

Master Gait Belt Ambulation for CNA Testing

Prevent the wheelchair brake oversight that causes most failures. This comprehensive checklist covers all provider requirements and addresses the safety protocols that protect both you and your patients.

Step 1: Pre-Ambulation Safety Setup

- Perform hand hygiene and introduce yourself to build trust CRITICAL
- Verify patient has non-skid footwear before any standing attempt CRITICAL
- Explain procedure clearly: "I'll help you walk safely using this support belt"
- Adjust bed height so patient's feet touch floor when sitting CRITICAL
- Lock bed wheels AND wheelchair brakes (most common failure point) CRITICAL

Step 2: Gait Belt Application & Checking

- Place belt around patient's waist over clothing, never against bare skin
- Check belt tightness by slipping flat fingers underneath (Headmaster requirement)
- Tighten belt snugly - should be secure but not restrictive
- Position buckle in front for easy access and patient comfort
- Ensure belt is not placed over ribs or abdomen - waist level only

Step 3: Standing Assistance Technique

- Face the patient directly and grasp belt with upward (palms-up) grip on both sides CRITICAL
- Use proper body mechanics - bend knees, keep back straight CRITICAL
- Provide agreed signal ("1-2-3") and assist patient to standing position
- Use knee-to-knee or toe-to-toe stabilization technique (NNAAP requirement)
- Stabilize patient completely before beginning ambulation CRITICAL

Step 4: Ambulation Execution & Monitoring

- Walk required distance while staying slightly behind and beside patient CRITICAL
- Maintain firm grip on belt throughout entire walk - never let go CRITICAL
- Ask "How do you feel?" during ambulation (Prometric requirement)
- Monitor patient continuously for dizziness, fatigue, or distress
- Stay within arm's reach throughout entire ambulation
- Maintain controlled pace - not too fast, not too slow

Step 5: Safe Seating & Completion

- Position patient with back of legs touching chair before sitting CRITICAL
- Support controlled descent into chair using belt grip CRITICAL
- Remove gait belt only after patient is safely seated
- Ensure call light is within patient reach CRITICAL
- Lower bed to safe position and lock wheels CRITICAL
- Perform final hand hygiene CRITICAL

Step 6: Test Day Performance Tips

- Verbalize your actions: "I'm checking that the brakes are locked"
- Focus on your patient (actor) rather than the evaluator
- Use controlled breathing between steps to manage test anxiety
- Remember: evaluators want you to succeed and demonstrate safety
- Practice the skill sequence out loud until it becomes automatic