



ANMF (Vic Branch) Policy

Perioperative nursing

Incorporating: Anaesthetics, Post Anaesthetic Recovery Units

Perioperative patients are vulnerable during all phases of a surgical procedure requiring a general anaesthetic and must receive optimal care at all times.

The critical nature of the individual patient condition in a perioperative setting has the potential to change within minutes in an emergency situation. In such instances, the registered or enrolled nurse providing care to the patient must be able to respond as the situation demands.

Policy

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) [ANMF (Vic Branch)] that:

1. All patients in a perioperative environment require the professional skills and knowledge provided by registered and enrolled nurses at all times.
2. The perioperative nurse role requires specialist knowledge and application of nursing science, understanding and competence in carrying out complex procedures and in the use of specialised equipment. Perioperative nurses working in the area of anaesthetics are responsible for the nursing care of patients and assisting the anaesthetist in the safe administration of anaesthesia.
3. In all perioperative situations where any type of anaesthesia is administered and maintained, a suitably qualified nurse should be present at the exclusive direction of the anaesthetist. It is considered that professional nursing knowledge and skills are essential in the maintenance of a safe environment in all aspects of patient management during critical intervention of anaesthesia and surgery.
4. The quality of nursing care in this critical care environment is reflected in the standards, guidelines and policy statements of ACORN (Australian College of Operating Room Nurses)¹. It is the primary responsibility and practice domain of suitably qualified or experienced perioperative registered nurses within a suitable skills mix. Enrolled nurses can form part of an agreed suitable skills mix within the care environment.
5. The perioperative nurse must be educationally prepared with a comprehensive range of competence, skill and knowledge required to ensure integrated patient care, throughout all phases of the perioperative experience.
6. Patient's in the perioperative environment are in a vulnerable state, both physically and psychologically during all phases of an anaesthesia and while recovering from an anaesthetic and must receive optimal care at all times.

¹ Australian College of Perioperative Nursing in Australia 2020 *Standards for Perioperative Nursing in Australia*

7. The provision of nurse staffing should be in accordance with the Safe Patient Care Act 2015².
8. Theatre technicians (however titled) must not be utilised to replace suitably qualified registered or enrolled nurses. The use of appropriately trained technicians in this environment is to provide only non-direct patient care in technical and assistive areas.

² Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Act 2015 No.51 of 2015 Authorised Version incorporating amendments as at 1 March 2020