

Professional Responsibility - KISS *Keep it Simply Succinct*

For ONA ALL SECTOR MEMBERS

It is your professional responsibility to report patient care and practice concerns to your employer when workload and practice situations make it difficult to provide safe, ethical and quality patient/client care. The College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) Code of Conduct “describes what nurses must do to maintain professionalism, competence and ethical behaviour to deliver safe client care” (CNO, 2023). “Challenging situations are not always full-blown emergencies or crises, but they can test a nurse’s ability to follow regulatory standards and provide quality care to our patients” (CNO, Winter2021).

Steps for Resolving Professional Responsibility and Workload Issues

1. When a professional responsibility and workload issue occurs:
 - Discuss with colleagues on your unit and identify possible solutions.
 - If unresolved, seek immediate assistance from an individual who is responsible to address and resolve workload issues (charge nurse, team lead, supervisor, manager, manager on-call).
 - If unresolved, inform your manager that you will be submitting a Professional Responsibility Workload Report Form (PRWRF).
2. Finish filling out the PRWRF as soon as possible.
 - Give a copy to your manager and keep a copy for yourself.
 - Submit remaining copies to your Bargaining Unit President for distribution.
3. Meet with your manager within the timeframes in your collective agreement to discuss the PRWRF. A union rep can attend with you. The manager’s written response is due within the timeframes detailed in your collective agreement.
 - Meeting notes must be recorded and signed by all parties (consult with the Labour Relations Officer regarding the resolution).
 - Your union representative must be involved in all resolution discussions at the unit level.
4. Following the manager’s response, or when the manager ought to have responded, the Bargaining Unit President will submit the PRWRF to the Labour-Management Committee* within the appropriate timeframes as detailed in your Collective Agreement.
 - Discuss the form and possible resolutions with your Bargaining Unit rep/Professional Responsibility and Workload rep, and prep for the Labour-Management Committee meeting.
5. Attend the Labour-Management Committee meeting within the timelines detailed in the collective agreement and try to resolve the issues. If resolved, Minutes of Settlement (MOS) are signed by all parties to the resolution. The Labour Relations Officer must sign on behalf of ONA.
All unresolved PRWRFs must be submitted to the Bargaining Unit Leader.
6. If not resolved:
 - Your Bargaining Unit Leader attends a Labour-Management Committee meeting to seek resolution with the employer. A Labour-Management meeting may be called to discuss the issue(s).

* Labour-Management Committee may also be referred to as Union Management Committee, Nurse/Management Committee or Association Agency Committee.

- If still unresolved, the Bargaining Unit Leaders involves the Professional Practice Specialist for further work on resolution.

Strategies for Professional Responsibility Concerns

- Ask your Bargaining Unit Leader or Professional Practice Specialist for support in creating the tracking tool and action plan.

Strategies for Bargaining Unit Executive Members

- Ensure Labour-Management Committee minutes are shared with the individual members whose concerns are presented at the Labour-Management Committee meeting.
- The Bargaining Unit President MUST send the PRWRFs to the Labour Relations Officer with responses.
- Members may access the College of Nurses of Ontario’s Outreach Program and Outreach Consultants at www.cno.org.
- If members do not want to contact the College, they may consult their Labour Relations Officer.

Strategies for ONA Members

References and materials to support your concerns:

- Refer to professional practice information on ONA’s website. Access ONA’s website for Professional Practice information, educational resources, tools, and e-learning modules at www.ona.org.
- Refer to the College of Nurses of Ontario’s Code of Conduct and Scope of Practice Standards and Guidelines at www.cno.org, as well as other regulatory college standards appropriate to your designation and setting.
- Refer to specialty certification requirements. A list of specialty certifications can be found on the Canadian Nurses Association website at www.cna-aicc.ca.
- Review legislation and regulations specific to your sector at www.health.gov.on.ca.

Remember, the PRWRF is not on its own a Professional Responsibility and Workload file. Rather, the PRWRF is evidence and the start of a paper trail to identify and demonstrate ongoing issues requiring a response from your employer. It provides evidence of your workload and patient safety issues and provides you with documentation should you be the subject of a complaint or a report to your Regulatory College.



The Ontario Nurses' Association is the union representing 68,000 front-line registered nurses and health-care professionals as well as more than 18,000 nursing student affiliates, providing care in Ontario hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community, industry and clinics.