



College of Respiratory  
Therapists of Ontario

Ordre des thérapeutes  
respiratoires de l'Ontario

# LEAVING WORK EARLY/ARRIVING LATE

Practice FAQs

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## QUESTION

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I currently work part time at one hospital and casual at another. Sometimes I need to leave one place just prior to shift change in order to make it in time for my shift at the other facility. If my employer is okay with me leaving early, is it permissible according to the CRTO?

## ANSWER

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There are a number of important factors to take into consideration in the scenario you have presented, and they all relate back to what is in the best interest of the patients you care for.

First off – if you leave prior to shift change, how is the relevant information being transferred to the RT covering the next shift? There have been a number of studies identifying the point of “transfer of accountability” (shift report, handover report, etc.) as the place where it is most likely that a breakdown in communication will occur – often resulting in an inappropriate plan of care and possibly a negative patient outcome. Therefore, if you are not going to be physically present to provide a verbal report, there needs to be a mechanism in place to ensure that all the information is transferred in as complete a manner as possible.

Secondly, what happens if the person relieving you is unexpectedly delayed – or if something happens in those remaining moments that requires your immediate attention (such as a code)? Technically you are responsible for providing respiratory care right up until the point where patient accountability has been transferred. If your services were needed and you were not able to provide them, that could be very detrimental to the patient who needs your help.

In the end, the fact that your employer permits something is only one part of the equation. As a regulated healthcare professional, your ultimate accountability is to your patients.