

## Quick Reference Card (camera-ready artwork)

**Directions:** Make photo copies of the card and cut along outside trim marks.  
Fold card in half at dotted lines **before** laminating.

### Color-coded “Alert” Wristbands/ Risk-Reduction Strategies

#### Quick Reference Card

1. Use wristbands with the alert message pre-printed (such as “DNR”).
2. Remove any “social cause” colored wristbands (such as “LIVESTRONG”).
3. Remove wristbands that have been applied by another facility, except for emergency tracking.
4. Initiate banding upon admission, changes in condition or receipt of information during the hospital stay.
5. Educate patients and family members regarding the wristbands.
6. Coordinate chart/white board/care plan/door signage information/stickers with same color coding.
7. Educate staff to verify patient color-coded “alert” wristbands upon assessment and during hand-off of care and facility transfer communication.

Fold

### Introduce hospital policy and procedures.

Review your hospital-specific policy and procedures. Your discussion should address removal of wristbands that may be present upon admission and the exceptions for emergency identification purposes, application of an allergy or fall risk band and removal of wristbands when conditions change. Be sure to address who determines that a wristband is needed, and who applies and removes wristbands and when. Include discharge instructions. A physician’s order for do-not-resuscitate must be in the medical record before a DNR wristband is applied.

Include procedures related to documentation in the medical record, including a patient’s refusal to wear the wristband if your policy has this provision, and alternatives to removal of “social cause” wristbands, if allowed by your policy.

Review communications procedures, including chart/white board/care plan/door signage information/stickers with same color coding. Be sure to address communication upon assessment and during hand-off of care and facility transfer.

Review your policy and procedure for patient education.

### Review patient education information/ materials.

Since how something is said is just as important as what is said, staff members need guidance to optimize communication. Patients and their loved ones are scared, vulnerable and unfamiliar with hospital ways, and the application of a color-coded “alert” wristband may heighten anxiety. Communication should be respectful and simple without being condescending.