

## Between the Flags: keeping patients safe

NSW Health has a safety system called 'Between the Flags' which helps healthcare staff to recognise the early signs of a patient becoming more unwell. The staff can then respond effectively to the situation.

'Between the Flags' mirrors the way Surf Life Savers keep watch over you at the beach to ensure you remain safe.



### Standard observation charts

In New South Wales, we use the 'Between the Flags' observation charts, which can be a paper form or viewed on a computer. The healthcare staff will regularly record your breathing and heart rate, blood pressure and temperature on the chart as well as other observations.

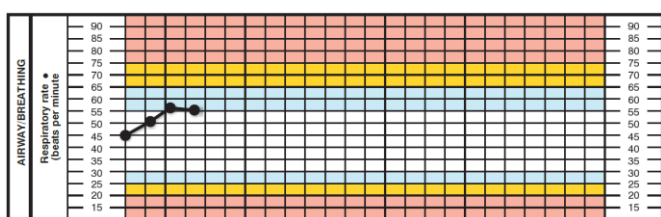
The charts are colour coded to help healthcare staff quickly recognise when patients are becoming more unwell. Most patients will have observations in the White Zone.

The coloured areas on the chart are explained over the page.

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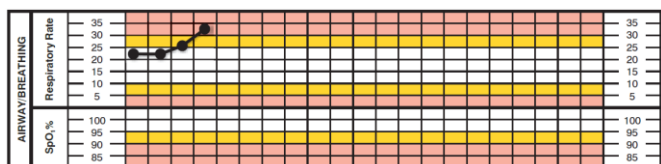
### Blue Zone

The 'Blue Zone' is seen on charts for babies, children and maternity patients. If the observations are in the 'Blue Zone' the patient may be unwell and the healthcare staff will monitor them more closely.



### Yellow Zone

If the observations are in the 'Yellow Zone', the patient may be more unwell. The healthcare staff may call the doctor or senior nurse/midwife to complete a Clinical Review assessment. This means the patient will be seen within 30 minutes to ensure they are safe.



### Red Zone

If the observations are in the 'Red Zone', the patient may be seriously unwell, and healthcare staff will call a Rapid Response. This means that a team of experienced staff will come to the bedside quickly.

You may recognise a worrying change in your condition or in the person you care for. Talk to your nurse or doctor and ask for a Clinical Review. The REACH system is also available to help you escalate concerns about worrying changes in a patient's condition. It stands for Recognise, Engage, Act, Call, Help is on its way.

### Other programs to keep patients safe

Just like the 'Between the Flags' system, there are other programs to help keep you safe when you are in hospital such as REACH, Sepsis and Partnering with People. Learn more about our patient safety programs on our website

[www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au)



#### Acknowledgement:

NSW Health thanks Surf Life Saving Australia for allowing us to use their colours and slogan as part of this program. We appreciate their support. Remember "Always swim between the red and yellow flags". More information about Surf Life Saving Australia can be found on [sls.com.au/](http://sls.com.au/)