



CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

COLLEGE OF PARAMEDICS OF NOVA SCOTIA

Property of:

The College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia
315 – 380 Bedford Hwy
Halifax, NS, B3M 2L4

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The College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia (CPNS) recognizes, and appreciates, the assistance of the Alberta College of Paramedics in providing our organization with permission to utilize their Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice in the development of the CPNS Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

INTRODUCTION

The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice are the foundation of the College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia's self-regulation. Our Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice are compulsory for all members and as such serves as a comprehensive framework to promote, guide and direct paramedic conduct and practice. As with any regulatory body, our Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice will be utilized in any complaint resolution or disciplinary hearing and is enforceable under the *Paramedics Act*.

All paramedics upon entering the profession are expected to follow the CPNS Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice; therefore, it is essential that each individual practitioner has a command of, and comprehends the significance of the information contained herein. This applies to all Primary Care Paramedics (PCP), Intermediate Care Paramedics (ICP), Advanced Care Paramedics (ACP), and Critical Care Paramedics (CCP) in all practice settings including but not limited to clinical, educational, evaluation, research, management and operational settings. When the term paramedic is used in this document it is inclusive of all four levels of paramedic practitioners in Nova Scotia. The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice serve as a guideline through which the public may judge the practice of paramedicine. Stakeholders may incorporate this framework in the development of paramedic performance metrics, career planning, operational and deployment models, as well as service level guidelines.

An individual paramedic's professional practice will be assessed within the framework of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, as well as the College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia Competency Profiles. The CPNS will use this framework to define entry to practice and re-entry to practice expectations, continuing competency expectations, and guidelines for judging the professional conduct and clinical performance of individual practitioners.

The Code of Ethics is based upon the values of respect, integrity, fairness, accountability, and professionalism, while The Standards of Practice establish the minimum standard around professional behavior and good practice expected of Nova Scotia paramedics. The statements within the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice provide the expectations around how these values and standards are to be enacted as a paramedic exercises their professional judgment in the provision of safe care. Paramedics will be held to a higher standard, when compared to other members of society, as health and public safety professionals, therefore, they are expected to apply these values not only in professional practice but also where these values have an impact in life and society broadly.

College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia

Code of Ethics

Responsibility to the Patient and Others

Paramedics demonstrate person-centered care by:

1. Practicing patience, compassion, and courtesy.
2. Advocating in the best interest of the patient.
3. Acting in a manner that ensures the patient's dignity, safety, privacy, confidentiality, and decision-making are maintained.
4. Working collaboratively within a patient- and family-centered health care team.
5. Communicating respectfully with others.
6. Maintaining appropriate professional relationship boundaries.
7. Respecting the rights of the patient and others.

Responsibility to the Profession

Paramedics demonstrate professional conduct by:

1. Practicing in accordance with the Standards of Practice.
2. Promoting and upholding the code of ethical standards of the profession.
3. Fostering professional working relationships.
4. Creating respectful and positive learning environments.
5. Providing leadership and mentorship to others.
6. Learning, sharing, and creating knowledge.
7. Recognizing professional limitations.
8. Consulting with others for the benefit of the patient.
9. Reporting and, when necessary, stopping any unethical or incompetent conduct.

Responsibility to Self

Paramedics maintain high standards of professional integrity by:

1. Recognizing that self-regulation of the profession is a privilege.
2. Maintaining mental and physical fitness to practice.
3. Maintaining clinical proficiency to practice.
4. Maintaining good character and reputation.
5. Maintaining professional accountability for actions in practice.
6. Using peer review to evaluate, reflect upon, and guide ongoing education.
7. Crediting work done by others.
8. Fostering a professional identity at work.

9. Managing conflict and maintaining impartiality.
10. Exhibiting conduct that always meets the requirements of the medical, legal, and professional boundaries of the profession.
11. Self-reporting any deviation from the Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice.

Responsibility to Society

Paramedics demonstrate service to society by:

1. Committing to action that prioritizes the health and safety of the public.
2. Incorporating an understanding of the social determinants of health in the provision of care.
3. Serving society through the continued development of the paramedicine profession.
4. Fostering innovative provision of care for the direct benefit of society.
5. Developing health education strategies to maximize health choices made by society.

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Standards of Practice

Clinical and Technical Proficiency

Paramedics demonstrate accountability for clinical and technical practice by:

1. Assessing the medical, psychological, and social needs of the patient.
2. Being accountable for patient care including advice, assessment, treatment, working diagnosis, and referral.
3. Continuously evaluating the ongoing management of patient care.
4. Being accountable for safe dispensing of Schedule I or Schedule II drugs (as defined by the Canadian Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and referenced in the Nova Scotia Drug Schedules Regulations made under Section 81 of the Pharmacy Act) only to a patient when those drugs are relevant to care and/or required to be provided during the provision of care.
5. Applying understanding of foundational knowledge that includes chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear emergency scene management.
6. Ensuring an informed approach to patient access, assessment, treatment, treatment in place, treatment referral, extrication, immobilization, and transportation.
7. Being knowledgeable about the effects, side effects, interactions, and safe administration of medications in the provision of care.
8. Applying understanding of foundational knowledge that includes paramedicine, clinical science, humanities, leadership, management, health and social care models, and public safety systems.
9. Utilizing evidence-based research to improve paramedicine practice.
10. Applying and evaluating knowledge developed through experience, clinical analysis, and research findings.
11. Establishing and continuously developing critical and clinical judgment.
12. Ensuring ongoing development of knowledge through clinical, educational, and technical research.
13. Exhibiting proficiency in technical and psychomotor skills.
14. Applying understanding of quality assurance and quality improvement theory and systems.
15. Maintaining currency in practice.
16. Ensuring best practices in infection control standards are maintained.

