

PGL- 002

Change in Practice Setting

This practice guideline was developed to help Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLT) understand their responsibilities around a change in practice settings.

A MLT may be asked to work in an unfamiliar practice setting to support the delivery of optimal laboratory services due to volume of testing or staff shortage for a short time or a MLT may want to change their lab practice setting. The new practice setting may be challenging at first with unfamiliar people and procedures. Building up trust and focusing specifically on steps related to the unfamiliar practice can override the discomfort of unfamiliarity and over time, it will not feel unfamiliar.

Whether an employer asks a MLT to move or if the MLT chooses to move to a new practice setting or role, SSMLT would expect the MLT to participate in training in the new setting and/or completion of a course to ensure safe and effective practice¹. When practicing in any setting MLTs are accountable to meet their standards of practice and code of ethics by providing safe, competent, and ethical MLT practice².

The SSMLT expects all members to work within the limits of their skills, knowledge, and experience (Individual scope). The MLT shall recognize when they are required to work outside the limits of their knowledge, skills and/or judgment.

The employer has the right to request that a MLT work in an unfamiliar practice setting. In situations where the employer has initiated the change in practice setting, they must provide the opportunity for the MLT to become competent in the practice setting through training and/or education and cannot expect the MLT to work outside their individual scope of practice until it is completed. A refusal of a placement in an unfamiliar practice setting is only justified when the risk of harm to a patient is greater by accepting the role than by refusing it.

When a change in practice setting occurs, SSMLT recommends the MLT to:

- Request an orientation of the unfamiliar practice setting.
- Create a support system. Ask to be partnered with an experienced MLT to become competent if one is not already assigned.
- Clearly communicate with supervisors and or managers their individual scope of practice and what support may be needed.
Example: 'I can prepare samples and perform testing, but at this time I do not feel competent to report results. I would like to request training in reporting.' Document the request and decision.
- Discuss how to gain the competencies required with supervisor or managers.
- Determine who to discuss any questions or concerns with such as the supervisor or manager.
- Identify your strengths and limitations, and how to achieve what is required for the role.

PGL- 002

- SSMLT recommends a refresher course if a MLT has not worked in a discipline for greater than 5 years and plans on changing their work setting.
Example: Changing practice to a Microbiology department after practicing in Hematology for the past 9 years.

As a regulated health care professional, you must engage in continuing professional education^{3,4} individually and within the workplace to gain the knowledge and competency required to perform all duties within the medical laboratory technology scope of practice.

References:

1. *SSMLT Standards of Practice*
2. *SSMLT Code of Ethics- SSMLT Regulatory Bylaws- Appendix A*
3. *SSMLT Continuing Professional Education Guidelines*
4. *SSMLT Regulatory bylaws*

Practice Guideline

PGL- 002

Approved date:	(YYYY-MMM-DD) 2022-05-17
Effective Date:	2022-05-17
Council Chair:	T. Pearce SSMLT Council President
Next review date: (3 Years).	

Revision Summary

Date:	Version #	Change Summary
2022-05-17	1	Initial version