



New Brunswick Association of Medical Radiation Technologists Association des technologues en radiation médicale du Nouveau Brunswick

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE NEW BRUNSWICK MEDICAL RADIATION TECHNOLOGISTS

INTRODUCTION¹

In New Brunswick, medical radiation technologists are regulated by the New Brunswick Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (NBAMRT). This Standards of Practice document applies to practitioners in the following fields:

- *magnetic resonance technology;*
- *nuclear medicine technology;*
- *radiological technology; and*
- *radiation therapy.*

This document addresses Medical Radiation Technologists (MRTs) who work in direct patient care roles, and those who do not provide direct patient care, including those who practice through research, education, consultation, management, administration, equipment sales, quality control, information technology development, regulation, and policy development, and/or relevant system development pertaining to the foregoing disciplines.

Professions in Canada are regulated in accordance with provincial legislation and subsequent regulations, federal and provincial health and safety statutes, personal and health information access and protection laws, and regulators' standards of practice, codes of ethics, and other published documents that set out requirements that practitioners must meet.

Legislation that establishes the profession's regulatory body also outlines and describes a profession's scope of practice. This scope comprises a series of specific activities, the performance of which requires MRTs to be educated and appropriately licensed. Individual competence or scope of practice can be influenced by a variety of factors including experience and education, as well as an individual's role, responsibilities, and employment setting.

SETTING THE STANDARDS FOR THE PROFESSION

As the regulator for MRTs in New Brunswick, the NBAMRT plays an important role in setting standards of practice to govern the practice of MRTs and to communicate to the public and employers our professional expectations and requirements.

WHAT ARE STANDARDS OF PRACTICE?

A *Standards of Practice* document sets out principles that apply to all MRTs, who must uphold them throughout their careers. The regulator of each profession is given the mandate to create Standards of Practice ("Standards") via legislation and regulations. Standards of Practice have the authority of legislation and supersede any overlapping workplace-specific policies or procedures. Standards can draw on other documents such as codes of ethics, by-laws, or guidelines that the regulator has published.

¹ Elements of this introduction have been adapted from the NSCMIRTP document, Scope of Practice (May 2017) and documents published by the Alliance of Medical Radiation Technologists Regulators of Canada.

HOW ARE STANDARDS OF PRACTICE USED?

The general purpose of Standards of Practice is to guide and direct the behaviour of practitioners, who must ensure the public interest is met through the provision of safe and ethical care to patients and clients. Standards accomplish this by setting out minimum, measurable expectations for practitioners across all specialties, focus areas, and practice settings. These expectations are stated, and their related behaviours are described in the Standards of Practice document, which can also be used to determine if the Standards are being achieved.

Ensuring that Standards of Practice are met is a shared responsibility between the MRTs, the NBAMRT, and employers as follows:

- MRTs are required to follow and meet the Standards in their daily practice regardless of their role and responsibilities.
- The NBAMRT is accountable to the public for ensuring that all MRTs meet the Standards of Practice. The NBAMRT applies the Standards in all its proceedings, including assessment of continuing competence activities and responding to reports and complaints against a member's practice.
- Employers use Standards of Practice to support the development of organizational policies, job descriptions and performance-appraisal tools and when addressing professional practice issues. Employers support an MRT practice by ensuring that the essential resources are available to support MRTs in meeting the Standards and that organizational policies are consistent with the Standards of Practice.

WHO MUST ADHERE TO THE STANDARDS?

Standards of Practice apply to all MRTs, including those who provide direct patient care, those who provide a mix of direct and indirect patient care, and those MRTs who only provide indirect patient care. MRTs who provide indirect patient care services include MRTs who practice as an administrator, an educator, a researcher, or MRTs working in imaging informatics and other indirect patient care services, including but not limited to product development and testing, quality assurance and product/equipment sales. This document therefore provides Standards of Practice using "Standard Statements" that describe the Standard, and "Indicators" that demonstrate how the Standards of Practice are met by direct and indirect clinical MRT practice.

It is understood that the application of all performance indicators may not be appropriate or required in all situations and for all roles.

