

Triage RN Competency Checklist

**Education**
- Online Pretest (Optional)
- ED Triage Systematics two-day course (Live); or
  - Core Concepts (Online)
- Post test
- Triage Acuity Scale 5-Level (Live or Online)
- Post test
- Triage Clinical Expertise Adult/Pediatric or Triage Clinical Expertise Pediatric (Live or Online)
- Post test

**Resources**
- Read Triage Policies and Procedures
- Have on hand access to specific Acuity Scale authored literature for reference aid
- Have on hand specific acuity scale quick reference aids
- Read and have immediate access to Advanced Triage Protocols
- Read and have access to Policy on Violence in the ED
- Read and have access to Policy on Suspected Victims of Intimate Partner Violence
- Read and have access to Policy on Victims of Sexual Assault
- Read and have access to Policy on Suspected Victims of Elder Abuse
- Read and have access to Policy on Suspected Victims of Child Maltreatment
- Read and have access to Policy on Horizontal Violence/Workplace Bullying

**Demonstration of Competency**
Triage RN competency is classified by three levels reflective of five stages identified by P. Benner (footnote): Novice/Advanced Beginner, Competent/Proficient, and Expert

**Competency Level: Novice/Advanced Beginner**
- The novice/advanced beginner triage RN does not function independently in the triage role. The novice/advanced beginner triage RN will demonstrate mastery of the following skills: Demonstrates clear understanding of EMTALA and HIPAA requirements.
- Obtains appropriate symptom driven chief complaints
- Determines and documents acuity level using specific triage acuity scale. Utilizes the nursing process for all patients including nursing diagnosis, assessment, plan, implementation, and evaluation.
- Initiates common nurse practice intervention/standards on presenting patients with corresponding documentation (*including ice, elevation, immobilization of musculoskeletal complaints with CMS and distal pulse checks to ensure neurovascular integrity is appropriate*).
Competency Level: Competent/Proficient
The competent/proficient triage nurse functions independently in the triage area. In addition to mastery of the novice/advanced beginner competencies, the competent/proficient triage RN will:

- Consistently apply Principles of Triage.
- Perform and document the Rapid Triage Assessment on arriving patients (Identifying and facilitating placement of patients who meet Immediate Bedding Criteria).
- Verbalize and appropriate consider the three Immediate Bedding Criteria
  - Obviously ill or injured (or nurse is able to quickly and confidently determine accurate disposition),
  - Open bed (available or able to obtain),
  - Available care provider (considering acuity of patient load).
- Perform and document the Comprehensive Triage Assessment (if Immediate Bedding Criteria not met).
- Demonstrate ability to prioritize patients.
- Determine and document patient disposition.
- Implement “any open bed policy” appropriately.
- Initiate dual triage per department guidelines.
- Complete ED triage documentation accurately: capture essentials of triage assessment.
- Reassess patients in waiting areas according to acuity scale objectives and/or reassessment policy (Nursing practice reflects department policy).
- Demonstrate understanding of rational for considering “worst-case scenario” on every patient.
- Initiate appropriate nursing interventions and/or diagnostics (by Advanced Triage Protocols according to hospital policy and standards).
- Initiate appropriate Advanced Triage Protocols according to hospital policy and standards.
- Participate in peer review.
- Participate in triage chart audits.

Competency Level: Expert
In addition to mastery of the proficient/competent competencies, the expert triage RN will:

- Participate in Triage Core Group.
- Participate in developing and/or maintaining triage competency standards including:
  - Education and mentoring
  - ENA standards
  - Peer review
  - Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) via chart audits
- Complete Triage Core Group Peer Evaluations as defined by core triage group guidelines.
- Collaborate with physicians on developing new or reviewing existing protocols.
- Train technicians and assistants in eliciting appropriate (symptom-driven) chief complaints.
Coordinate obtaining and/or creating and distributing waiting room literature (*e.g.* Waiting Room Brochure).

- Create a triage equipment list.
- Develop preceptor program and competency for new triage nurses.
- Assist with 5-level triage acuity scale training.
- Orient nurses to the triage area.
- Serve as a triage mentor/resource for nurses assigned to triage role.
- Serve as a triage mentor/resource for ancillary staff assigned to triage area.
- Participate in triage redesign and process improvement projects.

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