

ICU Shift Prioritization Sheet

This sheet is designed to help new ICU nurses organize and prioritize during a 12-hour shift. Keep it handy as a quick reference when you feel overwhelmed.

1. Start of Shift Priorities

- Review patient assignments and reports (safety concerns, code status, allergies).
- Check lines, airways, drips, and equipment.
- Perform a quick head-to-toe safety check (airway, breathing, circulation, monitors).
- Introduce yourself to your patients and set expectations.

2. Ongoing Shift Priorities

- Address ABCs first (Airway, Breathing, Circulation).
- Respond to alarms promptly; investigate before silencing.
- Reassess patients regularly (neuro, hemodynamics, pain, sedation).
- Stay ahead of medications and drips (double-check compatibility & timing).
- Document in real-time when possible.

3. When Overwhelmed, Remember

- Prioritize: Life-threatening → Urgent → Comfort.
- One patient at a time — stabilize, then move on.
- Call for help early (RT, charge nurse, physician).
- Breathe, pray, reset — you cannot pour from an empty cup.

4. End of Shift Priorities

- Update charting and complete all documentation.
- Tidy patient rooms (lines, equipment, meds).
- Give thorough report: include code status, major changes, concerns.
- Reflect: 1 thing you learned, 1 thing to improve next shift.