

ESSENTIAL PHYSICAL COMPETENCIES FOR NURSING

In response to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a national survey of administrators of health care facilities, which employ nurses, validated a list of essential competencies a nurse must possess in order to function safely and effectively in a variety of clinical settings. Results indicate that relative high numbers of activities were identified in each essential competency category by the health care agencies as being necessary for nursing practice. These competencies include:

- extended walking and standing daily
- ability to grasp, push, and/or pull
- ability to bend and stoop
- moving quickly in response to an emergency
- using upper body movements
- ability to reach
- carrying and moving equipment
- reaching and/or lifting

Other essential competencies identified for nursing care include:

- vision that allows detecting physical changes
- hearing that allows responding to physical and verbal cues
- a sense of touch that allows for assessment and palpitation

Adaptations most frequently reported as being used by nursing staff were hearing aids, adaptive phones, and calculators.

This is posted for general information only. Individual nursing programs and employers will have a specific set of criteria related to physical competencies for nursing students and / or employees.