HOW ARE THE STANDARDS OF PRACTICE ORGANIZED?

The Standards of Practice are organized in four broad areas or units:

- Standard 1.0: Patient-Centered Care
- Standard 2.0: Ethical Practice
- Standard 3.0: Responsibility and Accountability
- Standard 4.0: Practice Management

Each unit includes several specific standards, each of which includes the following:

- **Standard Statement:** the expected level of performance by a MRT, both legal and professional.
- **Indicators:** these statements describe behaviours that demonstrate how a MRT meets the standard statement. The indicators are not provided in order of importance, nor do they comprise all-inclusive or comprehensive lists of all instances where a standard must be met. General standards are applicable to all MRTs, while specific indicators apply to one or more of the MRT's practice area(s).

STANDARD 1.0: PATIENT CARE

Standard Statement:

MRTs incorporate a patient-centered approach and take steps to optimize the provision of safe, ethical, and competent health-care services.

Indicators:

Demonstrate patient-centered behaviours by:

- 1.1. Taking into consideration the patient's individual circumstances (e.g., physical and emotional needs, values, and cultural background) during and throughout the delivery of care.
- 1.2. Determining if the patient has provided informed consent, where applicable.
- 1.3. Respecting the patient's or substitute decision maker's right to refuse services or to withdraw consent at any time and exploring the reason(s) behind the refusal or wish to withdraw consent.
- 1.4. Assessing and monitoring the patient's responses and taking appropriate action to address the patient's questions, reactions, discomfort, or anxiety, then adjusting the procedure(s) as necessary.
- 1.5. Supporting the patient's comfort and safety throughout the procedure(s); during transportation, transfers, positioning, and during personal care (e.g.: toileting, repositioning, emotional support, pain management, fall prevention techniques, etc.).

Demonstrate effective communication by:

- 1.6. Assessing potential communication barriers (e.g., hearing, eyesight, language, literacy level) and taking steps to address the barriers.
- 1.7. Evaluating the patient's understanding of the procedure and adapting communication style accordingly.
- 1.8. Allowing the patient time to confirm understanding of information, to ask questions, or to clarify instructions.
- 1.9. Advising the patient of any post-procedure care and confirming understanding of the shared instructions or information.
- 1.10. Applying professional judgement to determine if immediate communication with another appropriate health-care professional is required.
- 1.11. Communicating observations, technical impressions, concerns regarding the image, treatment, or treatment prescription to the reporting health professional or other relevant health-care member.

Support the timely access to services by:

- 1.12. Identifying the need for advocacy and taking steps to advocate for the patient and any required services.

- 1.13. Educating patients on their right to inquire into, and be made aware of, the breadth of services available to them.

Ensure safety of the patient, self, and others by:

- 1.14. Screening the patient for any contraindications or risks to the procedure(s) and making required adjustments (e.g.: falls, previous allergic reactions, MRI patient screening, pregnancy).
- 1.15. Adhering to the principle of As Low As Reasonably Achievable (ALARA) for patients, colleagues and others, in accordance with the appropriate safety legislation.
- 1.16. Abiding by relevant safety codes and regulations.
- 1.17. Seeking timely assistance from the appropriate health-care provider(s) when issues arise that are outside one's personal sphere of practice and/or scope of practice that require intervention to reduce the risk of harm or injury to the patient, self, or others (e.g., pain management, change in the patient's health status).
- 1.18. Recognizing and acting on near misses, no-harm incidents, or harmful incidents.
- 1.19. Applying the infection prevention and control standards to prevent contamination of persons, equipment, and environment (e.g., employ routine practices, perform aseptic or sterile technique, use the required personal protective equipment).
- 1.20. Making use of the proper shielding devices when necessary.

