



College of Paramedicine
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Paramedics Code of Ethics

COLLEGE OF PARAMEDICINE OF PRINCE EDWARD
ISLAND

APPROVED BY COUNCIL | APRIL 1, 2024

Code of Ethics for Paramedics of PEI

Purpose and Authority

The *Regulated Health Professions Act* requires the College of Paramedicine of Prince Edward Island to adopt a Code of Ethics governing the professional conduct of its members. The Code of Ethics sets out the basic ethical commitments that guide all regulated members of the paramedic profession in Prince Edward Island through 'Values and Principles', and Responsibilities. The Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice are both compulsory for all members and serve as a comprehensive framework to promote, guide, and direct paramedic conduct.

For paramedics, the Code of Ethics establishes the expectations for responsible, ethical conduct when registrants interact with patients, society, other members of the profession, and the professional (self). For the public, the Code of Ethics provides clarity on the ethical values and principles, and responsibilities expected of paramedics and expresses the commitment to furthering public trust.

The Code of Ethics 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, research, education, management, evaluation, and administrative settings.

The Code of Ethics is also a regulatory tool that the College uses as part of the regulatory process that serves and protects the public interest. Violations of the Code of Ethics may constitute professional misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

The "values and principles" describe the broad ideals to which paramedics aspire and which guide their practice. The "responsibilities" illustrate the standards of conduct, and ethical professional performance expected of members. The values and principles, and responsibilities are not listed in order of importance and should be balanced against each other and considered in relation to the Standards of Practice, practice directives and guidelines, Bylaws, *Paramedic Regulations (coming into force on April 1, 2024)*, and the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.

Process to Develop Code of Ethics

The College of Paramedicine of Prince Edward Island would like to acknowledge that this Code of Ethics was developed through a process of:

1. A draft Code was developed by the Paramedicine Transition to RHPA Policy Group (PTRPG) in 2023
 - a. The Paramedic Association of Canada's Canadian Paramedic Profile – Code of Ethics was reviewed as the base document.
 - b. Codes used by regulatory bodies for paramedicine across Canada and the Codes used by other health professions regulated under Prince Edward Island's *Regulated Health Professions Act* were reviewed for relevance to the practice of paramedicine in this jurisdiction.
 - c. A draft Code was created, reviewed by the PTRPG and validated by the profession by review during an engagement session with paramedics from across PEI as part of a workshop hosted by the Paramedic Association of PEI.

2. A final draft was reviewed by legal counsel and recommended by the PTRPG to the Council for the College of Paramedicine of Prince Edward Island for consideration as the College's official Code of Ethics.

Values and Principles

As health and public safety professionals, Paramedics are held to a higher standard than other members of society. Within a Code of Ethics, the core, shared values and principles held by the profession are expected to be applied, along with practice standards. Values and Principles shape our attitudes, behaviours, actions, and relationships over all of our professional responsibilities. This Code applies not only in professional practice but, where it has an impact on professional practice, in life and society more broadly.

The Values and Principles describe the practice expectations that are a part of all Paramedics' ethical responsibilities.

Provides Compassionate Care. A Paramedic recognizes suffering and vulnerability, seeks to understand the unique circumstances of each patient, alleviates the patient's suffering within the Standards of Practice, and provides for health and wellbeing.

Acts with Honesty and Integrity. A Paramedic demonstrates consistency in their intentions and actions, acts in a truthful manner, and communicates that truth sensitively and respectfully even in the face of adversity.

Acts with Humility. A Paramedic acknowledges their own limitations and is willing to learn from others, recognizing the dignity, wisdom and worldviews of patients/clients, families, communities and other professionals.

Supports Justice and Equity. A Paramedic treats people fairly, without favouritism or discrimination, and actively works to ensure all people have timely access to quality care while addressing health disparities rooted in bias related to Indigeneity, race, place of origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion and other human rights factors.

Is Accountable. A Paramedic, as a self-regulated professional, is responsible for their actions and answerable for their practice.

Responsibilities

Paramedics are accountable for conducting themselves in an ethical manner. Each paramedic has the responsibility to adhere to the Code of Ethics upon entering the paramedicine profession and throughout professional practice. As health and public safety professionals, paramedics are expected to apply the values and principles across responsibilities in professional practice and, where it has an impact on professional practice, in life and society more broadly.

