

ALEXIAN BROTHERS HOSPITAL NETWORK POLICY		
TITLE: Color-Coded Patient Wristbands	NUMBER:	
EFFECTIVE DATE:	REVISION DATE:	PAGE: 1 OF 3

PURPOSE

The Alexian Brothers Hospital Network (“ABHN” or “Network”) has adopted this Policy in order to have a clearly defined and consistently implemented process that identifies and communicates specific risk factors or special needs by standardizing the use of color-coded wristbands, based upon the patient’s assessment.

OBJECTIVE

1. To reduce the risk or potential for confusion with the use of color-coded wristbands
2. To communicate patient safety risks to all health care providers as well as the patient, family members, and significant others to promote safe healthcare

DEFINITIONS

The following chart represents the meaning of each color-coded band:

Band Color	Communicates
White/Clear (with White insert)	Patient Identification
Red	Blood Bank Band
Pink	Extremity – Restricted use
Neon Yellow	Difficulty Swallowing

POLICY

Procedure

1. Identification (ID) bands in admission, pre-registration procedure and/or Emergency Department

The white or clear admission identification band is applied in accordance with procedures outlined in organizational policy on patient identification and registration. These identification bands may be applied by non-clinical staff in accordance with organizational policy. The identification band

should remain in place throughout the patient's encounter unless information is updated and replaced according to organizational policy.

2. Color-Coded hospital bands

During the initial patient assessment, data is collected to evaluate the needs of the patient and develop a plan of care unique to the individual. Throughout the course of care, re-assessment is ongoing, which may uncover additional pertinent medical information, trigger key decision points, or reveal additional risk factors to the patient.

- a. Except in circumstances involving a restricted extremity, any patient demonstrating risk factors on initial assessment will have a colored band placed by a nurse on the same extremity as the admission ID band.
- b. Upon application of the colored band, the nurse will instruct the patient, family member(s) and significant other(s), if present, the purpose of the band and that the wristband is not to be removed.
- c. In the event that any color-coded wristband(s) have to be removed for a treatment or procedure, a nurse will remove the band(s). Upon completion of the treatment or procedure, the patient will be reassessed, risk(s) (re)confirmed, and appropriate bands placed immediately by a nurse.
- d. Non-hospital colored wristbands are prohibited to be worn in the hospital setting and will be removed or covered by the nurse on admission to avert confusion with the colored hospital wristband. (See #3 – Other Colored Wristbands.)
- e. Medic Alert Bracelets (metal) will be regarded as jewelry and will be treated in accordance with the Patient Valuables Process.

3. Other Colored Wristbands

Following admission ID, the admitting nurse will examine the patient for community (charity or fashion) or other colored bands. If these bands are present, the nurse will explain the risks associated with the bands during hospitalization, and the patient will be asked to remove the band(s). If the patient agrees, the nurse will remove the band. If the patient refuses, the nurse will cover the band with medical tape. The nurse will document in the Medical Record the patient's refusal and explanation provided to the patient and family.

4. Patient/Family involvement and education

During the initial assessment and re-assessment (as appropriate) the nurse should take the opportunity to educate and re-educate the patient and family:

- a. The meaning of the wristband(s) and the alert associated with each band
- b. To notify the nurse whenever a wristband has been removed and not re-applied

5. Hand-off Care

The nurse will re-confirm color-coded wristbands with the patient's chart, and/or with patient/family and other caregivers before invasive procedures, at transfer and during changes in level of care. Errors will be corrected immediately.

Color-coded wristbands will be removed at discharge or transfer to another facility. Receiving facilities should re-assess the patient and follow their policy and procedure for banding process.

6. Staff Education

Staff education regarding color-coded wristbands will occur during the new employee orientation process and reinforced as needed.

Implementation

Area	Requirement	Action Plan
Staff Orientation and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule/training content • Documentation requirement • posters 	<p>Hospital staff education will need to be scheduled, completed and documented per respective hospital policy.</p> <p>Responsible: Individual Hospital Staff Education</p>
Patient Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types/content of material • Documentation requirement 	<p>Content of patient education attached. Patient education materials (brochures and posters) may be individualized and distributed. Patient education process and documentation practices will be done in accordance with hospital policy.</p> <p>Responsible: Individual Hospital Patient Education Staff</p>

Staff Education

Alexian Brothers Hospital Network

COMPETENCY CHECKLIST

Purpose: These are the standards of the technical competencies necessary for performance and/or clinical practice. They supplement continuing education programs and the quality improvement program.

To meet competency standard the employee must demonstrate proficiency in performing the technical procedures safely as evidenced by department specific criteria.

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|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| A. Demonstration | D. Skills Lab | G. Other |
| B. Direct Observation/Checklist | E. Self Study/Test | |
| C. Video Review | F. Data Management | |

NAME:

JOB TITLE:

Color-coded Patient Banding Process	Date	Method Used	Supervisors Initials	Comments
• Color Code – Intent of Specific colors				
• Authority for Application of band				
• Process for band confirmation				
• Interdepartmental communication re: band				
• Need for re-application of band				
• Discharge instruction for removal of bands prior to home and/or facility transfer				
• Patient refusal to comply with policy				
• Policy on patient restriction regarding "Charity"/community bands				
SIGNATURES	INITIALS	SIGNATURES		INITIAL

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

DATE

Staff Education Requirement

Point of Service	Content	Documentation Requirement
<p>Introduction</p>	<p>1. Reason for banding</p>	<p>In 2005, a hospital in Pennsylvania submitted a report to the Pennsylvania Patient Safety Reporting System (PA-PSRS) describing an event in which clinicians nearly failed to rescue a patient who had a cardiopulmonary arrest because the patient had been incorrectly designated as a “DNR” (do not resuscitate). The source of the confusion was that a nurse had incorrectly placed a yellow wristband on the patient. In this hospital, the color yellow signified that the patient should not be resuscitated. In a nearby hospital, where the nurse also worked, yellow signified “restricted extremity,” meaning that this arm is not to be used for drawing blood or obtaining IV access. Fortunately in this case, another nurse identified the mistake and the patient was resuscitated. However, the near miss highlights a potential source of error and the opportunity to improve patient safety by re-evaluating the use of color-coded wristbands.</p> <p>We want to thank and acknowledge this hospital for their transparency and disclosure of this event so it can serve as a wake up call for others potentially in similar situations.</p>
	<p>2. Explanation of colors</p>	<p>This initiative is being adopted by the Alexian Brothers Hospital Network.</p> <p>White/clear means Patient Identification in all settings.</p> <p>Red means Blood Bank Band.</p> <p>Pink means Do Not Use Arm.</p> <p>Neon Yellow means Difficulty Swallowing.</p>
<p>Risk Reduction Strategies</p>	<p>1. Use wristbands with embossed message on it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This reinforces the message for new employees, helps interpret meaning in low lights, and clarifies the meaning for those who are color blind. • Reduces the chance of confusing colors with alert message • The wristband is a tool but the medical record is the source of truth to verify any discrepancies.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Remove any “social cause/community wristbands 3. Initiate bands upon admission, changes in condition or information received during stay 4. Educate patients and families regarding purpose and meaning of wristbands 5. Verify patient color alert wristband on assessment and hand off of care 6. Remove all color-coded wristbands upon discharge or transfer out of the hospital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patient refuses, cover with bandage/ tape and document. • Include family/friends in this process to safeguard the patient. • The color-coded wristband is another safeguard to prevent mistakes.