Optimize the provision of procedures, treatments, and services by:

- 1.21. Verifying and evaluating the procedural information (e.g., the patient's identity, requisition, prescription, consultation request, authorization) for completeness and appropriateness.
- 1.22. Developing and/or interpreting a treatment plan or intervention based on the physician prescription or consultation request.
- 1.23. Correctly identifying anatomical orientation (e.g., utilize radiopaque markers, indicate patient positioning, laterality) and identifying the imaging or treatment parameters and field and treatment volumes to maximize outcomes.
- 1.24. Selecting, applying, and adjusting the procedural parameters and the patient's position as required and appropriate to the procedure or treatment.
- 1.25. Using the proper equipment and materials to position the patient accurately (e.g., immobilization devices).
- 1.26. Determining settings and verifying the technique or protocol to be used in the procedure or treatment.
- 1.27. Selecting and administering the correct substance (e.g., drugs, treatment, contrast, radiopharmaceuticals), the correct dose, at the correct time, for the required duration, via the correct route (orally, topically, by injection, inhalation, or into the body through an orifice).
- 1.28. Performing procedures involving the application or administration of ionizing radiation and magnetic resonance only when the conditions under the applicable legislation have been met.
- 1.29. Evaluating outputs (e.g., images, data, tests) to confirm accuracy and reliability of procedure(s), prior to the patient leaving the department or clinic.
- 1.30. Storing images in the appropriate format and ensuring all images and data are archived according to organizational policy.

MRTs have indirect patient care responsibilities in meeting the standards including:

- 1.31. Anticipating, advocating for, and planning to ensure the required resources are in place to support the delivery of safe and competent patient care and services (access to relevant clinical data, staffing, equipment, policies, and staff education).
- 1.32. Taking steps to support timely access to services (e.g., advocate for resources, adjust staff schedules and room booking).

- 1.33. Ensuring that patients receive safe and competent care when services are provided by a student, and immediately intervening when patient care or the quality of an image might be compromised.
- 1.34. Engaging in quality assurance and product testing activities; reporting concerns that may impact safety of the patient, staff, or other.
- 1.35. Facilitating and providing staff training on new equipment and evaluating staff competence in operating the equipment safely and efficiently to produce positive and optimal outcomes.
- 1.36. Providing content expertise that is in the best interest of the public (e.g.: when providing consultation on policies, when participating or leading organizational meetings and initiatives, in product or software development, etc.).
- 1.37. Engaging in imaging informatics competently to ensure accuracy, access and completeness of the information and to ensure timely reporting and diagnosis.

STANDARD 2.0: ETHICAL PRACTICE

Standard Statement:

MRTs adhere to the NBAMRT Code of Ethics and engage in practice that respects the rights of the patient, substitute decision-maker, and others.

Indicators:

To demonstrate this Standard has been met, the MRT will:

Identify and manage ethical dilemmas by:

- 2.1. Recognizing situations that result in an ethical dilemma.
- 2.2. Following the NBAMRT *Code of Ethics* to help manage and resolve the ethical dilemma.
- 2.3. Seeking assistance from or consulting with colleagues as appropriate to help manage the situation.
- 2.4. Documenting the situation, actions taken, and rationale for such action(s).

Identify and manage perceived, potential, and real conflicts of interest by:

- 2.5. Refraining from activities that could result in a personal benefit (e.g., financial, emotional, and political).
- 2.6. Declaring any perceived, potential, and real conflicts of interest to the appropriate person (e.g., patient, supervisor, manager).
- 2.7. Documenting the situations in which conflicts of interest have arisen when they could not be avoided by recording the efforts made to prevent or manage the situation(s).

Maintain confidentiality when collecting, using, and disclosing personal information of patients by:

- 2.8. Following privacy and confidentiality legislation (e.g., *Personal Health Information Privacy and Access Act, Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*), regulations, and organizational policies.
- 2.9. Obtaining the patient's or substitute decision-maker's consent to collect, use, and/or disclose personal information.
- 2.10. Identifying data that is considered personal information (e.g., patient/staff member/student names, address, phone number, email address, health card number, social insurance number, health information, etc.).
- 2.11. Restricting access to personal information, including that stored in archival systems such as electronic records (e.g., log-off computer; close patient records/images when providing services

- to another patient; access patient information only if assigned to provide services to patient; obtain and discuss patient information in a private area, etc.).
- 2.12. Refraining from unauthorized access to personal and health information and reporting and acting on incidents of unauthorized access.
 - 2.13. Securely and permanently destroying personal information in accordance with organizational policies.

