



Patient Identification Wristband — Policy Template

A two-page policy any facility can adopt: who gets a band, what is on it, colours, when it is checked, what happens when it is missing

Facility	
Policy owner • approved by • date • review date	

1 • Who wears a band

Every inpatient, every day-case, every emergency patient from the moment of registration, every newborn (two bands — ankle and wrist). Outpatients having a procedure, sedation, transfusion or contrast. A patient who refuses is documented and identified verbally with two identifiers at every step.

2 • What is on it

Required	Not permitted
Full name as registered (surname in capitals)	Diagnosis
Date of birth	Ward or bed number
Unique hospital or national number	Any abbreviation of the name
Barcode if the system supports it	Handwritten bands except in an emergency, replaced within 24 h

3 • Colours

One colour only for the identification band. A red band, in addition, means a documented allergy — nothing else. No other colour codes: colour coding for falls, DNR or infection status is done by chart alert, not by band.

4 • When it is checked

- Before every medicine, sample, transfusion, procedure, transfer and meal for patients with an allergy or special diet — two identifiers, asked not stated (Tool 1).
- At every handover: the receiving nurse reads the band aloud for every patient handed over.
- Every 24 hours for legibility and fit.

5 • Missing, illegible or wrong band

Stop. No medicine, sample or procedure until a correct band is on. Replace within 30 minutes from the registration record, never from the old band or from memory. Two staff verify the new band with the patient. Record the event on the incident form.

6 • Special cases

- **Unknown patient:** temporary unique number and "Unknown male/female", estimated age; re-banded when identified.
- **Newborn:** mother's name, sex, date and time of birth, unique number; two bands; checked against the mother's band before every return to her.
- **Same or similar names on one ward:** alert on both charts and both bands ("NAME ALERT"); beds not adjacent.

7 • Audit

Monthly: 20 patients per ward — band present, legible, correct against the record, red band matches a documented allergy. Target 100%. Results to the safety committee; below 95% triggers re-training.

