



On the ward

Furniture, equipment and handrails

This audit module is designed to look at furniture, equipment and handrails in a ward area.

The audit module is designed to be used when you have some resources available. Most suggestions would take some budget and/or timeframe to implement. It is not intended for major refurbishments or new builds.

You may use this audit module on its own or as part of an audit of other parts of the ward.

This audit contains 16 questions and will take approximately 20 – 25 minutes to complete.

Some questions may be relevant in some rooms/wards but not in others. Where questions are not relevant, there is an option to select 'not applicable', however please complete as many questions as possible to conduct a thorough audit.

A notes section is provided underneath each question to record any additional information or prompts for action that you identify while carrying out the audit.

Information, recommendations and suggested strategies to address any issues are provided below each question.

When you have completed the audit, please keep it for your reference. You may wish to use it to create your own action list, or to use the information to educate staff about the role of the environment in patient care.

If you want to audit more than one ward area, please print a new copy of this module and complete the audit again for the new location.



Name _____ Date _____

Hospital _____

Ward/location _____

Furniture, equipment and handrails

1. Is furniture stable enough to support a patient if they lost their balance?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Using sturdy, stable furniture that is supportive of patient transfer and weight bearing needs reduces the risk of falls and injuries.
- No** - Use sturdy, stable furniture that is supportive of patient transfer and weight bearing needs to prevent falls and injuries. Provide framed, four-legged furniture, avoiding furniture with tilting options or furniture on wheels (unless the wheels can be locked).
- N/A**

Notes

2. Are chairs covered in non-slip fabric that can be easily cleaned?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Using non-slip fabrics on chairs, especially the arms, reduces the chance of injury because it is easier to grip. Ensuring that the fabric can be cleaned and that it is non-porous with minimal surface joins/seams is important for infection control.
- No** - Using non-slip fabrics on chairs, especially the arms, reduces the chance of injury because it is easier to grip. Ensuring that the fabric can be cleaned and that it is non-porous with minimal surface joins/seams is important for infection control.
- N/A**

Notes



3. Do the legs of furniture stand straight, rather than sticking out on angles?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Using furniture with straight sturdy legs reduces tripping hazards and the risk of falls.
- No** - Using furniture with straight sturdy legs reduces tripping hazards and the risk of falls. Consider replacing furniture with safer, straight-legged options.
- N/A**

Notes

4. Is patient furniture and equipment (e.g. chairs, beds, treatment tables, commodes) height adjustable?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Providing height adjustable furniture and equipment ensures that patients can rise and sit easily, independently and without injury, and that care tasks can be performed without bending.
- No** - Providing height adjustable furniture and equipment ensures that patients can rise and sit easily, independently and without injury, and that care tasks can be performed without bending. Consider replacing furniture if possible.
- N/A**

Notes

5. Do patients have access to furniture with pressure reduction features, e.g. mattresses, chair cushions?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Using pressure reduction beds and chairs increases patient comfort and minimises pressure injury risk.
- No** - Using pressure reduction beds and chairs increases patient comfort and safety and minimises pressure injury risk. If it's not possible to have specialised pressure reduction equipment in all ward areas, having ready access to this for patients assessed as being at risk of pressure injury is necessary.



N/A

Notes

6. Are different types of chairs available, to meet different patient needs, including those with armrests?

Yes - Correct - To meet different patient needs, provide a range of comfortable furniture. Chairs with armrests provide comfort and are safer when used to aid in standing. Chairs with firm cushions and lumbar support are also recommended, or consider having lumbar support cushions available. Also note the recommended depth for seating, between 450-500mm.

No - To meet different patient needs, provide a range of comfortable furniture. Chairs with armrests provide comfort and are safer when used to aid in standing. Chairs with firm cushions and lumbar support are also recommended, or consider having lumbar support cushions available. Also note the recommended depth for seating, between 450-500mm.

N/A

Notes

7. Do furniture colours contrast with the surrounding environment?

Yes - Correct - Using furniture in colours that contrast with the walls and floors increases visibility and decreases the risk of injuries and falls. Avoid patterned or flecked upholstery on furniture as these can present visual challenges.

No - Using furniture in colours that contrast with the walls and floors increases visibility and decreases the risk of injuries and falls. Avoid patterned or flecked upholstery on furniture as these can present visual challenges.

N/A

Notes



8. Are all tables in patient areas sturdy with rounded corners?

- Yes - Correct** - Tables should be solid enough to not tip or collapse when leaned on. They should be easily accessible from a wheelchair. They should have rounded corners to reduce the chance of injury from bumping into the corners.
- No** - Aim to provide tables that are solid enough to not tip or collapse when leaned on. They should be easily accessible from a wheelchair. They should have rounded corners to reduce the chance of injury from bumping into the corners.
- N/A**

Notes

9. Are recliner chairs or fold out beds provided for relatives wanting to stay overnight?

- Yes - Correct** - This is important for visitor comfort and enables them to provide support to the patient. It can reduce patient stress by providing familiarity and social interaction.
- No** - This is important for visitor comfort and enables them to provide support to the patient. It can reduce patient stress by providing familiarity and social interaction.
- N/A**

Notes

10. Where a television is provided, is it in a position that is easy to view comfortably from the bed or a bedside chair, and with easy-to-use controls?

- Yes - Correct** - Where a television is provided, the appropriate design and placement of it in the patient’s room enhances the older person’s comfort. This includes positioning for easy viewing and listening, and easy-to-use controls.
- No** - Where a television is provided, the appropriate design and placement of it in the patient’s room enhances the older person’s comfort. This includes positioning for easy viewing and listening, and easy-to-use controls.



N/A

Notes

11. Are all handrails accessible (i.e. nothing is stored in front of or under them)?

Yes - *Correct* - Keeping areas near handrails free of clutter helps to ensure that they are accessible which supports independence, promotes mobility and reduces the risk of injury.

No - Keeping areas near handrails free of clutter helps to ensure that they are accessible which supports independence, promotes mobility and reduces the risk of injury.

N/A

Notes

12. Are handrails in the ward in accordance with AS 1428.1, design for access and mobility?

Yes - *Correct* - Complying with relevant Australian design standards is necessary to optimise access and mobility.

No - Complying with relevant Australian design standards is necessary to optimise access and mobility. Seek advice to ensure that safety standards are met.

N/A

Notes

13. Do handrails contrast in colour with the wall?

Yes - *Correct* - Handrails that contrast in colour with the wall or surface they're attached to are easier to see.



- No** - Handrails that contrast in colour with the wall or surface they're attached to are easier to see.
- N/A**

Notes

14. Are handrails designed so their end point is obvious?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Using colour so that the handrail can easily be seen on the wall, or texture at the end of a handrail, can help to indicate where the rail ends. Designing the rail to curve and connect back to the wall so the end point can be felt also helps to indicate where handrails end.
- No** - Using colour so that the handrail can easily be seen on the wall, or texture at the end of a handrail, can help to indicate where the rail ends. Designing the rail to curve and connect back to the wall so the end point can be felt also helps to indicate where handrails end.
- N/A**

Notes

15. Is equipment regularly checked for maintenance issues?

- Yes** - *Correct* - To ensure patient safety it's important to check that equipment is working and safe.
- No** - To ensure patient safety it's important to check that equipment is working and safe. Consider requesting regular maintenance checks on equipment and include this in relevant policies.
- N/A**

Notes



16. Is noisy equipment located away from patient rooms?

- Yes** - *Correct* - This is important for patient comfort and rest.
- No** - This is important for patient comfort and rest. Consider moving noisy equipment.
- N/A**

Notes