Maintain professional boundaries in relationships with patients, patients' families, subordinate staff members, students, and colleagues by:

- 2.14. Adhering to the NBAMRT *Code of Ethics*, workplace policies and professional legislation and regulations.
- 2.15. Refraining from entering in a personal relationship with a patient that could adversely affect an existing patient care relationship.
- 2.16. Recognizing there is a power imbalance between the MRT and the patient, subordinate staff members, and students.
- 2.17. Recognizing situations leading to, and the implications of, professional boundary crossing and violations and seeking further guidance when needed.
- 2.18. Identifying warning signs that a boundary issue might be developing, such as:
 - a. selecting a patient based on looks, age, or social standing;
 - b. preferentially scheduling patient appointments;
 - c. being preoccupied with the patient's social life outside the professional relationship;
 - d. looking forward to physical contact with the patient and feeling betrayed if the patient pulls back;
 - e. dressing differently for specific patients;
 - f. experiencing discomfort or defensiveness when discussing or documenting patient interactions; or
 - g. receiving feedback that others perceive potential professional boundary issues with the patient.
- 2.19. Taking steps to avoid boundary issues or misunderstandings by:
 - a. Ensuring consent is obtained prior to touching the patient.
 - b. Explaining to the patient the reason for removing any clothing or other items that interfere with diagnostic or therapeutic procedures and providing the patient with a gown or sheet to cover exposed body areas.
 - c. Avoiding direct communication with patients on social media, or otherwise outside of the professional relationship.

MRTs that have indirect patient care responsibilities meet this Standard by:

- 2.20. Acting as mentor and coach and role-modeling professional behaviours and attitudes towards staff members, students, and others.
- 2.21. Providing guidance and/or being available for consultation to staff and students on managing ethical dilemmas.
- 2.22. Advocating for and maintaining systems that support confidential storage, retrieval, transfer, and destruction of confidential personal information.
- 2.23. Facilitating access to the appropriate resources to help maintain confidentiality and privacy of personal information (e.g., staff training, policies, computer systems).
- 2.24. Reporting a breach in confidentiality or unauthorized access to the appropriate authorities.
- 2.25. Acting to ensure the patient is notified when a breach of confidentiality of personal information has occurred in accordance with organizational policies and applicable legislation.

STANDARD 3.0 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY and ACCOUNTABILITY

Standard Statement:

MRTs promote and contribute to excellence in the profession, accept individual responsibility for competence, demonstrate leadership attributes and remain accountable to the regulator and the public.

Indicators:

To demonstrate this Standard has been met, the MRT will:

Maintain the knowledge, skill and judgement required of the role and its responsibilities by:

- 3.1. Practicing within his/her individual sphere of practice (individual competence) and professional scope of practice.
- 3.2. Recognizing when a procedure, responsibility or expectation is beyond the level of personal sphere of practice or professional scope of practice and ensuring the patient has access to required services by an appropriate and competent MRT.
- 3.3. Taking responsibility for decisions and actions.
- 3.4. Continually enhancing knowledge of emerging practices, techniques and equipment, evidence-based practice, and organizational policies and procedures, as appropriate to scope of practice.
- 3.5. Engaging in the continuing competence activities as defined and required by the regulatory body (e.g., continuing professional development credits and practice hours).
- 3.6. Facilitating access to activities and opportunities that support staff involvement in continuing education and professional development.
- 3.7. Taking the appropriate steps when learning needs of staff and students are identified (e.g., initiating and monitoring remediation needs, provide supervision).
- 3.8. Providing constructive feedback to support change in practice and in the healthcare environment.
- 3.9. Applying critical thinking and professional judgement by considering evidence-based practice and potential options and outcomes before acting and then by reflecting on the actions taken and actual outcome(s) obtained.
- 3.10. Demonstrating critical thinking when making decisions and when managing problems or complex situations.

