



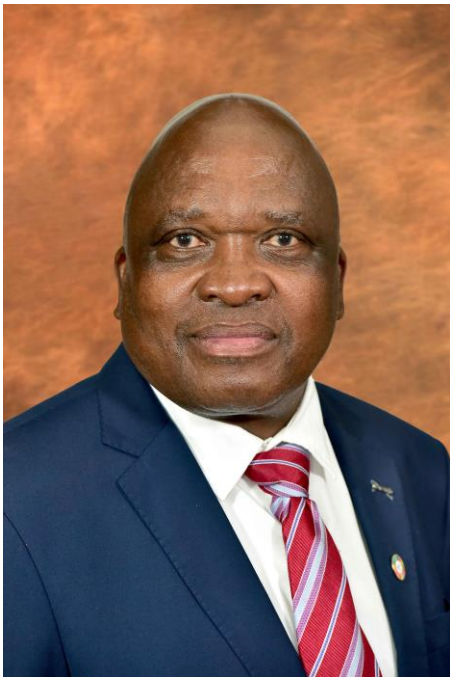
health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



NATIONAL NURSES UNIFORM POLICY

FOREWORD



The National Nurses Uniform Policy aims to prescribe wearing of uniform by nurses working in public health establishments. It determines how uniform is to be worn and outlines the provisioning strategy. Furthermore, the policy aims to ensure standardisation in terms of colour, material composition, and the quality of uniforms. Lastly, the policy seeks to adhere to the legal framework defined by the nursing statutory body to promote public confidence, professional accountability, and the image of its members.

The finalisation of the National Nurses Uniform Policy expresses the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 3 of 1999 which states that the employer has a responsibility to provide uniform or clothing to employees if their work requires that. The implementation of the PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2005 that introduced a uniform allowance for nurses to purchase their own uniforms came with limitations in relation to standardisation of uniform for quality of garment, colour, and material composition. This has resulted in the signing of the PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2022 Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the public health and social development sector, which stipulates that the employer should provide the uniform in a conventional manner. The PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2023 Amendment of resolution 01 of 2022: Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the Public Health and Social Development Sector has provided for the commencement date to be extended to 1 September 2024. In addition, it has provided that the annual uniform allowance continues to be paid until that time.

I am confident that the implementation of this policy will promote group and corporate identity and enhance the professional image of nurses as the key providers of healthcare in all public health establishments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mj PhaaHLA', written in a cursive style.

DR MJ PHAAHLA, MP
MINISTER OF HEALTH
DATE: 03 /01/2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Finalisation of the National Nurses uniform policy expresses the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 3 of 1999 which states that the employer has a responsibility to provide uniform or clothing to employees if their work requires that. The National nurses uniform policy seeks to implement the PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2022 Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the public health and social development sector, which stipulates that the employer should provide the uniform in a conventional manner.

The National Department of Health would like to acknowledge and express its appreciation to those who contributed to the development of this policy. We thank the members of the nurses Uniform Provision Task Team led by Ms. V Taschl from the Nursing Services Cluster, for their hard work and diligence in ensuring that the activities leading to the development of this document were carried out. The Chief Nursing Officer, Dr NJ Makhanya is acknowledged for overseeing the process, including her Nursing Services team comprising of Dr SJ Marais, Dr M Matandela and Dr V Matahela for their support of the project. A special word of appreciation goes to the various representatives of the nursing fraternity who shared their time and experience in the formulation of this policy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Uniform is a distinctive clothing type which is worn by members of the same organisation or profession. Having a uniform makes a person identifiable to others, provides a sense of belonging and helps one to fit in. It differentiates the uniform-wearer, in this case nurses, from other healthcare professionals and their respective roles. Uniform definition is essential for inter-disciplinary teamwork because it creates team spirit, enhances cohesion between staff members, and makes them feel connected to each other. Group cohesion creates an environment that supports and retains personnel. It is also an effective means for reducing staff turnover rates and improving personnel satisfaction.

Society makes assumptions based on appearances and nurses are under more scrutiny than most healthcare professionals. Nursing uniforms act as a form of nonverbal communication and can be regarded as a representation of their identity. In addition, nurses in uniform represent more than themselves during official duties. They also represent the profession and the Department of Health. They should therefore dress and behave in a manner that enhances the reputation of the public service. Uniforms help form a professional identity in healthcare delivery, fosters a strong self-image, leading to high confidence levels and better performance in nursing practice.

