



Fact Sheet: Maintaining Patient Safety During a Job Action

The Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB)¹ recognizes the right of registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) to be active participants in the collective bargaining process, which may include a job action. However, RNs and NPs must uphold the safety of clients and the trust of the public in the profession of nursing, when considering job action.

The [Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses](#) (CNA, 2017) states that when a job action occurs, RNs must take steps to safeguard the health and safety of clients when planning, implementing, or taking part in job action. Clients whose safety requires ongoing or emergency nursing care are entitled to have those needs satisfied during any job action (CNA, 2017).

RNs and NPs as regulated members of the NANB, are responsible for exercising reasonable nursing judgement in all decisions that impact client care (NANB, 2019). Individual RNs and NPs who decide to participate in or are affected by job action, all share the ethical commitment to the safety of persons in their care. However, the level of involvement in the job action or the degree of responsibility in formal leadership roles, may lead RNs and NPs to express this commitment in different but equally appropriate ways (CNA, 2017).

During a job action, RNs and NPs are expected to maintain patient safety by:

- being answerable for nursing actions, decisions and professional conduct, while adhering to relevant legislation, regulatory standards and employer policies (Standard 1 – Indicator 1.2, 1.3 & 1.4);
- recognizing and taking action in situations where client safety is actually or potentially at risk (Standard 1-indicator 1.6), while exercising reasonable judgement (Standard 2-indicator 2.5);
- assigning and delegating nursing activities as required by the client needs and the competence of other providers in the practice setting (Standard 2 – indicator 2.7);
- sharing nursing knowledge and expertise; being an effective resource and mentor (Standard 2 – indicator 2.8);
- contributing to and promoting measures that optimize positive client health outcomes at the individual, organizational and system level (Standard 3);
- demonstrating professional presence and modelling professional behaviour (Standard 3 - indicator 3.2);
- engaging in a client-centered practice (Standard 3 – indicator 3.5);
- coordinating and utilizing resources within their individual control to provide effective and efficient care (Standard 4 – indicator 4.2);
- communicating effectively and respectfully to promote continuity of safe, compassionate and timely care (Standard 4 – indicator 4.3); and
- maintaining fitness to practise (CNA, 2017).

¹ Under the [Nurses Act](#), NANB is legally responsible to protect the public by regulating members of the nursing profession in New Brunswick. Regulation makes this profession, and nurses as individuals, accountable to the public for the delivery of safe, competent and ethical nursing care.



During a job action, if RNs or NPs have any concern about their ability to maintain practice and ethical standards and/or their ability to ensure client safety, they have the obligation to communicate this concern following the established lines of communication in the workplace. For further guidance on how to work with limited human resources, please review [*Practicing with Limited Resources: A Guide for RNs and NPs*](#) (NANB & NBNU, 2019).

If during the job action the practice or action of an RN/NP is believed to be in violation of the [*Standards of Practice*](#) or the Code of Ethics and putting patient safety at risk, members of the public, employers or other health care professionals have a [*duty to report*](#) and the option to submit a complaint to the NANB.

References

Canadian Nurses Association. (2017). *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*. Ottawa: Author.

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Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2015). *Standards for the Therapeutic Nurse Client Relationship*. Fredericton: Author.

Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2013). *When RNs are expected to work with Limited Resources*. Fredericton: Author.

Nurses Association of New Brunswick & Nurses Union of New Brunswick. (2019). *Practicing with Limited Resources: A Guide for RNs and NPs*. Fredericton: Authors.