

(English Version Only)

Hong Kong Phlebotomy and Intravenous Infusion Association (HKPIVA)

Code of Conduct and Ethics

Guidance on professional conduct for Registered Phlebotomist

The four core principles of the code

Conduct as a registered phlebotomist is based on the four core principles set out in the code:

1. Make the care of patient your first concern, treating them as individuals and respecting their dignity.
2. Work with other health care providers to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of those in your care.
3. Provide a high standard of practice at all times.
4. Be open and honest, act with integrity and uphold the reputation of your profession.

Make the care of patient your first concern, treating them as individuals and respecting their dignity

Treat patient as individuals

You should:

1. Treat people as individuals and respect their dignity.
2. Be polite, kind, caring and compassionate.
3. Not discriminate in any way against those for whom you provide care.
4. Recognize diversity and respect the cultural differences, values and beliefs of others, including the people you care for and other members of staff.

Respect a person's confidentiality

You should:

5. Respect a person's right to confidentiality.
6. Not disclose information to anyone who is not entitled to it.
7. Follow the guidelines or policy on confidentiality as set out by your clinical setting

Work with other health care provider to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of those in your care.

Work as part of a team

You should:

1. Be aware of the roles and responsibilities of other people involved in providing health and social care.
2. Work co-operatively within teams and respect the skills, expertise and contributions from all people involved with your professional.
3. Treat all colleagues, team members and those with whom you work and learn, fairly and without discrimination.

Provide a high standard of practice at all times

Recognize and work within your limits of competence

You should:

1. Recognize and stay within the limits of your competence.
2. Seek help from an appropriately qualified healthcare professional, as soon as possible, if your performance or judgement is affected by your health.

Be open and honest, act with integrity and uphold the reputation of your profession

Be open and honest

You should:

1. Be honest and trustworthy when completing all records and logs of your practice experience.

2. Ensure that you are not influenced by any commercial incentives.

Act with integrity

You should:

1. Demonstrate a personal and professional commitment to equality and diversity.
2. Inform HKPIVA if you have been cautioned, charged or found guilty of a criminal offence at any time.
3. Ensure that you are familiar with and abide by the rules, regulations, policies and procedures of your clinical setting.
4. Ensure that you are familiar with and follow our advice on

Protect people from harm

You should:

1. Seek help and advice from your supervisor when there is a need to protect people from harm.
2. Seek help immediately from an appropriately qualified professional if someone for whom you are providing care has suffered harm for any reason.

Best Practice in Phlebotomy (Infection Prevention and Control)

Below summarises the infection control guidance provided in the WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION guidelines on drawing blood: best practices in phlebotomy

These are best practice guidelines. However, practices should be achieving the recommendations to protect patients and staff, or have a risk assessment to justify non-adherence.

Summary:

1. DO carry out hand hygiene (use soap and water or alcohol rub) before and after each patient procedure
2. DO NOT forget to clean your hands

3. DO use one pair of non-sterile gloves per procedure or patient
4. DO NOT use the same pair of gloves for more than one patient.
5. DO NOT wash gloves for reuse
6. DO use a single-use device for blood sampling
7. DO NOT use a needle, lancet or vacutainer for more than one patient
8. DO use a clean elastic tourniquet reprocessed between patients
9. DO NOT use a visibly dirty or unprocessed tourniquet between patients
10. DO disinfect the skin at the venipuncture site
11. DO NOT touch the puncture site after disinfecting it
12. DO NOT use needles and syringes to inject blood into laboratory sample tubes DO discard the used device (a needle and vacutainer is a single unit) immediately into a sharps container
13. DO NOT leave an unprotected needle lying outside the sharps container or dismantle sharps
14. DO seal the sharps container with a tamper-proof lid
15. DO NOT overfill or decant a sharps container
16. DO immediately report any incident or accident linked to a sharp injury, and seek assistance
17. DO NOT delay seeking assistance after exposure to potentially contaminated material; beyond 72 hours, Post-exposure Prophylaxis is NOT effective

Core Best Practice Standards:

Training:

To reduce the risk of adverse effects for patients, phlebotomists undertaking phlebotomy need to be trained in procedures specific to the types of specimen they collect.

Phlebotomy Environment:

Blood should be taken in a dedicated location that ensures patient comfort and privacy

The dedicated area should include:

1. a clean surface with two chairs (one for the phlebotomist and the other for the patient)
2. a hand wash basin with soap, running water and paper towels alcohol hand rub
3. Floors should not be carpeted
4. The workplace should be clean, tidy and uncluttered. There should be no sign of blood contamination on the chairs, counters or walls. The working surface should be visibly clean

Environmental Cleaning:

1. Remove the risk of environmental contamination with pathogens, counter and work surfaces, and chair arms should be cleaned with disinfectant at the start of each shift and when visibly dirty
2. Non-sterile gloves in multiple sizes should be available
3. A clean tray or trolley should be used to lay out equipment
4. Gauze or cotton-wool ball for application over the puncture site
5. 2% chlorhexidine gluconate in 70% isopropyl alcohol swabs for skin preparation
6. Clean tourniquet
7. Leak-proof transportation bags and containers
8. A puncture-resistant sharps container

Personal Protective Equipment and Hand Hygiene:

When taking blood, health workers should wear well-fitting, non-sterile gloves, and should also carry out hand hygiene (hand washing or use of an alcohol rub) before and after each patient procedure, before putting on gloves and after removing them

Skin Preparation:

1. Phlebotomists should clean the skin with 70% isopropyl alcohol, covering the whole area and ensuring that the skin area is in contact with the disinfectant for at least 30 seconds; they should then should allow the area to dry completely (about 30 seconds)
2. DO NOT touch the cleaned site; in particular, DO NOT place a finger over the vein to guide the shaft of the exposed needle. If the site is touched, repeat the disinfection

Tourniquets:

-
1. All items to be used on more than one patient should be designed so that they can be cleaned and disinfected. Such items include tourniquets
 2. Use a clean elastic tourniquet reprocessed between patients

Sharps Safety:

1. All phlebotomists should receive immunization for hepatitis B before assuming duties that include potential exposure to blood and body fluids.
2. A post-exposure prophylaxis protocol must be available in all phlebotomy areas, providing clear instructions to follow in case of accidental exposure to blood or body fluids
3. Closed systems for blood sampling are preferable because they have proven to be safer than open systems
4. Best practice is to discard the needle and tube holder, as a single unit, into a puncture resistant sharps container that is clearly visible and within arm's reach

Dangerous practices which should be avoided include:

1. **Recapping and disassembling vacuum-containing tubes and holders reusing tourniquets and vacuum-tube holders that may be contaminated with bacteria and blood, therefore it should be discard every single time.**
2. working alone with confused or disoriented patients who may move unexpectedly

Sharps Safe Devices:

1. Consider the use of safety (i.e. engineered) devices such as retractable lancets, needles with needle covers or retractable needles
2. Before selecting a safety-engineered device, users should thoroughly investigate available devices to determine their appropriate use, compatibility with existing phlebotomy practices, and efficacy in protecting staff and patients.