

Clinical Task Instruction

Delegated Task

D-CM02: Heart rate measuring

Scope and objectives of clinical task

This CTI will enable the Allied Health Assistant to:

- correctly measure and document a client's heart rate (pulse) using the radial pulse.
- identify indications for initiating heart rate measurement.

VERSION CONTROL

Version: 2.2

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Document custodian: Chief Allied Health Officer, Allied Health Professions' Office of Qld. Review date: 24/06/2025

The CTI reflects best practice and agreed process for conduct of the task at the time of approval and should not be altered. Feedback, including proposed amendments to this published document, should be directed to AHPOQ at: allied_health_advisory@health.qld.gov.au.

This CTI must be used under a Delegation framework implemented at the work unit level. The framework is available at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/calderdale-framework.asp>

Please check <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/clintaskinstructions.asp> for the latest version of this CTI.

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Requisite training, knowledge, skills and experience

Training

- Completion of CTI D-WTS01 When to stop.
 - Mandatory training requirements relevant to Queensland Health/Hospital and Health Service (HHS) clinical roles are assumed knowledge for this CTI.
 - Completion of the following Queensland Health allied health assistant training modules (or corresponding units of competency in HLT43015 Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance) or equivalent work-based learning:
 - Physiotherapy Learner Guide: Deliver and monitor a client-specific exercise program.
 - 3.3 Monitoring requirements.
- NB: Services may elect to complete the entire module if monitoring will be performed as part of an exercise program.

Access the module/s at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/ahassist-modules>

Clinical knowledge

- The following content knowledge is required by an AHA delivering this task:
 - basic anatomy and physiology to the extent required to undertake this task, including terminology such as radial pulse, tachycardia and bradycardia.
 - indications for initiating heart rate measuring.
- The knowledge requirements will be met by the following activities:
 - complete the training program/s (listed above).
 - reviewing the Learning resource.
 - receiving instruction from an allied health professional in the training phase.

Skills or experience

- The following skills or experience are not identified in the task procedure but support the safe and effective performance of the task and are required by an AHA delivering this task:
 - Nil

Safety and quality

Client

- The AHA will apply CTI D-WTS01 When to stop at all times.
- This CTI should be administered in conjunction with CTI D-WTS01 When to stop which includes normal values for a range of standard clinical observations and actions to implement if observations fall outside these ranges.

Equipment, aids and appliances

- A stopwatch, or clock or watch with a second hand.

Environment

- Ensure that an appropriate level of client privacy is maintained during the task.

Performance of clinical task

1. Delegation instructions

- Receive the delegated task from the health professional.
- The delegating allied health professional should clearly identify parameters for delivering the clinical task to the specific client, including any variance from the usual task procedure and expected outcomes. e.g. the delegating health professional should indicate if an irregular heartbeat might be normal for the client. The delegating health professional should provide guidance regarding the timing of the measurement in the broader intervention if relevant e.g. at the commencement, at 15-minute intervals, at conclusion.
- The AHA may implement this task in variance to the timing or frequency in the delegation instruction or initiate the task if indicated by circumstances outlined in CTI D-WTS01 When to stop. The following may indicate heart rate monitoring is required:
 - Instructed by delegating health professional.
 - One or more of the following is reported by the client or is documented in the client's chart:
 - light headedness, when standing from a sitting or lying position
 - dizziness e.g. swaying, balance problems, unable to focus eyes on AHA
 - weakness
 - blurred vision
 - fatigue
 - fainting
 - feeling hot or sweaty or clammy
 - recent surgery or trauma
 - low haemoglobin level (<90 g/L).
 - Also consider if client has any of the following which may affect their heart rate:
 - infection
 - dehydration
 - recent physical activity
 - recent ingestion of caffeine
 - recent cigarette smoking.

2. Preparation

- locate the stopwatch, or clock or watch with a second hand for use.

3. Introduce task and seek consent

- The AHA introduces themselves to the client.
- The AHA checks three forms of client identification: full name, date of birth, **plus one** of the following: hospital unit record (UR) number, Medicare number, or address.

- The AHA describes the task to the client. For example:
 - “I would like to measure your heart rate. Is that OK?”.
- The AHA seeks informed consent according to the Queensland Health Guide to Informed Decision-making in Health Care, 2nd edition (2017).