1. Responsibility to Patients

Paramedics have a responsibility to:

- 1.1. **Provide safe and competent care** by maintaining professional competence and taking action to minimize risk, protect others and protect themselves. Paramedics know their respective Scopes of Practice and provide competent care within their level of care.
- 1.2. **Act respectfully** in a manner that upholds the patient's safety, dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and autonomous decision-making; and considering the patient's rights, needs, culture and the environmental context.
- 1.3. **Communicate professionally and responsibly** within the scope of practice, by being open, honest and respectful with patients at all times, adhering to privacy and confidentiality legislation, regardless of medium (in-person, telephone, online, social media, direct messaging services, etc.)
- 1.4. **Advocate** in the best interest of the patient to receive fair and equitable access to healthcare services.
- 1.5. **Work collaboratively** for the benefit of the patient, with the patient, their family and significant others, and members of the patient's healthcare team, consulting with other healthcare providers when necessary.
- 1.6. **Maintain currency** through continuing competency, complying with the College's Continuing Education and Competency Program to ensure they provide care in accordance with current standards.
- 1.7. **Maintain professional boundaries** by acknowledging and respecting the inherent power imbalance that occurs between a patient and their healthcare provider and maintaining clear separation between professional and personal relationships.

2. Responsibility to the Profession

Paramedics have a responsibility to:

- 2.1. **Support self-regulation** of the profession by recognizing that self-regulation of the profession is a privilege, and each member has an ongoing responsibility to merit this privilege.
- 2.2. **Practice in accordance with legislation** including the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, the *Paramedics Regulations*, and other relevant legislation.
- 2.3. **Ensure ongoing professional awareness of regulatory information and comply** with the College's Bylaws, Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, practice directives, and guidance documents.

- 2.4. **Report** incompetent, illegal or unethical conduct to the appropriate professional regulatory college when the regulated member has reasonable grounds to believe that a member of the College of Paramedicine of Prince Edward Island or any other regulated profession under the Regulated Health Professions Act has failed to perform their professional responsibilities.
- 2.5. **Self-report** to the College any deviation from the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice or any other policies or procedures that govern the paramedic profession including any area of physical or mental incapacity that could reasonably impair the ability to practice safely and competently.
- 2.6. **Respect and foster** professional and positive work and learning relationships.
- 2.7. **Share** professional knowledge, participate in mentorship, and be willing to learn and accept new knowledge shared by others.
- 2.8. **Contribute** to the development and innovation in paramedicine through practice, research, teaching, mentorship, leadership, quality improvement, administration or advocacy on behalf of the profession.
- 2.9. **Recognize professional limitations** in all aspects of provision of care.
- 2.10. **Ensure comments made in public and social media** do not demean the profession of paramedicine, individuals within the profession and / or the College of Paramedicine of Prince Edward Island.

3. Responsibility to the Professional (self)

Paramedics have a responsibility to:

- 3.1. **Maintain a high standard** of professional integrity.
- 3.2. **Maintain physical and mental fitness** to practice.
- 3.3. **Demonstrate conduct that meets the requirements** of the medical, legal, and professional boundaries of the profession.
- 3.4. **Recognize professional limitations** by understanding own capabilities and limitations, and performing only the functions that fall within scope of practice for which they have been educated, trained, and in which they possess the required knowledge, skills and judgement.
- 3.5. **Seek help** and appropriate medical care from qualified professionals for personal and professional problems that might adversely affect personal health and services to the public.
- 3.6. **Maintain and demonstrate professional accountability** for own actions.
- 3.7. **Engage in professional development** to maintain and improve professional competencies.

4. Responsibility to Society

Paramedics have a responsibility to:

- 4.1. **Demonstrate impartiality** by respecting the rights and diversity of all individuals to access healthcare, regardless of their demographic or socioeconomic factors, values, beliefs, gender identity and expression, and/or cultures.
- 4.2. **Advocate in the interest of the public** to receive fair and equitable access to needed healthcare services and resources.
- 4.3. **Report suspected abuse** by being familiar with the signs of abuse and all legislated requirements to report abuse, such as the mandatory reporting of child abuse under the *Child Protection Act*, the duty of care to vulnerable adults under the *Adult Protection Act*, and the duty to report sexual abuse by any health professional under the *RHPA*.
- 4.4. **Correctly represent their qualifications** in all circumstances by representing their designation, registration and practice permit status, as well as any conditions on their practice permit truthfully and without any misrepresentation.
- 4.5. **Recognize the social determinants of health** as important social and economic factors in creating health inequities and work to reduce these inequities in the provision of care.