Engage in leadership activities to support collaborative practice and encourage practice advancement and new technology by:

- 3.11. Engaging in mentorship opportunities with colleagues, staff, students, and others.
- 3.12. Participating in the development of new knowledge and research.
- 3.13. Engaging in change management strategies and team building techniques.
- 3.14. Demonstrating effective mediation, negotiation, and dispute resolution techniques.
- 3.15. Educating others on the role and competence of the MRTs and relevant procedures.
- 3.16. Engaging in research to promote advancement in patient care services and the profession.
- 3.17. Adhering to the legislation governing practice (e.g., NBAMRT Bylaws, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission Regulations, *Personal Health Information Privacy and Access Act*, etc.).
- 3.18. Acting in accordance with regulatory documents (e.g.: Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Bylaws, Professional Practice Guidelines and Position Statements).
- 3.19. Recognizing and acting when practice-setting/employment policies conflict with legislation, regulations, or other regulatory documents.
- 3.20. Following the most restrictive guideline, regulation, or legislation when multiple such documents exist.
- 3.21. Taking responsibility for the treatment, procedure, or services through to completion of services or when an appropriate hand-off or transfer of care has taken place.

- 3.22. Taking appropriate action to ensure their own physical, psychological, and emotional health does not negatively affect their ability to provide safe, competent, compassionate and ethical care.

Adhere to mandatory reporting obligations by:

- 3.23. Reporting unethical, unsafe, or incompetent behaviours to the appropriate regulatory body.
- 3.24. Reporting suspected or confirmed abuse of a vulnerable person, in accordance with provincial legislation.
- 3.25. Complying with self-reporting obligations as required by legislation and regulations (e.g. cases of incapacity, an accusation and/or finding of guilt of committing a criminal offence, etc.).
- 3.26. Filing a report with the appropriate regulatory body when reasonable grounds exist to believe that another regulated health professional has sexually abused a patient, in accordance with applicable legislation and regulations.

STANDARD AREA 4.0 PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Standard Statement:

MRTs optimize inter- and intra-professional communication between colleagues and among all members of the healthcare team to support continuity of care within a safe practice environment.

Indicators:

To demonstrate this Standard has been met, MRTs will:

Ensure that patient health records are comprehensive, complete, and accurate by:

- 4.1 Confirming the following information is documented in the patient record:
 - a. patient's demographic information and medical history;
 - b. relevant identifiers;
 - c. allergies, reactions, adverse effects, treatment concerns or emergency situations;
 - d. pregnancy or contraindications to the ordered procedure;
 - e. time, dose, duration of any substances or treatment;
 - f. technical impressions and observations, including abnormal test results;
 - g. details of steps taken to obtain informed consent (e.g. when a dialogue occurred about the intervention or treatment plan, when the procedure to be undergone is high-risk, when the consent is not implied, when the patient refuses to give consent, and/or in a situation where a patient is unable to provide informed consent);
 - h. post-procedure instructions and confirmation of the patient's understanding of the instructions; and
 - i. details of any circumstances in which a change was made to a patient's health record, the origin of the request for change, the rationale for the change and details as to what specifically was changed.

Adhere to all applicable record keeping guidelines, policies, regulations, and legislation including:

- 4.2 Following all NBAMRT guidelines, applicable legislation and regulations, and organizational policies for compiling, using, protecting, and disposing of personal information and health records.
- 4.3 Maintaining pharmaceutical dispensing records in accordance with legislation and organizational policies.
- 4.4 Using the appropriate and workplace/organization-wide approved abbreviations and terminologies.
- 4.5 Ensuring patient information and data systems comply with applicable privacy and confidentiality legislation, regulations, and employers' policies and guidelines.

4.6

Document other activities including:

- 4.7 Recording the results of quality control tests, equipment faults and other problems.
- 4.8 Recording informatics activities.
- 4.9 Managing the flow of information by confirming receipt of patient record, images, and pertinent data by the intended recipient.
- 4.10 Documenting radiopharmaceutical processes according to legislation.
- 4.11 Documenting drug and substance administration.
- 4.12 Documenting occupational health and workplace safety issues, including near misses, no-harm incidents or harmful incidents, adverse events, and emergency situations.

