

National Occupational Standards

Sector: Health and Social Care

Occupation: Health Carer

MQF Level: 3

Units:

- CRW301: Comply with accountability rights and responsibilities
- CRW302: Comply with communication
- CRW303: Comply with the necessary documentation
- CRW304: Comply with client observation and assessment
- CRW305: Comply with assisting the client in breathing
- CRW306: Comply with encouraging eating and drinking
- CRW307: Comply with toileting needs of a client
- CRW308: Comply with personal cleansing and dressing of a client
- CRW309: Comply with mobilisation needs
- CRW310: Comply with other death and dying needs
- CRW311: Comply with infection control and prevention duties
- CRW312: Work Ethics

Introduction:

We are currently living in an informed society where qualifications and certification are becoming more important as Europe strives to become the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world. This requires that all range and types of knowledge, skills and competencies within the European workforce be formally recognised such that it is possible to take stock of what the European labour workforce can offer.

This economic demand has also brought about the need to identify all the different existing types of Health Carers in a health and social care setting, and to outline all the competencies required in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities to carry out such work. Occupational standards have improved quality assurance ensuring that Health Carers are able to carry out their work well and possess all the required competencies.

There is also the drive to validate informal and non-formal learning and also to satisfy the needs of the labour market. Occupational standards are thus considered as driving curriculum design, mainly but not solely in the area of vocational education and training. Occupational standards also aid the process of validating informal and non-formal learning.

CRW301: Complies with Accountability, Rights and Responsibilities

All entities in the Care Sector require Health Carers that have the responsibility to carry out skills in a safe and effective manner. All Health Carers should be competent in their work and accountable for each and every task performed.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Ensure the delivery of a high standard of caring practice in accordance with the National Occupational Standards by using the available resources effectively.
- Provide equitable care irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity, sexual orientation and culture.
- Maintain client privacy and confidentiality.
- Demonstrate accountable practice towards clients, carers and employers
- Seek support for specific tasks and/or activities of care for which he/she does not feel competent or confident
- Obtain informed consent from clients before carrying out any tasks or care activities
- Treat clients with respect and dignity
- Safeguard the wellbeing of clients.

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must:

- Know who their immediate superior and/or competent authority is and identify their conduct regulations.
- Identify activities of daily living.
- Identify core components of individualised care.
- Be familiar with human rights in the Health and Social Care sector
- Be familiar with the importance and use of technology and informatics

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer should be able to:

- Show ethical considerations and meet relevant standards of practice, care and advice and adhere to policies and procedures.
- Raise concerns with the employer when requested to undertake tasks that are not within his/her remit
- Report to the appropriate authority any personal difficulties that might affect the ability to do the job competently and safely
- Adopt a work ethic within a multi-disciplinary team
- Treat the client as an individual person by respecting the individual's autonomy and dignity
- Promote equal rights to all clients
- Support the individual in maintaining independence and in making informed choices about the services he/she receives
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Respect privacy and confidentiality
- Respect diversity

CRW302: Complies with Communication

All health and social care entities require their employees to communicate effectively at all levels. Health Carers work very closely with the client and therefore it is of utmost importance for them to communicate effectively with all members of the multi-disciplinary team, clients and their relatives.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Maintain confidentiality
- Maintain effective communication with both senior and junior staff, and with all members of the multidisciplinary team.
- Establish a caring, trustful relationship with the client leading to an effective Health Carer-client communication
- Communicate with both client and their relatives by listening and responding effectively
- Be sensitive and demonstrate active listening skills, particularly with clients who have communication difficulties
- Demonstrate sensitivity, respect and empathy when communicating with clients irrespective of their disability and/or challenging behaviour.
- Explain procedures to clients and obtain consent as necessary.
- Communicate to the more senior staff any progress or regression of the clients being cared for.
- Keep conflict amongst the staff away from clients
- Control one's emotions and therefore keep calm and focused when something happens in the ward/unit.
- Be sensitive to both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know:

- The different kinds and aspects of communication
- The difference between empathy and sympathy
- The importance of written communication when required
- The importance of having a good working relationship with colleagues in the ward/unit.
- The importance of informing immediate superior and/or competent authority of any situation that may impair the client's wellbeing, for example cases of self-harm.
- Who and where to contact and where in case of emergency
- The importance of identifying barriers and promoters to communication
- The importance of using courtesy and etiquette in the work place
- The importance of identifying conflict and ability to resolve it in a discrete and effective manner.

