

Flight Nursing

Flight nurses are a sub-specialty of Trauma Nurse. Flight crews are common at large trauma hospitals where flight teams respond to accidents, disasters, and transport critically ill patients. The goal of each mission: to triage, stabilize and transport victims/patients to a medical center.

Flight Nurse Guidelines

1. Flight nurses have at least a BSN with MSN preferred.
2. Three years of critical care nursing experience in an ICU or ED.
3. Possess excellent clinical assessment skills.
4. Seek opportunities to develop independent decision-making skills, i.e. charge role.
5. Demonstrate an ability to problem solve and be resourceful.
6. Obtain certifications and seek educational conferences and opportunities related to transport.
7. Prehospital care experience, i.e. EMT training, Prehospital RN course.
8. Develop public speaking skills.
9. Obtain nationally recognized certifications, i.e. CEN (Certified Emergency Nurse), CFRN (Certified Flight Registered Nurse), or CCRN (Certified Critical Care Nurse).

Flight Nurse Qualifications, Education, and Training

In most cases, flight nurses are fully trained and certified advanced registered nurse practitioners (ARNP). There are several paths to becoming an RN. Some nurses will get a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree at an accredited four-year college or university. Others will pursue an Associates' degree in nursing at a junior or community college. Still others will get a registered nursing diploma through a vocational or technical school, but diploma programs are less common.

After completing the level of education, you choose at an approved nursing program, you will need to pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) to become licensed. To become an advanced practice nurse and become certified as a nurse practitioner, you will then need to go on to pursue a master's or doctorate degree in nursing. Both degrees will require extensive hands-on clinical hours. Some nursing schools offer specific flight nurse courses and certificates.

Job Outlook and Career Opportunity for Flight Nursing

As in all nursing fields, flight nurses are in short supply. However, advanced practice nurses are in particularly strong demand and command a higher pay grade. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual salary for a registered nurse was \$75,330. Those with more education or certification will stand to make more. The top 10% were making over \$116,230 annually.

Professional Organizations

Air & Surface Transport Nurses Association (astna.org)

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