated
- Implements diagnostic testing, if indicated in accordance with hospital policy and procedure
- Implements advanced treatment protocols or collective orders, if indicated in accordance with hospital policy and procedure
- Collaborates with Public Health or National Agencies during a pandemic crisis or during a disaster

1.5 Evaluation

Quality monitoring shall be developed and implemented to ensure timely, appropriate triage.

- Demonstrates complete documentation and consistency with triage protocol (e.g. random chart audits, case review, adherence to computer based triage etc.)

STANDARD II. ASSESSMENT

The emergency nurse shall initiate accurate and ongoing assessment of physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs of patients within the emergency care system.

2.1 Initial Assessment

Initial assessment shall include systematic and pertinent collection of data based on the chief complaint.

- Obtains initial focused subjective and objective data through history taking (inclusive of patient/family/EMS, other care providers, etc.), physical assessment, and review of records.
- The patient assessment shall reflect a holistic approach

2.2 Ongoing Assessment

Continuing reassessment shall be performed to include systematic and pertinent collection of data that reflect the current health status of the patient.

- Performs ongoing patient assessment in a timely manner based on acuity
- Records significant data as appropriate to the nature and severity of the illness or injury
- Communicates significant data to appropriate persons promptly
- Communicates information and wait times with patients and families

STANDARD III. ANALYSIS / PLANNING

The emergency nurse shall formulate a comprehensive plan of care for the emergency patient based on the subjective/objective data.

3.1 Plan of Care

The emergency nurse shall develop and utilize a plan of care as a systematic, uniform, and consistent method to provide safe and effective patient care.

- Identifies priorities for nursing actions, affecting patient outcomes and goals
- Reflects environmental, physical and psychosocial stress factors affecting the patient
- Bases the plan on current nursing knowledge, professional standards, and agency policy
- Incorporates teaching and learning principles into the plan of care

3.2 Supplies and Equipment

The emergency nurses shall ensure that supplies and equipment necessary for the care and safety of the emergency patient are available.

- Ensures that supplies necessary for provision of emergency care are readily available and fit for use
- Ensures that the equipment necessary for provision of emergency care is readily available and in working order

3.3 Safety

The emergency nurse shall take measures to ensure the safety of colleagues, patients, significant others and themselves in the emergency care setting.

- Identifies and rectifies sources of potential accidents through daily or periodic inspection
- Is familiar with standardized safety procedures
- Implements safety procedures for each patient in accordance with the patient's specific requirements
- Practice reflects a knowledge and use of infection control measures.
- Demonstrates knowledge, skill, and judgment necessary to implement the protocol to be followed in the event of an internal/external disaster or threat
- Ensures that the supplies and equipment necessary for the implementation of universal precautions are available and utilized
- Participates in the development of a security plan to assure the safety of all and the protection of property
- Identifies actual/potential security risks on an ongoing basis and act accordingly to ensure the safety of all

3.4 Legal Responsibilities

The emergency nurse shall demonstrate an awareness of current federal, provincial, and municipal laws governing the delivery of care to the emergency patient.

- Follows written agency policy and procedure surrounding medical/legal issues
- Follows the Canadian federal and provincial privacy legislation when providing any information

STANDARD IV. INTERVENTION

The emergency nurse shall implement a plan of care based on nursing/medical assessment and diagnosis.

4.1 Independent Functions

The emergency nurse shall function independently within the scope of professional nursing practice established by their respective regulatory body.

- Independently performs continuous patient monitoring and alters the plan of care accordingly
- Independently provides patient education
- Independently performs life/limb and function saving measures within the scope of professional nursing practice

4.2 Collaborative Function

The emergency nurse shall function collaboratively with other health care providers to implement the plan of care within the scope of professional nursing practice.

- Individualizes a plan of care for each patient
- Implements a plan of care for each patient

STANDARD V. EVALUATION

The emergency nurse shall evaluate and modify the plan of care based on observable responses and attainable goals of patient centered outcomes.

5.1 Evaluation

Emergency nursing care shall be evaluated on a continual basis to determine attainment of patient centered outcomes.

- Records and uses current patient data to measure progress
- Utilizes data from the patient, primary care giver, and members of the health care team
- Documents reassessment of the patient and revises the plan of care accordingly

5.2 Initiatives Development

The emergency nurse shall be involved in mechanisms to regularly evaluate and monitor the quality of emergency care.

- Participates in the development of continuous quality improvement plans
- Participates in the implementation of the quality improvement plan through patient outcome reviews and patients surveys
- Participates in the development of actions, resolutions, and ongoing monitoring activities designed to improve emergency care practice

STANDARD VI. ETHICS

The emergency nurse shall provide care based on the Canadian Nurses Association, Code of Ethics for Nursing.

6.1 Ethics

The emergency nurse shall provide care that demonstrates ethical beliefs and respect for the patient's rights in accordance with the Canadian Nurses Association, Code of Ethics for Nursing.

- Respects the individuality and human worth of the patient regardless of age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, cultural or ethnic background, or spiritual beliefs
- Respects the health and well-being, choice, dignity, confidentiality, fairness, and privacy of the patient
- Promotes and utilizes principles of equity and fairness in assisting the patient
- Takes actions which are consistent with their professional responsibilities and standards of practice

STANDARD VII. COMMUNICATION

The emergency nurse will communicate with the emergency patient, significant others, and other health care providers openly, honestly, and in a timely manner, following the Canadian federal and provincial privacy legislation.

7.1 Liaison with the Patient and Significant Others

The emergency nurse shall provide sufficient information to allow the patients and significant others to participate in the patients care.

