



College of Respiratory
Therapists of Ontario

Ordre des thérapeutes
respiratoires de l'Ontario

NUCLEAR STRESS TESTING

Practice FAQs

November 2012

QUESTION

Can Respiratory Therapists (RTs) administer radioactive substances by injection for the purpose of nuclear stress testing?

ANSWER

A very “cautious” yes. Here is the step by step rationale:

1. Under the [Respiratory Therapy Act](#), RTs are authorized to perform the controlled act of “*administering a substance by injection or inhalation*” and RTs require an order to perform this authorized act. The CRTO does not “list” or restrict the substances which may be administered. (see [PPG Interpretation of Authorized Acts](#)).
2. The legislated scope of practice for RTs is “*the providing of oxygen therapy, cardio-respiratory equipment monitoring and the assessment and treatment of cardio-respiratory and associated disorders to maintain or restore ventilation.*” Nuclear stress testing may fall within this scope of practice.
3. In order for RTs to consider administering radioactive substances by injection, they must also ensure that they:
 - are free from terms, conditions or limitations (TCLs) on their certificate of registration that may limit their practice;
 - are competent (i.e., have the knowledge, skill and judgement to act safely, ethically and in the best interest of the patients/clients they serve);
 - adhere to *all* of the standards of practice¹; and
 - adhere to *all* other legislation that regulates their practice.

Did you know that safety of nuclear medicine is regulated by the Nuclear Safety and Control Act (NSCA)? Is your practice setting authorized to practice nuclear medicine? Here is some additional information from the College of Medical Radiation Technologists of Ontario’s (CMRTO’s) [website](#):

¹ The College uses the phrase “standards of practice” to refer to legislation, regulations, standards, position statements, policies and practice guidelines. Collectively, these pieces establish a framework for the practice of Respiratory Therapy in Ontario.



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[Nuclear Safety and Control Act](#) (NSCA) is federal legislation which came into force on May 31, 2000 and replaces the old Atomic Energy Control Act. The Nuclear Safety and Control Act regulates the use of radioactive materials used in the practice of nuclear medicine and radiation therapy. There are also proposed regulations related to the Nuclear Safety and Control Act. More information on the NSCA and the implementation of the new requirements and the proposed regulations may be found on the website for the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission at www.nuclearsafety.gc.ca.

4. In order to ensure that RTs are accountable to the practice of administering radioactive substances for the purposes of nuclear stress testing, RTs should maintain records or documentation that clarify their scopes and roles, and provides evidence of their competencies. For example, RTs may wish to add organizational policies, procedures, guidelines and other evidence of training and/or education and quality assurance that have been completed, to their [PORTfolios](#).
5. Even though you may have be authorized to “*administer substances by injection or inhalation*” and be competent to perform nuclear stress testing, there is a lot to consider in order to ensure that you are providing safe and ethical care that is in the best interest of your patients/clients. Here are some other CRTO resources for your review:
 - ✓ [Standards of Practice](#)
 - ✓ Professional Practice Guideline [Orders for Medical Care](#)
 - ✓ Professional Practice Guideline [Documentation](#)
 - ✓ [Professional Liability Insurance](#)
 - ✓ [Position Statement on Scope of Practice & Maintenance of Competencies](#)

If you are unsure about the practice of administering radioactive substances for the purpose of Nuclear Stress Testing, please do not hesitate to contact the College.