Engage in workplace-safety and risk-management activities, including:

- 4.13 Adhering to organizational policies and relevant provincial and federal legislation and guidelines pertaining to health and safety.
- 4.14 Ensuring the practice setting is safe and potential risk of harm to patients, colleagues, and others is prevented or minimized (e.g. radiation safety, patient ancillary devices, MR safe or compatible devices).
- 4.15 Ensuring equipment and materials are handled, stored, transported, and disposed of according to applicable safety and operational standards as set out in the relevant legislation, regulations, guidelines, organizational policies, and employers' and manufacturers' policies and guidelines.
- 4.16 Protecting themselves, their colleagues, other members of the healthcare team, any other individuals who may be present as well as any patient from any unnecessary exposure to radiation (use required person-protection equipment).
- 4.17 Decontaminating when necessary in accordance with any license(s) issued under the applicable legislation.
- 4.18 Recognizing and responding appropriately to adverse events and emergency situations (e.g. cardiac arrest, adverse reactions to medications and/or procedures).
- 4.19 Taking the appropriate action on identified learning needs of colleagues, other staff members and students (e.g.; initiating and monitoring remediation needs, providing supervision, reporting incompetence or concerns).
- 4.20 Complying with applicable occupational health and workplace safety legislation, employer policies and manufacturer guidelines.
- 4.21 Monitoring equipment outputs (e.g. images, recordings) to ensure appropriate performance.
- 4.22 Documenting activities associated with the operation of equipment in accordance with applicable legislation and employer and manufacturer policies and guidelines.
- 4.23 Tracking and reporting safety trends and creating a plan to address safety issues.
- 4.24 Following infection prevention and control standards, protocols and guidelines to reduce risk of cross-contamination and exposure to infectious diseases.
- 4.25 Determining the quality, serviceability, and operability of the equipment and materials to be used in the procedure in accordance with the standards set by legislation, safety codes, guidelines and facility policies, and, if the standards are not met, taking timely corrective action.
- 4.26 Conducting the required quality control tests according to the applicable legislation, guidelines, safety code and the facility policies.

GLOSSARY

ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Achievable): Acronym for a philosophy respecting the use of radiation and high frequency sound waves based on using dosages as low as reasonably achievable to attain the desired diagnostic, therapeutic, or other goal.

Client: is the direct recipient of private services, a customer, other stakeholder, person or company who is engaged in a contractual agreement with the member or the practice setting, and the patient's family member.

Competence: the combined knowledge, skill and judgement required to perform a role or function.

Confidentiality: the protection and non-disclosure of personal and health information to ensure the privacy of the individual to whom the information relates.

Ethical dilemma: a decision-making problem between two possible moral imperatives or moral conflicts, neither of which is unmistakably the correct or preferable decision or path.

Implied consent: consent inferred from the patient's (or alternate decision maker's) actions and surrounding circumstances.

Indirect patient care: non-patient care activities that indirectly affect patient care and services (e.g. administration/management functions, product/equipment development, testing or sales, student services or education, informatics, research, quality control and policy analysis).

Informed consent: the process whereby permission to proceed with identified intervention procedures is obtained from a patient based on reasonable disclosure of the facts, risks and alternatives. Informed consent may be expressed orally or in writing or it may be implied (see above), depending on the circumstances.

Personal sphere of practice: refers to the MRT's personal knowledge, skill and judgement or competence. Personal sphere of practice can be influenced by a variety of factors, including experience, education, and employment setting.

Scope of Practice: includes both the legislative scope of practice statement and the defined professional activities performed by MRTs who are educated, trained, and licensed to perform.

Substitute decision-maker: a person who is authorized to give or refuse consent to an intervention on behalf of someone who is incapable of making his/her own decisions, duly appointed pursuant to a Power of Attorney for personal care, the *Advance Health Care Directives Act*, RSNB 2016, c 46, the *Infirm Persons Act*, RSNB 1973, c I-8, , the *Mental Health Act*, RSNB 1973, c M-10, the *Public Trustee Act*, SNB 2005, c P-26.5, or such subsequent versions of these or other pertinent statutes as may later come into effect. In most cases this will be a family member or partner. In others, this may be an individual specifically selected by the client or appointed by the Court.

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