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer should be able to:

- Communicate effectively with all members of the team
- Liaise with all relevant professionals and the clients' relatives when necessary.

- Show sensitivity to both verbal and non-verbal communication with both clients and their relatives
- Support either the clients or their relatives while keeping boundaries between the client/relatives and themselves as care providers.
- Report to the immediate superior and/or competent authority any personal difficulties that might affect the ability to do the job competently and safely
- Work openly and co-operatively with colleagues while treating them with respect
- Respect and promote, where necessary, the views and preferences of individuals
- Support the individual in maintaining independence and in making informed choices about the services they receive
- Communicate effectively by recording all the findings related to the client.
- Deal with emergency situations effectively and report accordingly.

CRW303: Comply with the Necessary Documentation

All health and social care entities require their employees to communicate effectively at all levels. All observations and assessments performed are to be noted in the client's documents or care plans. Both delegator and delegate have the responsibility to ensure that the task is performed in a professional manner.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Record the appropriate information properly, when required.
- Record parameters as necessary
- Check documentation of any supplies being brought from stores, pharmacies or other suppliers.
- Chart timings of body turning in cases of bedridden clients.

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know:

- The importance of recording all necessary parameters within their competence
- The importance of accurately documenting what has been done, highlighting issues that need to be addressed.

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer must be able to:

- Communicate, read and write in Maltese and/or English, in a clear and legible manner.
- Document in a proper manner as instructed and required; for example document in ink, obliterate all blank spaces with ink and sign at the end of the documentation either with initials or if the full signature is required, the full name should also be written in block letters
- Carry out the recording of the following: temperature, pulse and respiration rate, digital blood pressure monitoring, blood glucose monitoring and Urine testing.
- Empty urine bags or bedpans and record output of urine
- Encourage fluid intake if not contra-indicated and record all intake of fluids
- Enquire with the clients and subsequently confirm whether they suffer from any particular health conditions or allergies and document accordingly.
- Enquire about the client's food preferences and follow any feeding and dietary requirements
- Chart the client's bowel movements, where applicable.
- Chart timings of body turning in cases of bedridden clients to minimise the occurrence of pressure sores and therefore ensure skin integrity.

CRW304: Comply with Client Observation and Assessment

The Health Carer is to observe and report the person's general appearance, emotional affect, nutritional status, habits and preferences as well as body temperature, skin condition and any abnormal conditions including those which the client may complain of.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Observe and communicate with the client
- Evaluate the normal attitudes and behaviour of the client to identify early signs of any physical or emotional disturbances.
- Recognize patterns of behaviour which may need attention in clients under care
- Perform basic skills and functions required e.g. emptying of a urine bag, urine testing, temperature taking and recording etc.
- Observe the client continuously while attending client during the activities of daily living.

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know:

- The importance of identifying the client's non-verbal communication
- How to identify when the client is physically or emotionally unwell or in pain.
- Who is the immediate superior and/or relevant authority and to whom one should report if any relevant finding is identified.