Uniforms in healthcare allow for patients to distinguish between categories of personnel. Management personnel are also enabled to identify between roles of staff members who may not be on their team. Healthcare worker's uniforms protect them against the spread of infections and ensures patient safety. In addition to departmental branding, all nurses are obliged to display their distinguishing devices as stipulated in the South African Nursing Council (SANC) regulations on uniform.

Nurses in the Department of Health have taken on expanded roles, which require them to work across institutions and in multi-disciplinary teams. These new uniforms will help patients and their caregivers identify them easily and give the assurance of the high standard of nursing care. A professional appearance communicates expertise and authority. This increases the likelihood that patients will comply with care instructions, resulting in improved clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction. The departmental branding promotes the Department of Health in implementing its strategic goals.

According to clause XV11 of the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 3 of 1999, it is the employer's responsibility to provide uniform or clothing to employees if their work requires that, or an allowance that covers the reasonable cost of the uniform or clothing. Until the signing of Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC) Resolution 1 of 2022 (Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the public health and social development sector) nurses were the only health professionals who were receiving an annual uniform allowance. Currently, provision of nurse's uniform in the public sector is inadequate because the allowance provided is insufficient to procure enough uniform for nurses to wear for seven days, which is the highest number of days a nurse is expected to work without a break. In addition, the uniform worn is not standardised in terms of colour, consistency, and quality of fabric. A national nurse's uniform policy will ensure standardisation in the implementation of the resolution in terms of, procurement, colour, material composition, and quality of uniforms.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all nurses as defined in Section 30 of the Nursing Act, 2005 (Act No. 33 of 2005) employed in health establishments of the Department of Health who are required to wear uniform in the execution of their duties and eligible to receive the uniform allowance under PHSDSBC resolution 1 of 2005.

3. KEY DEFINITIONS

"Colour" refers to the number on the Pantone colour scale.

"Material composition" refers to the ratio of natural to synthetic fibres, texture and thickness of fabric.

"Quality of garment" refers to the workmanship of the finished garment.

4. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

NDoH	National Department of Health
NHC	National Health Council
PERSAL	Personnel Salary Administration System
PDoH	Provincial Department of Health
PFMA	Public Financial Management Act
PHSDSBC	Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council
PSCBC	Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SAMHS	South African Military Health Service
SANC	South African Nursing Council
SEIAS	Socio Economic Impact Assessment Study
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure

5. LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

5.1 Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 which makes provision for the collective bargaining of employees and resulted in the resolutions listed below:

- Clause XV11 of the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 3 of 1999
- Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC) The resolution 1 of 2005
- PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2022 Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the public health and social development sector
- PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2023 Amendment of resolution 01 of 2022: Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the Public Health and Social Development Sector.

5.2 South African Nursing Council Regulations R1740, R1747 and R1201. These regulations provide the parameters within which nurses uniform should be worn in relation to the distinguishing devices prescribed for the various categories of nurses. The content of the SANC regulations have been incorporated into the PHSDSBC resolutions.

5.3 Public Service Act Regulations: Resolution 1 of 2003: which makes provision for disciplinary steps that could be instituted for failure to wear uniform.

5.4 The Public Financial Management Act 1 of 1999 (PFMA): which governs the procurement processes for the implementation of the resolution.

6. ASSOCIATED HEALTH POLICIES

6.1 Infection Prevention and Control Policy which relates to the manner in which uniform and accessories should be worn to reduce the risk of spreading infection in clinical care.

6.2 Occupational Health and Safety Act No 85 of 1998 which makes provision for the protection of healthcare professionals through the wearing of uniform.

6.3 Patient Rights Charter and Batho Pele Principles: which outlines that a patient should be treated by a named health professional.

7. RESCINDED POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND STRATEGIES

7.1 The PHSDSBC resolution 1 of 2005 which deals with the payment of a uniform allowance will cease to exist on 31 March 2023.

7.2 PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2023 however, made provision for:

7.2.1 the extension of the date of implementation to 01 September 2024.

7.2.2 the payment of a once-off uniform allowance by 30 November 2023 to all qualifying nurses. Should the employer not be able to meet the implementation date of 1 September 2024, the uniform allowance shall continue considering applicable annual inflation rates as determined by the National Treasury.

