

## Medical Examination of Nurses

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**Functional Sub group** Personnel/Workforce - Occupational Health & Safety  
Personnel/Workforce - Employment Screening

**Summary** States requirements for nurses to be medically examined before commencing duty and screened on a regular basis for communicable diseases.

**Author Branch** Employee Relations

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**Applies to** Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, Public Hospitals

**Distributed to** Public Health System, Health Professional Associations and Related Organisations, NSW Department of Health, Public Hospitals

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**Status** Active

**Director-General**

**Compliance with this policy directive is mandatory.**

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**CIRCULAR**

<b>File No</b>	C.10014
<b>Circular No</b>	83/362
<b>Issued</b>	7 December 1983
<b>Contact</b>	Mr R Dash

**MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF NURSES**

This circular supersedes circular no 75/296 of 15 August 1975 and .circular no. 83/304 of 7 October 1983. The Public Hospital Nurses (State) Award provides that the medical examination of nurses under the Award is a matter for agreement between the NSW Department of Health and the NSW Nurses' Association. The agreement may be varied from time to time.

Pursuant to this provision, revised proposals for the examination of nurses in public hospitals were recently negotiated between the NSW. Department of Health and the NSW. Nurses' Association and have been agreed on by both parties. The renegotiated agreement is herewith issued to hospitals for implementation:

- Before a nurse commence duty at a public hospital, whether on a casual or permanent basis, the hospital shall conduct a medical examination of the nurse.
- Subject to Clause 3, the hospital may accept a certificate of fitness for employment issued by a medical practitioner within the previous 3 months in place of the medical examination referred to in Clause 1.
- For protection against tuberculosis, the hospital shall:
  - (1) before a nurse commences duty, conduct a PA chest ,x-ray examination of the nurse unless a radiologist's report of a normal chest x-ray taken within the previous 6 months is available.

Distributed in accordance with circular list(s):

<b>A</b> 260	<b>B</b> 149	<b>C</b> 345	<b>D</b> 207	<b>E</b>	73 Miller Street North Sydney NSW 2060 Locked Mail Bag 961 North Sydney NSW 2059 Telephone (02) 9391 9000 Facsimile (02) 9391 9101	
<b>F</b>	<b>G</b> 114	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b> 263A		
<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>		<b>Q</b>

In accordance with the provisions incorporated in the Accounts and Audit Determination, the Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officers and their equivalents, within a public health organisation, shall be held responsible for ensuring the observance of Departmental policy (including circulars and procedure manuals) as issued by the Minister and the Director-General of the Department of Health.

- (2) as soon as practicable after the nurse commences duty, conduct a Mantoux test on the nurse, then:
    - (a) where the Mantoux test is negative, offer immunisation with BCG vaccine;
    - (b) where the Mantoux test is positive (otherwise than as a result of BCG vaccination), offer referral to a chest clinic for assessment;
  - (3) offer a Mantoux test annually to:
    - (a) previously Mantoux-negative nursing staff;
    - (b) nursing staff whose Mantoux reaction has been converted by BCG vaccination
  - (4) offer a chest. X-ray annually to nursing staff whose Mantoux reaction is positive (otherwise than as a result of BCG vaccination);
  - (5) where a nurse has been caring for open tuberculosis cases, conduct a PA chest x-ray examination of the nurse 1 year after completion of employment.
- For protection against other communicable diseases, the hospital shall:
    - (1) where a nurse has not had a complete course of immunisation against diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles and mumps, offer immunisation against these diseases;
    - (2) offer booster immunisation against tetanus at 10 year intervals to nursing staff;
    - (3) offer to nursing staff a rubella antibody test and, where a nurse has a negative result, offer rubella immunisation.
  - For protection against radiation exposure, nurses required to work in close proximity to a source of ionising radiation should be provided with a film badge or personal radiation dosimeter, and a record should be maintained of the radiation exposure measured by such film badge or dosimeter.

The costs involved in the various screening and protection procedures should be borne by hospitals except for the certificate of fitness referred to in clause 2 of the agreement.

BV McKAY  
Secretary