Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
The purpose of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice is to promote, guide and direct professional paramedic practice. All paramedics upon entering the profession are expected to utilize this Code of Ethics and these Standards of Practice to understand the expectations of practicing paramedicine.

This applies to all Emergency Medical Responders (EMR), Primary Care Paramedics (PCP), and Advanced Care Paramedics (ACP) in all practice settings across clinical, educational, evaluation, research, management and operational settings. When the term paramedic is used in this document it is inclusive of all three levels of Alberta practitioners.

The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice provide the guidelines through which the public is able to judge professional paramedic practice. Stakeholders may incorporate this framework in the development of paramedic performance metrics, career pathway planning, operational and deployment models, and service level guidelines.

Assessment of professional practice will be made of an individual paramedic in accordance with this Code of Ethics, these Standards of Practice, and the Canadian Paramedic Profile.

The Alberta College of Paramedics uses this framework to define entry and re-entry to practice expectations, continuing competence expectations, and guidelines for judging the professional conduct and clinical performance of individual practitioners within the legislative framework of the Health Professions Act (HPA) and the Paramedics Profession Regulation (PPR).

The Code of Ethics is based on the values of respect, integrity, fairness, accountability, and professionalism. The statements provide the expectations of how these values are to be enacted when exercising professional judgment as part of the provision of safe care. Paramedics are accountable as health and public safety professionals to apply these values in professional practice and, where it has an impact on professional practice, in life.
Code of Ethics

Responsibility to the Patient and Others

Paramedics demonstrate person-centred care by:

1. Practising 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.
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. Practising 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 practise.
3. Maintaining clinical proficiency to practise.
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.
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 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.
Standards of Practice

Quality Assurance and Improvement

Paramedics are accountable for ensuring that the performance of restricted activities occurs only within a system of quality assurance by:

1. Ensuring the practice of restricted activities occurs only as authorized in regulation and within a system of quality assurance and improvement.
2. Ensuring the quality assurance program provides for consultation with other health professionals regarding the practice of restricted activities.
3. Ensuring the quality assurance program is evidence-based and reflects best practice.
4. Ensuring the quality assurance program meets the minimum criteria of documented policy framework and restricted activities clinical guidelines, documented ongoing evaluation of evidence in relation to patient care outcomes, and documented evaluation of practitioner proficiency.
5. Ensuring the quality assurance program provides for ongoing documented evaluation of practitioner adherence to program requirements.
6. Participating in ongoing review of restricted activities policy, guidelines, and procedures to ensure patient safety.
7. Participating in a quality assurance program that ensures ongoing practitioner professional development.

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 1 or Schedule 2 drugs as defined by the Pharmacy Drug Act 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.
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. Practising in accordance with the Code of Ethics, the Canadian Paramedic Profile, and the College’s Practice Statements.
2. Maintaining appropriate permits in order to practise.
3. Practising in accordance with practice setting 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.
12. Ensuring vehicles and equipment are maintained and in compliance with regulations.
13. Operating vehicles and equipment in a safe manner with appropriate education and ongoing proficiency.
15. Being accountable for maintaining professional proficiency and ongoing professional development.
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.
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.
5. Ensuring that performance of restricted activities as authorized in regulation is evaluated on an ongoing basis.
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 Improvement

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.
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:

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 system-wide 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.
Teamwork

Paramedics demonstrate collaboration and cooperation by:

1. Informing other regulated health care providers and patients of any conditions, restrictions, or limitations for practice as relevant to the immediate event.

2. Ensuring any referral or alternate care plan or release of care by a paramedic to another regulated health care professional is communicated and consulted upon by the patient, family, and provider.

3. Being accountable for professional and personal actions that have implications for the patient, colleagues, and the public.

4. Developing and maintaining professional relationship boundaries in all aspects of provision of care with others.

5. Collaborating with others to develop and improve measurements of provision of safe care in relation to ongoing review of patient outcomes.

6. Taking appropriate measures to ensure prevention of infection between patients, providers, and the public.

7. Communicating appropriately and sharing knowledge and expertise with others for the benefit of the patient.

8. Limiting information disclosed and the number of people informed while still fulfilling medical, legal, and research obligations.

9. Informing and discussing with the patient the indications, risk of harm, and contraindications of medication and care when safe to do so.

10. Developing and maintaining effective listening, feedback, and communication capabilities to respectfully and effectively communicate with others.

11. Developing and maintaining the capability to recognize, manage, and resolve conflict in practice.