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer must be able to:

- Recognise changes in the client's psychological, physical and medical condition and report accordingly.
- Carry out the recording of the following: temperature, pulse and respiration rate, digital blood pressure monitoring, blood glucose monitoring and urine testing.
- Observe and report changes in the skin colour, texture and integrity
- Observe and report breathing patterns of clients with different medical conditions

CRW305: Comply with assisting the client in breathing

The Health Carer should have the required knowledge of the process of normal breathing to identify breathing difficulties and be able to assist and reassure the client appropriately.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Recognise breathing problems
- Recognise when the breathing rate is not within normal parameters
- Recognise when there is a change in the breathing pattern such as: regular or irregular breathing, shallow or laboured and deep breathing
- Keep the client calm while reassuring that he/she is being taken care of
- Inform immediate superior and / or relevant authority of any significant changes in respiratory pattern while helping out in setting up the necessary equipment to assist the client to breathe
- Care for the client receiving oxygen therapy

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know:

- The typical rate and rhythm of respiration in order to identify any deviation from normal
- How to recognize a client in physical distress
- The adequate moving and handling of the client in relation to breathing, especially when unconscious or during food intake, to ensure safe swallowing.

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer must be able to:

- Acquire a baseline respiration reading
- Monitor a client with breathing problems and inform immediate superiors and / or relevant authorities of any changes in respiratory status
- Position the client properly to promote better breathing in cases of breathing distress eg: propping up
- Move and handle the client adequately in relation to breathing, especially when unconscious or during food intake, to ensure safe swallowing.
- Care for the client on oxygen therapy by performing oral care and moistening the lips and mouth as necessary
- Feed patients with breathing problems according to the recognised feeding protocol.

CRW306: Comply with encouraging eating and drinking

Feeding and giving oral fluids to clients are nursing duties that can be delegated to Health Carers provided that all the necessary advice has been taken into consideration.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Thicken liquids with thickener in cases of clients who do not tolerate fluids in accordance with recommendations
- Feed client while still promoting independence
- Feed client through a naso-gastric tube or peg
- Position client properly in accordance with recommendations
- Follow recommendations from the Speech Language Pathologist regarding the food consistency the clients can tolerate
- Report any changes in client's feeding and drinking patterns to the immediate superior

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must:

- Distinguish between the different types of food consistencies
- Know the nutritional content of pre-prepared feeds
- Know the needs of the clients and therefore the type of food that is suitable for them in accordance with recommendations
- Recall and apply instructions given by the Speech Language Pathologist
- Know and understand the importance of adequate nutrition in maintaining healthy body composition such as skin integrity
- Identify the possible risks during feeding, such as choking hazards and risk of scalding
- Know the client's daily nutritional requirements in order to maintain a well-balanced diet as per recommendations.

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer must be able to:

- Feed the client according to their condition, illness and/or disease as per recommendations
- Give the appropriate consistency of food to clients with different conditions as per recommendations
- Follow the instructions of other health professionals including the Dietician, Nutritional Practice Nurse and Speech Language Pathologist
- Carry out enteral feeding in a safe and effective manner
- Assist the client to assume the proper posture in bed prior to feeding, as per recommendation
- Position him/her at face to face and eye level with the patient.
- Follow feeding requirements and techniques as per recommendations.

- Ensure that the client has no residual food material in the mouth before he/she is left alone or put to bed.
- Recognise when the client is at risk of choking and/or aspiration

CRW307: Comply with toileting needs of a client

The Health Carers must have an understanding of micturition and bowel habits, the properties of urine and stools in order to identify and record any abnormalities.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Identify the characteristics of continent and incontinent clients
- Identify and report clients who need assistance with their toileting needs
- Ensure privacy when the client is using the commode, bedpan or urinal.
- Assist/accompany clients as need be to prevent falls
- Ensure sensitivity during the performance of the client’s toileting needs to avoid any embarrassment or uncomfortable situations
- Describe the normal consistency of urine e.g. colour, clarity and odour of urine
- Identify and report abnormal patterns and consistency of urine
- Describe the normal colour and consistency of faeces
- Identify and report any abnormality in the consistency and patterns of defaecation
- Appropriately use and dispose of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during and after handling body fluids according to Infection control policies and protocols.
- Perform hand hygiene before and after attending the client with their elimination needs as per infection control policies and protocols.
- Assist the Nursing staff in routine and standard stoma care procedures
- Assist the Nursing staff in caring for catheterised clients

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know how to:

- Distinguish between a continent and an incontinent client
- Recognize the importance of ensuring privacy to the client
- Describe the normal consistency and patterns of urine
- Classify the abnormalities in the consistency and patterns of urine such as anuria, dysuria and polyuria.
- Describe the normal consistency and patterns of defaecation
- Classify the abnormal consistency and patterns of faeces such as diarrhoea and constipation
- Describe the appropriate procedures to dispose of faeces and urine
- Apply the principles and protocols of Infection prevention and control
- Identify the appropriate PPEs to use as required and when applicable.
- Differentiate between the different kinds of stomas and provide care for a client with a stoma
- Differentiate between the different kinds of urinary catheters and provide care for a catheterised client

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer must be able to:

- Identify and report to the immediate superior any changes in the consistency and pattern of toileting the client may be experiencing
- Identify and report any client discomfort in relation to toileting
- Carry out the necessary documenting and charting in relation to toileting eg: bowel movements and urine output.
- Demonstrate competence in emptying the urine bag in a safe and effective manner
- Use Personal Protective Equipment when handling body fluids
- Dispose of linen according to Infection Control policies and protocols
- Document all abnormalities while informing immediate superiors of any abnormalities and changes
- Assist in routine and standard stoma care procedures
- Care for a catheterised client

CRW308: Comply with personal cleansing and dressing of a client

The Health Carer must know how to assist clients with their bathing, shaving, dressing and other personal needs while still promoting independence.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Assist a client who is capable of getting out of bed to bath or shower.
- Assist semi-dependant clients and attend fully to dependant clients to care for themselves by helping them to wash and comb their hair, brush their teeth, keep toe and hand nails short, shaving and to care for their skin
- Assist clients in dressing/undressing
- Promote independence and encourage the client to self-care
- Bed bath a fully dependent client
- Perform mouth care
- Perform eye/ear care
- Wash and keep hair combed and tidy
- Identify clients who are at risk of developing pressure sores
- Maintain skin integrity and perform measures to prevent pressure sores eg: change position of client every two hours
- Care for a client with continence difficulties.
- Assist clients while respecting their privacy and dignity
- Keep the client’s immediate environment clean and tidy

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know:

- The importance of reporting any unusual signs.
- mouth, eye, ear, skin and nail care.
- The importance of performing proper care while bathing the client especially clients with urinary catheters, access lines etc)
- The importance of keeping the immediate environment clean and tidy
The importance of respecting the client’s privacy and dignity.

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer must be able to:

Report any unusual signs the client may exhibit.

- Uphold the client’s privacy and dignity.
- Assist the client as necessary to prevent accidents
- Promote independence, function ability
- Respect client’s wishes
- Bed bath a fully dependant client

- Perform mouth care
- Perform eye, ear and skin care
- Perform catheter care
- Identify patients at risk of pressure sores and perform measures appropriately.
- Leave immediate environment clean and free from any hazards e.g. carpets, open flames and/or electric supplies
- Ensure proper bed making.

CRW309: Comply with client's mobilisation needs

The Health Carer must know how to assist clients with walking, transferring from the bed to a sitting position out of the bed, and vice versa, and changing of position while in bed in line with mobility assessments report.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Change the fully dependant client's position in bed.
- Assist the client with mobility as needed.
- Where needed, use the assistive aids to ambulate, mobilise and/or transfer clients according to the mobility assessment report.
- Encourage the client to move in bed safely.
- Assist and encourage the client in carrying on with personal activities of daily living independently

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know:

- The safe handling techniques as recommended in the mobility assessment report.
- The appropriate way to communicate and inform the client about changing of position or transferring from one position to another.
- Of assessment tools for pressure ulcers.
- The use and benefits pressure relieving equipment such as an air mattress.
- The benefits and appropriate manners of a change in position of the client in bed. client
- The importance of identifying early signs of pressure sores and take the necessary measures.
- The importance of involving the client in the care plan to gain compliance.