4. Positioning

- The client’s position during the task should be:
 - at the bedside/in bed with an over-bed table positioned in front of the client, including using a clip board or seated at a table and supported in a chair.
- The AHA’s position during the task should be:
 - standing or sitting at the client’s side so that the client’s heart rate can be effectively measured.
- If using an interpreter:
 - seat the interpreter next to the AHA. This will make it easier for the client to synthesise non-verbal cues from the test administrator and the verbal cues from the interpreter.

5. Task procedure

- Explain and demonstrate (where applicable) the task to the client.
- Check the client has understood the task and provide an opportunity to ask questions.
- The task comprises the following steps:
 1. Locate the client’s radial pulse using your index and middle fingers over the pulse. Do not use your thumb to measure heart rate as it has its own pulse that may be felt.
 2. Count the beats for 30 seconds, then double the result to get the number of beats per minute.
 3. Record heart rate clearly and accurately as per local health service guidelines.
 4. Provide feedback to the client on their heart rate at the completion of the task.
- During the task:
 - monitor for adverse reactions and implement appropriate mitigation strategies as outlined in the Safety and quality section above including CTI D-WTS01 When to stop.
- At the conclusion of the task:
 - take appropriate actions including CTI D-WTS01 When to stop if indicated by the heart rate reading.
 - encourage feedback from the client on the task.
 - ensure the client is comfortable and safe.

6. Document

- Document the outcomes of the task in the clinical record, consistent with relevant documentation standards and local procedures. Include observation of client performance, expected outcomes that were and were not achieved, and difficulties encountered or symptoms reported by the client during the task.

- For this task, the following specific information should be presented:
 - heart rate (beats/minute).

7. Report to the delegating health professional

- Provide comprehensive feedback to the health professional who delegated the task.

References and supporting documents

- Queensland Health (2015). Clinical Task Instruction D-WTS01 When to stop. Available at: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/ahwac/html/clintaskinstructions.asp>
- Queensland Health (2017). Guide to Informed Decision-making in Health Care (2nd edition). Available at: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/143074/ic-guide.pdf

Assessment: performance criteria checklist

D-CM02: Heart rate measuring

Name:

Position:

Work Unit:

Performance criteria	Knowledge acquired	Supervised task practice	Competency assessment
	<i>Date and initials of supervising AHP</i>	<i>Date and initials of supervising AHP</i>	<i>Date and initials of supervising AHP</i>
Demonstrates knowledge of fundamental concepts required to undertake the task.			
Obtains all required information from the delegating health professional, and seeks clarification if required, prior to accepting and proceeding with the delegated task.			
Completes preparation for the task including compliance with infection control and obtaining appropriate equipment.			
Introduces self to the client and checks client identification.			
Describes the purpose of the delegated task and seeks informed consent.			
Positions self and client appropriately to complete the task and ensure safety.			
Delivers the task effectively and safely as per delegated instructions and CTI procedure. a) Clearly explains the task, checking the client's understanding. b) Cleans hands in compliance with infection control protocols. c) Ensures the client's arm is supported. d) Locates client's radial pulse using index and middle fingers over the pulse. e) Counts the pulse for 30 seconds – timed correctly. f) Records heart rate clearly and accurately as per local health service guidelines. g) During the task, maintains a safe clinical environment and manages risks appropriately. h) Provides feedback to the client on performance during and at completion of the task. i) Takes appropriate actions if indicated by the heart rate reading.			
Documents the outcomes of the task in the clinical record, consistent with relevant documentation standards and local procedures.			
Provides accurate and comprehensive feedback to the delegating health professional.			

Comments:

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Record of assessment competence:

Assessor name:		Assessor position:		Competence achieved:	/ /
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Scheduled review:

Review date:	/ /	
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Heart rate measuring: Learning resource

Required reading

- Medline Plus. (2021). Radial pulse. Available at: <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/imagepages/19395.htm>.
- NHS. (2018). How do I check someone's pulse? Available at: <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/2314.aspx?CategoryID=72&SubCategoryID=725>.

Required viewing

- EMTprep (2017) How to obtain a radial pulse – EMTprep.com. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqA4Vc8RaRo>

