



## *Nova Scotia College of Respiratory Therapists*

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### **Respiratory Therapists Duty to Provide Care**

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Respiratory Therapists provide vital acute, critical, emergency and home care to patients.

During a health emergency, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, Respiratory Therapists face a disproportionate risk of exposure to the virus as they provide care for infected patients. Respiratory Therapists have a professional responsibility to provide appropriate care to infected patients while adhering to established guidelines and protocols to minimize the risk of transmission.

During an emergency response, Respiratory Therapists are expected to adhere to the following:

- a) Work within their legislated scope of practice, the employer's scope of employment, and their individual scope of competence.
- b) Inform their employer of competency limits if they are called upon to practice in areas where the required skills are beyond their scope of competence.
- c) Operational needs may require Respiratory Therapists to be re-assigned to areas of practice outside of their current scope of competence. Upon re-assignment, Respiratory Therapists must identify their competency limits and collaborate with the employer to update and acquire the necessary skills.
- d) Ensure all guidelines and protocols are adhered to so as to reduce their risk of exposure when providing patient care.
- e) Personal situations may be complicated by circumstances precipitated by the virus. A Respiratory Therapist or a family member may become symptomatic or infected, or they may have child/elder care responsibilities. Respiratory Therapists who may be infected must inform their employer immediately that they are unavailable for work and are in self-isolation for the defined time period as per governmental/organizational recommendations. Respiratory Therapists with child or elder care issues should inform their employer immediately that they have home responsibilities that currently prevent them from working. They should make reasonable efforts to source alternate care arrangements if possible.
- f) Ensure responsible use of social media. Respiratory Therapists should be supportive of the federal and provincial health messaging the public is receiving. Communications must be transparent, objective, accurate and evidence based. Personal opinions may be interpreted as professional comments by the viewing audience. Respiratory Therapists must not use social media platforms to post about or comment on anything heard or seen about any patient, patient family member(s), or circumstance.
- g) Routinely check the NSCRT website to obtain current information related to COVID-19.