



# Position Statement

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## Nurse Leaders in Emergency Care Settings

### Description

Nursing leadership is vital to effectiveness and efficiency in the emergency care setting and provides the foundation for providing safe practice and safe care.<sup>1, 2</sup> Emergency nurse leaders uphold standards of professional emergency nursing practice that support an environment conducive to decreased nursing staff turnover and enhanced nursing retention.<sup>3</sup> Emergency nurse leaders network with many key stakeholders within and outside emergency care, and in their role, it is crucial to establish and maintain dynamic relationships. These collaborations are pivotal when addressing issues of the emergency care setting, including quality, cost, practice, regulatory compliance, and strategic planning.

Emergency nurse leaders should further their education beyond the entry level baccalaureate advocated by the American Nurses Association (2015).<sup>4</sup> Attaining and maintaining certification in their area of specialty adds commitment to their chosen career path. Membership and participation in professional organizations further demonstrate nurse leaders commitment to the professional practice of nursing.<sup>5</sup>

### ENA Position

It is the position of the Emergency Nurses Association that:

1. Emergency nurse leaders uphold a commitment to quality, safety, and cost effective care, using evidence based practice.
2. Emergency nurse leaders support lifelong learning for themselves and others.
3. Emergency nurse leaders' role model professionalism by joining and participating in their specialty nursing associations and support certification in emergency nursing practice.
4. Emergency nurse leaders promote an environment that is conducive to professional nursing practice, including mentoring of developing nurses.
5. Emergency nurse leaders who are expected to provide care at the stretcherside maintain the same competencies as the staff registered nurses.
6. Emergency nurse leaders' support learning and practicing transformational leadership styles.

### Background

An emergency nurse leader is responsible for instilling strategic goals and objectives of the organization into the department's practice while holding 24-hour accountability for all patient care activities. To facilitate this, the emergency nurse leader needs a strong foundation in all aspects of emergency care. The emergency care setting is a complex and ever-changing environment, and emergency nurse leaders oversee the nursing care delivered by others while retaining



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accountability for the quality of that care.<sup>2,3,6</sup> To meet these demands, nurse leaders practice sociability, composure, and positive communication skills.<sup>7</sup> Emergency nurse leaders develop themselves through life-long learning and personal growth, which has been associated with better nursing outcomes, improved performance, increased satisfaction, and a positive influence on the direction of nursing.<sup>1,2,8</sup>

Many attributes of emergency nurse leaders are a reflection of their leadership style, their experience in nursing management, and their years of nursing experience.<sup>5</sup> Most nurse leaders use more than one leadership style, applying that which best meets the needs of the situation.<sup>5,6</sup> To lead advances in healthcare and meet the ever-changing dynamics of today's healthcare system, emergency nurse leaders use transformational leadership practices, which have been shown to have a significant positive impact on today's healthcare environments.<sup>1,3,5-7</sup> Transformational leadership has been linked to employee effectiveness, decreased nurse turnover, healthy work environments, and high levels of patient satisfaction.<sup>3,6,9,10</sup> Emergency nurse leaders not only model expert practice but also contribute to the healthy environment of the department through support, encouragement, advocacy, and collaboration.<sup>4,11</sup>

## Resources

ANA Enterprise (2017). American Nurses Association Leadership Institute.  
<https://learn.ana-nursingknowledge.org/catalog/?pagename=ANA-Leadership-Institute>

Emergency Nurses Association. (2017). *Emergency nursing scope and standards of practice, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Des Plaines, IL: Author.

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Developed: 2009.

Reviewed and Approved by the ENA Board of Directors: October 2012

Reviewed and Approved by the ENA Board of Directors: March 2018

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