

ACCCN Resuscitation Position Statement (2006)

- Adult & Paediatric Resuscitation by Nurses

The Australian College of Critical Care Nurses Ltd. recommends that all nurses should receive Basic Life Support (BLS) training as a component of their entry-level qualification and that they be responsible for maintaining their competence in BLS at minimum on an annual basis. ACCCN Ltd. further recommends that, where semi-automatic defibrillators are accessible, competence in their use should be considered a feature of BLS training and practice.

In addition, ACCCN Ltd. recommends that registered nurses working in critical care environments where patients are at risk of sudden life-threatening emergencies due to airway, breathing and/or circulatory conditions should become competent in the provision of Advanced Life Support (ALS). Where registered nurses work in areas where children are at risk of sudden life-threatening emergencies they should become competent in the provision of Paediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS). Competencies in ALS should be performed annually.

Health care agencies that provide critical care facilities should define the registered nurse's role in initiating and maintaining ALS skills with or without a medical officer present. These skills may include:

ALS

- arrhythmia recognition
- defibrillation
- insertion of intravenous cannulae
- administration of first-line pharmacological agents
- advanced airway management, including intubation
- transcutaneous pacing
- post-resuscitation management
- transport of a patient

PALS

- advanced airway management
- use of age appropriate equipment
- administration of first-line pharmacological agents & fluid therapy according to weight
- alternative access to circulation
- defibrillation
- post-resuscitation management
- transport of a patient

Where registered nurses are working in isolation and are primarily responsible for the health care and management of communities, competency in BLS, ALS and PALS is recommended. The registered nurse should be supported by appropriate education guidelines, protocols, communication and ALS equipment to manage patients with life-threatening emergencies until support services can arrive.

As with BLS, the ACCCN Ltd. recommends that registered nurses formally reassess their competency in ALS/PALS on at least an annual basis. Informal, frequent self-assessments, either through work performance in clinical sessions or through simulation exercises, are also advised between formal assessments.

In keeping with its member status of the Australian Resuscitation Council (ARC), the ACCCN Ltd. promotes and supports the policies and guidelines of the ARC. Following these national guidelines creates a consistent approach to life-threatening situations and thus the best possible outcome for patients.