7.3 Provincial nursing uniform policies/standard operating procedures need to be updated to be aligned with this policy.

8. BACKGROUND

Clause XV11 of the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 3 of 1999 stipulated that where an employer made uniform compulsory in the provision of an employee's duties, the employer was expected to provide the uniform.

The PHSDSBC resolution 1 of 2005 made provision for nurses to receive a uniform allowance to procure uniform for themselves. The outcome was that the uniform allowance was not sufficient to procure enough uniform sets for a seven-day period. In addition, there was no standardisation of uniform in terms of quality of garment, colour, and material composition. Discussion between labour unions, their members, and the employer continued until PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2022: Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the Public Health and Social Development Sector. PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2022 stipulates that the employer should provide the uniform.

However, the employer was unable to meet the time frame set for October 2023. This led to further collective discussion and culminated with PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2023 which made provision for the amendment of Resolution 01 of 2022: Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the Public Health and Social Development Sector. The stipulations of Resolution 1 of 2023 made provision for the extension of the implementation date to 01 September 2024. Furthermore, provision was made for the payment of a once-off uniform allowance by 30 November 2023 to all qualifying nurses. Should the employer not be able to meet the implementation date of 1 September 2024, the uniform allowance shall continue considering applicable annual inflation rates as determined by the National Treasury.

9. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The uniform nurses are currently wearing is not provided by the employer in a conventional manner, but rather through an allowance. Therefore, the uniform is not standardised in terms of colour, consistency, and quality of fabric.

PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2022: Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the public health and social development sector was signed in April 2022. It mandates that the employer should provide the uniform in a conventional manner. Implementation date of the resolution is 1st September 2024.

10. AIM, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

10.1 To standardise the provision of uniform for nurses working in public health establishments.

10.2 To standardise and prescribe how uniform is to be worn for nurses working in public health establishments.

10.3 To outline the procurement and distribution of uniform for nurses working in public health establishments.

11. POLICY

The following are the stipulations of the PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2022 Agreement on the provision of uniform for nurses in the public health and social development sector.

11.1 Colour: Maroon and White

- Dress: white
- Pants: maroon
- Skirts: maroon
- Jersey: maroon
- Jacket: maroon
- Blouses, shirts, and tops: white
- Shoes: brown
- Belt: brown

11.2 Emblem

- Nursing lamp embroidered in gold with "Department of Health" underneath.
- Emblem will be on the following items of clothing: jersey, jacket, dress, shirts, blouses, and tops.
- Emblem should be embroidered on left hand side of garment either on pocket in the case of dresses, tops, blouses, and shirts or on the left panel of the jersey and jacket.

11.3 Number of sets

Total of seven sets of uniform to be provided to nurses over a period of two years.
A uniform set refers to either.

- A dress
- A skirt and a top, blouse, or shirt
- A pair of pants/trousers and a top, blouse, or shirt

The accessories are a brown belt, brown shoes, maroon jersey, and maroon jacket.

1st and 2nd year issue

- In the 1st year the employer will issue four sets of uniform, 1 pair of shoes and one jersey.
- In the 2nd year the employer will issue three sets of uniform, 1 belt and 1 jacket.

After the second year the cycle starts again until the resolution is either nullified or amended.

11.4 Maternity wear

Where an official requires maternity wear and has already been issued with their uniform quota for the year, they may make a private purchase from the designated service provider.

11.5 Size alterations

Should there be a need for a different size of uniform after an official has already been issued with their uniform quota for the year, the official may make a private purchase from the designated service provider.

11.6 Traditional adornments

Any traditional adornments on the torso should be worn under the clothes and should not be visible. While on duty, no traditional adornments should be worn from the elbow downwards while providing patient care for infection prevention and control reasons.

11.7 Transferred personnel

Should personnel be transferred to another health establishment or province after they have received their annual uniform issue, they will only qualify for new uniform in the following year.

12. NON-COMPLIANCE

Managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is always adhered to in respect of the employees they manage. All staff are required to comply with the principles and requirements of the Policy. Non-compliance with the uniform policy will lead to disciplinary procedures that will be instituted according to the Regulations of the Public Service Act; Resolution 1 of 2003.

13. RESPONSIBLE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S UNIT

The office of the Chief Nursing Officer is responsible for policy development, development of specifications and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2022 and PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2023.

14. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

14.1 There will be a decentralised approach to procurement where provincial transversal tenders will be used.

14.2 Provinces are to participate in these tenders through the bid specification and bid evaluation committees and procure accordingly.

14.3 Provinces are to develop their own standard operating procedures for dates of procurement, storage, and distribution.

14.3 Standardisation in terms of colour, fabric composition and garment are to be achieved through a service level agreement (SLA) with a suitable standardisation authority.

15. COMMUNICATION

Key communication will be between the following structures:

- National Department of Health Management Committee.
- National Health Council (NHC) - Technical Sub-committee.
- National Health Council (NHC).
- Director-General communication to provincial Heads of department (HOD).
- External stakeholder engagement will include the following bodies: labour sector, SANC, private health establishments, South African Military Health Service (SAMHS), Correctional services, nursing education institutions and provincial nursing practice and education managers.

16. TRAINING

Provinces will be responsible for training. Training will be provided to the following categories of personnel who are integral to the procurement and distribution of nurses' uniform as follows:

- Nursing service managers from different health establishments.
- Supply chain officials.
- Distribution officials.

17. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation of the PHSDSBC resolutions will be planned and implemented in conjunction with provincial nurse managers after each of the first three years. The following will be evaluated.

- Availability of the National Policy and Provincial SOP in nursing areas.
- Availability of Uniform at provincial depot.
- Proof of training of nurses.

- The percentage of Nurse Managers, including Assistant Directors in complete, correct uniform.
- The percentage of clinical nurses, including Unit Managers in complete, correct uniform.

18. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation period shall be from the commencement date of PHSDSBC Resolution 1 of 2023 (September 2024) up to end of 2026. The transitional arrangements are:

- Between September 2024 and September 2025, nurses should receive their first-year issue. Nurses across the country will be expected to wear the new uniform from Monday to Thursday and wear any other uniform they have from Friday to Sunday.
- Between September 2025 and September 2026, nurses should receive their second-year issue.
- By October 2026, it is envisaged that nurses will wear the new uniform every day.

Nursing students will not receive uniform because the scope of the policy covers only employees who receive the uniform allowance.

- To ensure standardisation of uniform, students will continue to purchase uniform from their bursaries.
- Those who have purchased uniform thus far will wear what they have purchased until the teach-out period.
- Students who commence their training from January 2025 and use public health clinical facilities will be expected to purchase their uniform from a designated service provider.

ANNEXURE A

DRESS CODE

1. White dress, or maroon pants/skirt with white shirt/top.
2. Plain flesh matching coloured pantyhose / stockings (without designs) with dresses and skirts. No patterned or fishnet stockings are to be worn.
3. When wearing pants, knee high stockings are allowed.
4. White dress code can be worn as daily uniform and on ceremonial occasions as determined by provinces.
5. Skirts may not be shorter than knee length and not longer than calf length.
6. Jerseys and jackets should not be worn while an employee is involved in direct clinical care.
7. Hair to be clean and neat and should be tied up if longer than shoulder length, wigs and extensions should be able to fit into a theatre cap.
8. Bright coloured wigs and extensions such as (blue, red, yellow, green, purple, and orange) are not allowed.
9. Hair accessories such as elastic bands and hairclips may be white and maroon. Where hair clips are worn, they must not have the potential to injure employees or patients and must comply with occupational health and infection control standards.
10. All nurses should wear the official uniform when reporting on and off duty.
11. Uniform trousers should be full length.
12. Specialised footwear for medical reasons is for the official's own account. These officials are still entitled to the standard issue pair when that is due.
13. Jewellery should be discreet.
 - One pair of earrings is allowed and should complement the uniform and not pose a risk to patients and staff.
 - A plain wedding band (with no indentations and precious stones) may be worn while on duty.
 - No jewellery or traditional arm bands are to be worn below the elbow. The only exception is a "Medical Alert" bracelet.
 - No nose or tongue rings are allowed.
 - Nails are to be kept short (1-2mm).
 - No nail enhancements like artificial nails and nail polish allowed.
14. Distinguishing devices should be worn according to SANC regulations.
15. Employees should always wear a name badge/identity badge when on duty.
16. Head scarves are not allowed while on duty.
17. Males should wear brown socks to compliment the colour of the shoes.
18. Moustaches and beards must be neatly trimmed and should be aligned to mask fitness testing prescriptions of occupational health.