Professionalism

Paramedics demonstrate accountability for professional practice by:

1. Practicing in accordance with the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice and the College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia Competency Profile.
2. Maintaining appropriate qualifications and/or licenses to practice.
3. Practicing in accordance with the individuals practice settings policy and procedures.
4. Using clinical and professional judgment to ensure informed consent, informed refusal of care, and informed referral of care.
5. Maintaining high standards of personal and professional conduct.
6. Reporting witnessed unsafe practice and/or professional misconduct to the appropriate agency.
7. Cooperating with any investigation or inquiry into professional conduct.
8. Being accountable as an individual paramedic to represent the profession.
9. Being accountable for the provision of care, advice provided, and any failure to act.
10. Complying with health, safety, and traffic legislation, and workplace safety policies and procedures.
11. Being forthcoming with any errors committed.
12. Ensuring vehicles and/or facilities and equipment are maintained and in compliance with regulations.
13. Within the individuals practice environment, operating vehicles and/or other equipment in a safe manner with appropriate education and ongoing proficiency.
14. Complying with emergency medical response and transport vehicle operations, required certifications, and best practice.
15. Being accountable for maintaining professional proficiency and ongoing professional development.
16. Ensuring privacy and confidentiality of information.
17. Maintaining timely, accurate, legible, and complete documentation of provision of care.
18. Correcting any documentation error in a timely and forthright manner.
19. Ensuring comments made in public and social media do not demean the profession of paramedicine, individuals within the profession, and/or the College, or other professions.
20. Demonstrating accountability and responsibility for provision of care by signature and title or initials as appropriate to each entry on the health or safety record.
21. Accessing and collecting health record information for purposes that are consistent with organizational policies and relevant legislation.

Pedagogical Practice

Paramedics demonstrate informed practice by:

1. Providing professional preceptorship, mentorship, leadership, and supervision to students and colleagues.
2. Providing appropriate direct supervision and remaining accountable for the delegated aspects of the provision of care.
3. Ensuring patient safety when considering the knowledge and ability of the learner and colleagues when delegating provision of care.
4. Being accountable for documentation and communications completed by students under supervision to ensure accuracy, clarity, and timeliness.
6. Being accountable for knowledge translation for the purposes of improved practice.
7. Developing and maintaining professional relationships that improve inter-professional collaborative learning and practice.
8. Cooperatively sharing knowledge and expertise that contributes to the improvement and advancement of the profession.
9. Reducing disruptions that may lead to error in practice.
10. Seeking opportunities to teach and be taught.
11. Utilizing communications technology and/or other technology in the provision of care, in the education of others, for the assessment of records, for the monitoring of care, and to enable collaborative practice.

Continuous Practice

Paramedics continuously improve practice by:

1. Accepting responsibility to be informed to make appropriate decisions for professional practice.
2. Appropriately questioning and revising policy and procedures that may be inconsistent with informed and safe practice.
 3. Being accountable for accuracy, relevancy, and interpretation of evidence derived from research, guidelines, policies, consensus statements, expert opinion, and quality improvements.
4. Fostering and participating in professional communities of practice.
5. Being accountable for knowledge of quality assurance and improvement science, communications, and organization behaviour in order to create environments where ongoing improvements can occur.
6. Preventing or minimizing adverse events through identification, reporting, and monitoring.
7. Seeking suitable assistance in provision of care and/or transportation of patient.

8. Incorporating risk management strategies to ensure safe practice.
9. Responding to human and system factors in practice to minimize medication errors and unsafe practice.
10. Engaging in continuous self-evaluation and improvement.
11. Ensuring appropriate etiquette when using communication technologies, or speaking in person.
12. Being accountable for the requirements of continuing competency and professional development programs.

Health and Social Advocacy

Paramedics improve health systems, social systems, and public safety by:

1. Providing health education and promotion, health awareness, and injury and disease prevention.
2. Guiding, directing, and seeking feedback from stakeholders in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the provision of health and public safety to ensure safe practice.
3. Incorporating appropriate evidence for quality and safety improvements in health care and public safety.
4. Supporting the patient to learn and access appropriate health and social care in order to meet social determinants of health.
5. Supporting and engaging in health care and public safety research that supports improvements in achieving health and social determinants of care.
6. Measuring quality and ongoing improvements of safe care through ongoing supervision, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of the provision of health and social services.
7. Participating in the development, maintenance, and improvement of approaches that ensure safe medication dispensing, medication administration, and medication inventory management.
8. Identifying and reporting of practice errors related to restricted activities.
9. Directing and participating in changes to improve administrative, operational, and educational practice in paramedicine.
10. Directing and participating in regular review of policies and procedures related to administrative, operational, and educational paramedicine practice.
11. Being accountable for the paramedic-patient relationship as the foundation for paramedic practice across all populations, cultures, settings, and contexts as focused on the needs of the patient.