

# Ensuring Patient Safety

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Patient safety is defined as “the pursuit of the reduction and mitigation of unsafe acts within the health care system, as well as the use of best practices shown to lead to optimal patient outcomes” (Canadian Patient Safety Institute, 2016). The College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA)<sup>1</sup> recognizes that supporting patient safety requires accountability, competence, and collaborative efforts between registrants, clients and families, members of the interprofessional team, employers, and organizations across the health-care system.

## Purpose

CRNA's mandate is to protect the public and the purpose of this document is to support registrants to consider their responsibilities and accountabilities related to patient safety as reflected in the *Practice Standards for Regulated Members* (CARNA, 2013) and the *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses* (Canadian Nurses Association [CNA], 2017). Registrants must consider patient safety at all times and be able to articulate how it is reflected in their scope of practice.

## Key Principles

- CRNA's regulatory standards, guidelines and practice advice documents are designed to provide a framework for decision-making in a wide range of situations to ensure safe, competent and ethical care.
- Registrants are expected to do what any reasonable, prudent nurse would do in the same situation and to make informed and reasonable decisions based on the context of the situation.
- Registrants are accountable at all times for their own actions and must exercise reasonable judgment and set justifiable priorities in practice.

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<sup>1</sup> CARNA is operating as the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA).

Component of Regulatory Framework	Questions for Registrants to Consider
<b>Legislation and Regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do you have the necessary knowledge about your legislated scope of practice?</li> <li>▪ Are you aware of the restricted activities that you as an RN or NP are authorized to perform, and the limitations that may exist based on employer requirements and your individual scope?</li> <li>▪ What legislation related to patient safety is relevant to your role and practice setting?</li> </ul>
<b>CRNA Standards and Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are you aware of what is expected of you as per the <i>Practice Standards for Regulated Members</i> (CARNA, 2013) and the <i>Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses</i> (CNA, 2017)?</li> <li>▪ How do you ensure that you are meeting CRNA's standards and guidelines? Do you seek out and apply relevant CRNA standards, guidelines, practice advice and/or policy and practice direction to your practice?</li> </ul>
<b>Employer Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are you aware of, and do you follow, employer requirements within your practice setting?</li> <li>▪ Do you identify policies or procedures that are inconsistent with therapeutic client outcomes, best practices, and safety standards?</li> <li>▪ Do you take action to work collaboratively with the interprofessional team and your employer to address policies, procedures and practices that may pose a risk to patient safety?</li> <li>▪ Do you take action to work collaboratively with the interprofessional team and your employer to engage in quality improvement activities?</li> </ul>
<b>Individual registrant level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are you able to recognize and respond immediately when patient safety is affected, and anticipate and prepare for the same?</li> <li>▪ How do you apply evidence, best practices, knowledge and skills when developing care plans and delivering care?</li> <li>▪ Where do you seek out guidance when you have questions about your expectations as a registrant?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you work towards effective communication and collaboration with clients, families and interprofessional teams? Do you know how to address misunderstandings and conflict using conflict resolution strategies to promote healthy professional relationships and optimal client outcomes?</li> <li>▪ How do you advocate and contribute to safe practice environments collaboratively with the interprofessional team and your employer?</li> <li>▪ How do you regularly assess your practice and take the necessary steps to improve personal competence?</li> <li>▪ How do you evaluate the effectiveness of a plan of care and modify accordingly?</li> <li>▪ How do you plan for unanticipated outcomes?</li> <li>▪ Are you aware of how to recognize, act on and report adverse events, near misses and hazards in your practice setting?</li> <li>▪ Do you question, intervene, report, and address unsafe, uncompassionate, unethical or incompetent practice or conditions that interfere with your ability to provide safe, compassionate and ethical care, and support those who do the same?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Client Level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you incorporate principles of person-centered care into practice?</li> <li>▪ How do you overcome obstacles to applying person-centered care?</li> <li>▪ Do you assess and evaluate client outcomes to improve client care?</li> <li>▪ How do you ensure that clients are provided with adequate information in order to make informed decisions and provide informed consent?</li> <li>▪ What mechanisms are in place to support clients in providing feedback and sharing their perspectives?</li> </ul>



## References

Canadian Nurses Association. (2017). *Code of ethics for registered nurses*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

Canadian Patient Safety Institute. (2016). *Patient safety and incident management toolkit: Glossary*. <https://www.patientsafetyinstitute.ca/en/toolsResources/PatientSafetyIncidentManagementToolkit/Pages/Glossary.aspx>

College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta. (2013). *Practice standards for regulated members*. Edmonton, AB: Author.