

Emergency Department

Kalispell, MT

About the Emergency Department:

- **How many beds:** We are a 32 bed unit. We have 6 resuscitation/trauma rooms, 2 family consult rooms, 4-6 behavioral health rooms, 4 negative pressure rooms, decontamination area, 1 SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner) room.
- **Patient demographics:** We serve a variety of patient demographics including both adults and children. Logan Health Emergency Department is a level 3 trauma center designated by the American College of Surgeons. We are the trauma center for the northwest region of Montana and the pediatric resource for the western and central regions of Montana. Our specialties include pediatric and adult neurosurgery, pediatric surgery, orthopedic surgery, vascular surgery, thoracic surgery, surgical oncology, plastic surgery, adult and pediatric critical care, surgical critical care, interventional radiology, rehabilitation medicine and palliative care.
- **Schedules and call requirements:** We utilize self-scheduling, 6 weeks at a time. Full-time and part time staff schedule first, followed by PRN staff. All full-time staff is required to work 6 weekend shifts in 6 weeks. Weekends for day shift are Saturday and Sunday. Night shift weekends are Friday and Saturday. In our department we have 3 groups of shifts, days, mids and nights. Day shift is 0700-1930 and nights is 1930-0700. Normal mid shift times are 1000, 1200, 1400 and 1500 (these times can vary). During the summer, we tend to add an additional mid shift time.

There is no on-call requirement for the emergency department. However, if staffing allows, a person may be asked to be on call for their regularly scheduled shift. Staff may also be low censused and either start their shift later than scheduled or leave work before the end of their scheduled end time.

Common treatments and skill sets/procedures:

Common treatments: Pneumonia, nonspecific chest pain, acute cerebrovascular disease, CHF (non-hypertensive), lower respiratory disease, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, cardiac dysrhythmias, respiratory failure, septicemia, fluid and electrolyte disorders, COPD-bronchiectasis, acute myocardial infarction, coronary atherosclerosis and other heart disease, diabetes mellitus with complications, intracranial injury, poisoning by other medications and drugs, abdominal pain, syncope, UTI, mood disorders, skin and subcutaneous infection, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, alcohol related disorders, malaise and fatigue, fever of unknown origin.



Emergency RN skill sets: Maintaining accurate patient assessments, thinking and acting quickly, prioritizing effectively, remaining calm under pressure, developing coping methods, learning to de-escalate situations, play well on the team, communicate effectively, remaining flexible, and being great educators.

Common emergency department procedures: Arterial blood gasses, arterial line set ups, bag mask ventilation, bladder catheterization, burn debridement, cardioversion/defibrillation, assisting with closed reduction fracture, external cardiac pacing, assisting with lumbar puncture, nasogastric tube placement, assisting with intubation, intraosseous access., intravenous access and fluid administration, medication administration, assisting with nasal cauterization and packing, procedural sedation and analgesia, assist with reduction dislocation, pediatric and adult resuscitation, splinting, and assisting with thoracotomy.

Qualities of an emergency department nurse:

Emergency nurses must quickly assess incoming patients and prioritize care based on need, available staffing, and patient acuity. They work as part of a team and often initiate treatment while waiting for the physician to come and evaluate the patient.

5 qualities to be a successful emergency department nurse are:

- A strong professional and emotional foundation: You'll need to be ready to spend long hours on your feet and move and lift patients when necessary. Nurses should have a strong disposition and be able to detach yourself emotionally to some degree when treating patients who may be critically ill or injured.
- Clinical skills: ED nurses need to perform their duties swiftly and efficiently to prevent delays in care and to protect their patients. A high level of skill is needed to perform treatments and therapies and to immediately recognize important changes in a patient's condition. Patient assessment is another vitally important skill, with the ability to interpret labs and other diagnostic information in relation to the patient condition.
- A calm attitude: Performing emergency nursing procedures in a sometimes-chaotic environment calls for being able to keep a level head to follow instructions from physicians and other ER providers. Loud noises, quick directives and high tensions can be present. Learning to remain calm and continue to perform your ER duties is something you must master with time.
- Learning to be assertive: Emergency nursing skills encompass more than just administering IVs or finishing your charting quickly. While practical ER nursing skills are essential, learning when and how to speak up is important to your role as well. Oftentimes, you will be the only advocate your patient has. Learning how to voice concerns or ideas, especially to other professions, is part of the job.
- Flexibility: Patient needs can change quickly, and you must be able to respond immediately to those changes. You may need to accompany a ventilator patient to x-ray, then come back and start an IV on a person with fragile veins. The mix of patients in the emergency department can also change from minute to minute. As a ED nurse, you will need to keep all the changes straight to prevent medication errors and other problems.