Common Risky Behaviors Checklist

The checklist of observable behaviors may aide a supervisor when assessing if a healthcare professional is questionably fit to perform. It is not intended for performance evaluation or as a substitute for documentation required by an organization’s policy. Please note that each employee may display behaviors uniquely. It is helpful to look for patterns now and over time.

Absence & Tardiness
- ☐ Shows up when not scheduled for shift
- ☐ Takes extended breaks, sometimes without telling colleagues and without explanation
- ☐ Calls in sick frequently or uses other excuses to miss assigned shifts
- ☐ Calls in sick before or after a weekend providing multiple days off (frequent pattern)

Cognitive Impairment
- ☐ Forgets how to complete simple tasks or makes mistakes (memory/concentration)
- ☐ Makes inaccurate judgments regarding patient care (judgment)
- ☐ Exhibits confusion (e.g., about directions or instructions)
- ☐ Unable to accurately communicate specific patient information with staff and/or patients
- ☐ Inaccurate or incomplete patient care documentation
- ☐ Inability to complete assigned tasks that others do adequately
- ☐ Consistent inability to improve performance or conduct even with training or counseling

Unprofessional Communication/Boundaries
- ☐ Exhibits aggression or hostility towards patients and/or coworkers
- ☐ Responds defensively or aggressively when provided performance feedback
- ☐ Inappropriate sharing of personal information with patients
- ☐ Communicates with flat affect in tone of voice
- ☐ Avoids eye contact

Physical Impairment
- ☐ Alcohol-like odor on breath
- ☐ Irregular breathing pattern (e.g., labored, shallow)
- ☐ Stumbles/staggers while walking (gait/balance)
- ☐ Changes in speech pattern (e.g., slurred, fast, slow)
- ☐ Fumbles/drops equipment (manual coordination)
- ☐ Pupils dilated/constricted
- ☐ Perspiration that appears excessive for environmental conditions
- ☐ Jerky body movements
- ☐ Reports difficulty sleeping
- ☐ Nodding out or sleeping on duty

Drug Diversion
- ☐ Loiters around medicine supply
- ☐ Insists on performing narcotic counts alone
- ☐ Waits until alone to access narcotics cupboard and/or to draw up medication
- ☐ Reports medication being wasted when the medication not wasted
- ☐ Reports wasting more of a drug than seems likely
- ☐ Inconsistencies between narcotic records and administration record
- ☐ Has no reasonable explanation for Pyxis withdrawals
- ☐ Patients consistently complain that pain is not improving after receiving pain medication
- ☐ Reports lost or wasted medications frequently
- ☐ Fails to ensure observation or co-signing for narcotic wastage
- ☐ Asks others to withdraw narcotics for his/her patients
- ☐ Offers to cover other nurses’ breaks to administer medications to their patients
- ☐ PRN medications for a patient administered at higher frequency than other shifts