- Involves the patient in education and decision-making processes related to their care
- Involves significant others in education and decision-making processes related to the patients care

7.2 Liaison with Community

The emergency nurse shall participate in educational endeavours related to the provision of emergency care within the community.

- Participates in formal/informal community teaching regarding emergency nursing and emergency care systems

7.3 Interdisciplinary Relations

The emergency nurse shall communicate effectively, in order to facilitate effective and comprehensive emergency health care.

- Functions as liaison between/among members of the health care team
- Collaborates in health care decisions related to patient care
- Communicates quality of care concerns to other members of the health care team
- Contributes relevant data/information to members of the health care team and community agencies
- Communicates nursing expertise to other disciplines to address issues relevant to provision of emergency health care

7.4 Documentation

The emergency nurse shall accurately document pertinent patient data, nursing interventions, and patient outcomes.

- Documents thoroughly, chronologically and continuously, based on the nursing process and patient outcomes
- Utilizes agency specific documentation systems

7.5 Public Relations

The emergency nurse shall demonstrate skill in interacting with the public to foster the provision of respectful patient centered care.

- Facilitates communication between patient and emergency care team
- Promotes open communication
- Follows the Canadian federal and provincial privacy legislation when communicating with outside agencies, family members, and the public

7.6 Interactions

The emergency nurse shall interact as team members of the emergency medical system, respecting the limits, capabilities, and responsibilities of all members.

- Participates in multidisciplinary patient care conferences and collaborate in team decisions
- Participates in critical incident stress management on both a formal and informal basis

EDUCATION

STANDARD I. PROVISION OF INFORMATION

The emergency nurse shall assist the patient and significant others to obtain knowledge about health, wellness, illness, and injury prevention or treatment.

1.1 Patient and Significant Other Teaching

Teaching shall be an ongoing process that includes provisions of information about the condition, responsibilities, options, and recommendations for appropriate follow-up.

- Offers information about the condition to the patient and significant others in a way that is consistent with their intellectual and emotional capabilities
- Offers explanations about interventions before initiation whenever possible
- Involves the patient and significant others in the decision-making process related to therapeutic intervention whenever possible
- Ensures an explanation is provided for medications, treatments, self-care, follow-up, and/or referral
- Participates in development and use of written discharge instructions
- Evaluates patient educational materials

1.2 Prevention

Epidemiological trends shall serve as a basis for identification of individuals at risk of illness or injury.

- Assists the patient and significant others in the identification of factors and place them “at risk” for illness or injury
- Explains methods for illness or injury prevention
- Explains early detection and intervention strategies

1.3 Public Education

The emergency nurse will participate in public education regarding the emergency care system.

1.4 Health Promotion

The emergency nurse will participate in the dissemination of health information as it is related to identify needs of the patient.

STANDARD II. EDUCATION OF SELF AND PEERS

The emergency nurse shall maintain their professional competency based on their provincial governing bodies.

2.1 Continuing Education

The emergency nurse shall obtain progressive, ongoing education.

- Determines professional learning needs and identifies short and long-term education goals relevant to practice
 - Plans/implements activities to achieve educational goals
 - Shares newly gained knowledge from relevant educational programs with peers and colleagues
 - Demonstrates enhanced clinical practice as a result of continuing education
 - Has knowledge of and participates in professional groups that impact on the practice of emergency nursing

2.2 Nursing Education

The emergency nurse shall facilitate learning experiences for professional peers and nursing students.

- Acts as a teacher, preceptor, mentor, and role model to nursing students
- Teaches professional peers about the roles and responsibilities of the emergency nurse

2.3 Emergency Medical System

The emergency nurse shall facilitate learning experiences for members of the health care team and students.

- Participates in the orientation of health care team members and students regarding policies, procedures, roles, and responsibilities
- Participates in the teaching and supervision of health care team members and students during clinical practice

2.4 Orientation

Orientation shall be based on the function which the emergency nurse is expected to assume in the emergency setting.

- Knowledge of employer approved written policies and procedures
- Knowledge of the physical set-up of the emergency facility and the utilization of all client care equipment
- Knowledge of the utilization of documentation system
- Knowledge of the roles and functions of other emergency personnel as described according to legal statutes, job descriptions, policies and procedures
- Knowledge of the emergency communication network and its operation

- Knowledge of nursing procedures and psychomotor skills within the emergency situation
- Knowledge of ethical and legal considerations which impact patient care in the emergency setting

RESEARCH

STANDARD 1. RESEARCH

The emergency nurse shall assess quality of literature and recognize and utilize research findings to advance emergency nursing practice.

1.1 Application to Practice

The emergency nurse shall use information from research literature to improve practice.

- Possesses an awareness of research in emergency nursing
- Implements changes in clinical practice through evidence based research
- Disseminates research findings to peers

1.2 Collaboration

The emergency nurse shall collaborate with colleagues in other disciplines who are engaged in research in the practice setting.

- Participates in and supports interdisciplinary research
- Assists in identification of research subjects

1.3 Administrative Support

The emergency nurse in leadership roles shall facilitate research in the practice setting when agency guidelines governing research have been fulfilled.

- Provides administrative support for research conducted in settings for which they are responsible
- Includes research activities as a component in performance evaluations

1.4 Ethics

The emergency nurse shall adhere to ethics that govern research.

- Protects the subject's rights to privacy and confidentiality
- Protects the subject's rights to voluntary/informed consent without coercion
- Demonstrates knowledge of and participates in the mechanisms available to address violation of the rights

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