

2024

# SSMLT Code of Ethics



SSMLT  
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## Introduction

The Code of Ethics describes the expected ethical obligations and principles that patients, the profession, and the public believe will guide the professional and personal conduct of all medical laboratory technologists (MLTs). These principles can be thought of more as exhibited behaviours than the knowledge and skills listed in a Standards of Practice document.

The Code of Ethics, along with the Standards of Practice, defines professionalism in the practice of medical laboratory technology. MLTs adhere not only to the guidelines, but also to the underlying spirit and precepts.

A medical laboratory technologist's fundamental responsibility is to manage the prescribed medical laboratory services for patients to improve their health. MLTs have professional obligations to work collaboratively with colleagues and other healthcare providers to deliver professional services.

## **Patient safety and protection is always paramount.**

The Code of Ethics will:

- Promote an MLT's recognition of the professional and personal conduct expectations for medical laboratory technology practice.
- Represent the minimum standards of professional behavior and ethical conduct expected of all MLTs.
- Always apply to MLTs in all dimensions of professional and personal conduct, including technical and nontechnical fields such as education, administration, quality assurance, and research.

The ethical obligations and principles are not listed in order of importance. They should be balanced against each other and considered in relation to all of the obligations and principles described by the Code of Ethics. Over time, it will evolve in response to regulatory, legal, and ethical expectations and will be adopted only after stakeholder consultation. Legislation, regulations, bylaws, Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice and practice guidelines collectively establish a framework for the practice of ethical and safe medical laboratory technology.

## **Ethical Obligations**

Medical laboratory technologists demonstrate an application of their ethical obligations through their professional and personal conduct.

**Obligations to Patients:**

Medical laboratory technologists put their patient(s)' interest(s) above their personal interest(s). MLTs carry out their professional duties competently and with integrity. They always respect their patients' individual needs and overall welfare, including the patients' right to freedom of choice in health care provider, free and enlightened consent, and an expectation of confidentiality of all patient information, in accordance with existing legislation.

**Obligations to the Public:**

Medical laboratory technologists are dedicated to serving the public's health care needs through respectful, accessible, and cooperative interactions with the public and patients, other healthcare providers, and students. MLTs facilitate awareness and understanding of the medical laboratory technology profession.

**Obligations to the Profession:**

Medical laboratory technologists contribute to the profession's development through collaboration, mentorship, self-development, and support of its institutions. MLTs strive for excellence in their professional practice, and professional and personal conduct through life-long learning. Medical laboratory technologists recognize, disclose, and resolve conflicts of interest to safeguard patient care.

**Obligations to the Regulatory Body:**

Medical laboratory technologists understand, respect, and comply with provincial Acts and regulations, and the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, bylaws and practice guidelines approved by their regulatory body. Medical laboratory technologists cooperate and maintain harmonious relations with, and promptly always reply to correspondence from the regulatory body.

**Obligations to Oneself:**

Medical laboratory technologists are accountable and responsible for their professional and personal conduct. MLTs practice within their scope of professional competence and recognize their professional and personal limitations. Medical laboratory technologists maintain and improve their knowledge, skills, judgement, and behaviours to ensure the best possible patient care.

**Ethical Principles**

Medical laboratory technologists demonstrate the following ethical principles through the medical laboratory technology services delivered, either alone or in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team, and any services rendered under the MLTs' direction and supervision.

**Confidentiality / Privacy / Conflict of Interest**

Medical laboratory technologists shall:

- Respect and protect patient confidentiality and privacy by understanding and complying with applicable privacy legislation and policies regarding the collection, use, and disclosure of confidential information.

- Recognize, disclose, and act appropriately to resolve conflicts of interest that arise during professional activities. They will maintain the integrity of personal health information, maintain transparency, and deliver unbiased patient-centered care. MLTs never use confidential information to the detriment of a patient or to benefit themselves or another person.

### **Diversity / Respect / Dignity / Consent**

Medical laboratory technologists shall:

- Value, respect and protect the rights, welfare, and dignity of all patients by providing patient care and service with respect for human rights, regardless of, but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation, age and socio-economic status, mental or physical abilities at all times.
- Obtain free and informed consent from patients before undertaking any action, in accordance with relevant legislation and policies, recognizing that consent can be withdrawn at any time.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with patients, colleagues, and other healthcare providers while delivering patient-centered care.

### **Safety**

Medical laboratory technologists shall:

- Practice according to established protocols, safety guidelines, relevant current provincial and federal legislation, institutional policies and procedures, and environmental considerations. They do so to protect patients, colleagues, healthcare providers, society, the environment, and themselves from any potential harm while acting in the best interest of the patient.
- Promote a culture of safety with colleagues, and other healthcare team members.

### **Accountability / Responsibility**

Medical laboratory technologists shall:

- Exercise independent judgment, accept responsibility for their actions and the foreseeable consequences of their actions and recognize their accountability for the service they provide.
- Practice within the scope of their professional competence, recognize the competence of others and seek their assistance as required.
- Take appropriate action in responding to situations which may jeopardize patient care or harm the profession, including reporting impaired, incompetent, and/or unethical colleagues in accordance with their legal requirements.

## **Professionalism / Behaviours / Attitudes / Professional Development**

Medical laboratory technologists shall:

- Strive for excellence in their professional practice, and in their professional and personal conduct to uphold the integrity of the profession and the public trust.
- Communicate effectively with patients, the public, colleagues and other healthcare providers, contributing to a healthy and positive work environment
- Maintain and enhance professional practice and augment their knowledge, skills, judgement, and behaviour through self-reflection and self-directed professional development and by demonstrating continued competence
- Demonstrate collegiality, mentorship, and sharing of new and emerging professional knowledge.

## **Collaboration**

Medical laboratory technologists shall:

- Display integrity and respect in all interactions and collaboration with healthcare providers and others involved in patient care.
- Contribute to ongoing improvement in healthcare provision through an application of a process-orientation and focus on quality.
- Promote learning by facilitating the sharing of knowledge, skills and judgment processes with colleagues, students, other healthcare professionals, and the public.

## **Summary**

While the ethical obligations and principles are presented as discrete sections, medical laboratory technologists recognize that in practice they are implemented as part of daily processes and do not stand alone. MLTs use a combination of their knowledge, skills, judgment, and behavior to adjust to changing circumstances and evolving environments.