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer must be able to:

- Carry out moving, handling, and early ambulation according to the mobility assessment plan.
- Use all adequate and appropriate handling equipment in a safe and effective manner
- Assist senior staff when using assessment tools related to mobility.
- Assist senior staff when using assessment tools related to skin integrity.
- Change the position of the client in bed
- Transfer a client out of bed and vice versa
- Assist the client to walk
- Assist the client in carrying out all her/his personal activities of daily living requiring mobility.
- Inform the client regarding the care plan so as to gain the client's compliance.
- Motivate the client to promote and facilitate independence.

CRW310: Comply with death and dying needs**Performance Criteria**

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Establish a quiet, comfortable and dignified environment for the dying person and family members
- Provide comfort measures for the dying person as directed by the nursing staff. Listen with respect and support the client and relatives who may wish to sound their concerns
- Assist senior staff with the preparation of the body for the last offices
- Pack and organise the dead client's belongings for their return to the family as indicated by senior staff.
- Facilitate spiritual arrangements according to client's and relatives' needs.

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know:

- The proper manner to care for the dying
- The importance of preparing a quiet and comfortable place for the dying client and his/her relatives
- When and how to assist senior staff with the preparation of the body for shrouding
- The key importance of cleanliness and organisation of the bed area/ unit after the client's body is taken to the mortuary.

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer must be able to:

- Care for a client in a comfortable environment.
- Calm and reassure client
- Listen to the client and their relatives with respect
- Empathise with the client and their relatives
- Care for the dying client
- Assist senior staff with the last offices.
- Clean and disinfect bed areas

CRW311: Complies with infection control and prevention

The Health Carer must know how to care for equipment, dirty utilities and the immediate environment.

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Clean, tidy and disinfect bed areas including any furniture
- Assist clients in keeping bed areas clean
- Clean and disinfect any relevant clinical equipment according to the manufacturer’s instructions where necessary
- Cleaning and disinfecting bed pans and urinals
- Keeping the linen trolleys and store clean, in order and replenished
- Assist with the storing of consumables e.g. Intravenous fluid packs, catheter bags, urinary catheters etc...
- Make sure that all instruments and equipment used during procedures is scrubbed clean and sent for sterilisation
- Ensure all common areas are tidy and hazard free

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know:

- The proper practice to clean and disinfect bed areas.
- The importance of cleaning and disinfecting equipment to prevent contamination
- The proper practice to disinfect the dirty utilities including bedpans, urinals and basins
- Identify any hazards and inform senior staff where applicable while taking the necessary precautions in preventing accidents
- The importance of keeping the linen store in order.
- The importance in assisting other staff in storing consumables brought in from pharmacy or other stores
- The importance of keeping all common areas tidy and hazard free

Required Skills

The Level 3 Health Carer must be able to :

- Clean, tidy and disinfect bed areas including any furniture
- Clean and disinfect equipment while in use and when not in use
- Replenish the linen store and trolley properly
- Keep all common areas tidy and hazard free at all times

CRW313- Work Ethics

This unit lists the knowledge and skills needed by a person holding this position to carry out work in an ethical and professional manner. This unit covers work ethics related to relations with clients and colleagues

Performance Criteria

The candidate must have the necessary knowledge and skills to:

- Maintain a professional and courteous attitude with clients
- Maintain a harmonious team work environment with colleagues
- Respect work obligations including data protection and confidentiality

Required Knowledge

The level 3 Health Carer must know:

- The importance of working within a team ethos
- The rules and regulations of the workplace
- Own duties, functions and responsibilities
- The importance of being familiar with workplace dress codes where applicable
- The importance of respecting cultural diversity

Required Skills

The level 3 Health Carer must be able to :

- Value clients and colleagues by adopting a professional and courteous attitude
- Address clients and colleagues in a respectful manner at all times
- Show awareness of and sensitivity to cultural diversity
- Maintain a positive approach during the execution of the tasks
- Carry out tasks effectively and efficiently according to instructions
- Be punctual
- Be presentable by wearing clean and appropriate clothing according to the workplace standards
- Respect and follow superiors' instructions