

Competency Checklist

Date:	
Employee Name:	
Preceptor/Evaluator's Name	
Competency:	Vital Sign Assessment - Blood Pressure

INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE LEVEL SUMMARY

How Met		Level of Competency	
O	Direct Observation/Return Demonstration	1	Below expected standards
V	Verbalization/Discussion	2	Fully meets standards
T	Test	3	Well above standards. May precept peers
NA	Not applicable		

If overall performance or competency is rated below the minimum competency level of 2, that performance or competency must be reassessed within 30 days of this review.

The employee demonstrates skills and competence in the following:	How Met	Level of Competency 1 2 3	Evaluated by:
Goal: The patient's blood pressure is measured accurately with minimal discomfort to the patient.			
1. Gather Equipment/Supplies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sphygmomanometer • Stethoscope • Gloves 			
2. Perform hand hygiene and don gloves.			
3. Select the appropriate arm for application of the cuff.			
4. Have the patient assume a comfortable lying or sitting position with the forearm supported at the level of the heart and the palm of the hand upward. In addition, make sure the patient keeps the legs uncrossed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the measurement is taken in the supine position, support the arm with a pillow. • In the sitting position, support the arm yourself or by using the bedside table. • If the patient is sitting, have the patient sit back in the chair so that the chair supports his or her back. 			
5. Expose the brachial artery by removing garments, or move a sleeve, if it is not too tight, above the area where the cuff will be placed.			
6. Palpate the location of the brachial artery. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center the bladder of the cuff over the brachial artery, about midway on the arm, so that the lower edge of the cuff is about 2.5 to 5 cm (1"-2") above the inner aspect of the elbow. • Line the artery marking on the cuff up with the patient's brachial artery. • The tubing should extend from the edge of the cuff nearer the patient's elbow. 			
7. Wrap the cuff around the arm smoothly and snugly, and fasten it. Do not allow any clothing to interfere with the proper placement of the cuff.			
8. Check that the needle on the aneroid gauge is within the zero mark.			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If using a mercury manometer, check to see that the manometer is in the vertical position and that the mercury is within the zero level with the gauge at eye level. 			
Estimating Systolic Pressure			
1. Palpate the pulse at the brachial or radial artery by pressing gently with the fingertips.			
2. Tighten the screw valve on the air pump.			
3. Inflate the cuff while continuing to palpate the artery. Note the point on the gauge where the pulse disappears.			
4. Deflate the cuff and wait 1 minute.			
Obtaining Blood Pressure Measurement			
1. Place the stethoscope earpieces in your ears. Direct the earpieces forward into the canal and not against the ear itself.			
2. Place the bell or diaphragm of the stethoscope firmly but with as little pressure as possible over the brachial artery. Do not allow the stethoscope to touch clothing or the cuff.			
3. Pump the pressure 30-mm Hg above the point at which the systolic pressure was palpated and estimated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open the valve on the manometer and allow air to escape slowly (allowing the gauge to drop 2–3 mm per second). Note the point on the gauge at which the first faint, but clear, sound appears that slowly increases in intensity. 			
4. Note this number as the systolic pressure. Read the pressure to the closest 2 mm Hg.			
5. Continue deflating the cuff and note the point at which the sound completely disappears, this number is the diastolic pressure.			
6. Allow the remaining air to escape quickly. Repeat any suspicious reading, but wait at least 1 minute. Deflate the cuff completely between attempts to check the blood pressure.			
7. When measurement is completed cover the patient and help him or her to a position of comfort.			
8. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.			
9. Clean the diaphragm of the stethoscope with the alcohol wipe. Clean and store the sphygmomanometer, according to hospital policy.			

Employee is competent to perform the above tasks independently and without supervision

Employee's level of competence is below 2. Reassess competency on: _____

Employee's Signature	
Evaluator's Signature	