

DMS regulation information and FAQs



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DMS regulation information and FAQs

The regulation of diagnostic medical sonographers is a vital part of ensuring safe, effective and ethical medical radiation and imaging services to the public of Ontario

The Ontario government has approved regulations that regulate diagnostic medical sonographers (DMS) in conjunction with the College of Medical Radiation Technologists of Ontario (CMRTO) effective January 1, 2018. CMRTO is pleased and proud to have collaborated with diagnostic medical sonographers, medical radiation technologists, employers, educators, associations, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and the public to realize this significant public protection initiative.

Throughout the lengthy process of preparing for regulation, DMSs have demonstrated that they are concerned about providing safe, effective and ethical care to their patients, and are ready to fulfil the accountabilities and responsibilities of being self-regulated professionals. Regulating DMSs with CMRTO will bring all medical radiation and imaging specialties under one regulatory framework and will enhance patient protection by establishing entry to practice requirements and continuing oversight of practice.

This information update provides sonographers and current CMRTO members with information about the regulation of sonographers, and answers some of the most common questions you may have about the process and being a self-regulated professional.

Our goal as the CMRTO is to work with diagnostic medical sonographers and medical radiation technologists to ensure a smooth and seamless implementation of diagnostic medical sonography as a fifth specialty within the CMRTO. Welcome sonographers! We're pleased to have you join us!

Questions and Answers

1. How are health professions regulated in Ontario?

The regulation of professions is a responsibility of the provincial government. In Ontario, the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA) is the legislation that regulates 28 health professions, including physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists and medical radiation technologists, under 26 regulatory colleges. The regulatory colleges must regulate the profession to serve and protect the public interest.

Further information on all the health regulatory colleges in Ontario can be found at www.ontariohealthregulators.ca

2. What is CMRTO?

CMRTO is the regulatory (licensing) body for medical radiation technologists (MRTs) in Ontario. It is established under the RHPA and the profession specific legislation, the *Medical Radiation Technology Act, 1991* (MRT Act). CMRTO currently regulates MRTs in four specialties: radiography, radiation therapy, nuclear medicine, and magnetic resonance imaging. And effective January 1, 2018, CMRTO regulates diagnostic medical sonographers as a fifth specialty.

It is mandatory for MRTs to be registered with CMRTO in order to practice the profession of medical radiation technology.

CMRTO is a non-profit organization that is funded by members' fees. CMRTO uses those fees to meet its legal obligation to regulate the profession in accordance with the legislation.

Further information on CMRTO can be found at www.cmрто.org.

3. How does the CMRTO protect the public?

The purpose of the CMRTO is to protect the public, by making sure that its members are qualified to practice and are practicing professionally. Our goal is to strengthen the safety, quality, oversight and transparency of medical radiation and imaging services by:

- setting and enforcing standards of practice, ethics, guidelines and policies for the practice and conduct of members
- registering only those individuals who have met the educational and examination requirements for competent practice before they can practice or use the professional title
- requiring members to participate a Quality Assurance (continued competence) program every year to help continually improve their skills and knowledge to ensure quality of care
- addressing complaints and concerns from the public, patients and employers regarding professional conduct issues through its complaints and discipline process
- providing current information about each member's registration status, specialty, place of practice and past conduct to the public on its website

Further information about the CMRTO can be found [here](#).

4. Why are sonographers being regulated with CMRTO?

Over the years, the provincial government has conducted a number of public consultations on whether sonographers should be regulated, and how. In August 2017, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) announced that it had received direction to regulate diagnostic medical sonographers with CMRTO and that the registration process is to begin by January 2018.

The announcement of the self-regulation of diagnostic medical sonographers – supported by the Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Sciences (OAMRS) and the CMRTO – reflects not only the professional standards that have been achieved by sonographers in their practice, and many years of work by sonographers, the OAMRS and the CMRTO to bring it about, but also the need to ensure the Ontario public continues to receive safe and competent care.

By being self-regulated under the CMRTO, sonographers will join their medical radiation technologist colleagues in the self-regulation of the profession, including the recognition of the education and training sonographers have undergone to practice as professionals, authorized use of a protected title, and assurance that the profession's standards are enforced and the public is protected.

5. What is the *Medical Radiation and Imaging Technology Act*?

The Ontario government has introduced legislative changes to strengthen transparency of the oversight of diagnostic medical sonographers and cover the entirety of the medical radiation and imaging technology profession. New legislation (Bill 160, *Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act*) will repeal and replace the MRT Act with the *Medical Radiation and Imaging Technology Act* (MRIT Act).

Key changes under the MRIT Act include:

- updating the name of the profession and the regulatory college to accurately reflect the entirety of its membership
- changing the scope of practice statement to include the “application of soundwaves” to capture the practice of diagnostic medical sonographers
- appropriately identifying all medical radiation and imaging professionals that are members of the regulatory college

This legislation received Royal Assent on December 12, 2017 and is currently awaiting proclamation. It is expected that the MRIT Act will come into force on January 1, 2019.

6. Will CMRTO be changing its name?

If and when the MRIT Act comes into force (expected on January 1, 2019), the name of the CMRTO will change to the College of Medical Radiation and Imaging Technologists of Ontario (CMRITO).

In 2018, CMRTO will be busy preparing its legal and governance tools in readiness for the new MRIT Act. This will include updating by-laws, policies, publications, website and many other documents and processes.

7. What is the scope of practice of the profession?

The new MRIT Act will change the scope of practice of medical radiation and imaging technology to add the use of soundwaves for the purpose of diagnostic procedures in the Act. The scope of practice will be:

“The practice of medical radiation and imaging technology is the use of ionizing radiation, electromagnetism, soundwaves and other prescribed forms of energy for the purposes of diagnostic or therapeutic procedures, the evaluation of images and data relating to the procedures, and the assessment of an individual before during and after the procedures.”

8. What will the protected title be?

The protected title assures the public that the regulated professional is legally authorized to practice the profession in Ontario.

Effective January 1, 2018 members of the CMRTO in the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography may use the title “diagnostic medical sonographer” and the abbreviation DMS. When the MRIT Act comes into effect (expected January 1, 2019), the title will be restricted to members of the new CMRITO. In other words, no person other than a member of the CMRITO will be permitted to use that title or hold themselves out as qualified to practice in the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography.

There is one title for all the areas of practice of diagnostic medical sonography, whether the individual has met the registration requirements in general, cardiac, and/or vascular sonography.

9. What about the areas of practice of general, cardiac and vascular sonography?

There is one specialty certificate for diagnostic medical sonography. Applicants must meet all of the requirements for registration in the same area of practice within diagnostic medical sonography (general sonography, cardiac sonography or vascular sonography each being considered an area of practice) in order to be registered in the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography.

The public is protected because only those individuals who have met the requirements for registration in the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography will be permitted to be registered with CMRTO and authorized to practice. As self-regulated professionals and under the CMRTO's Standards of Practice, DMSs can only perform procedures for which they have the necessary knowledge, skills and judgement to perform safely, effectively and ethically.

In addition, the registration regulation contains a condition which applies to all CMRTO members effective January 1, 2018 that the member shall practice only in the areas in which the member is educated and experienced.

Employers may require their sonographers to complete additional specialized training in a particular area specific to the type of patients seen in the facility. For example, the employer of sonographers practicing in pediatric hospitals may require their sonographers to complete the ARDMS examination in the area of pediatric sonography in addition to being registered with CMRTO. This is similar to other areas of specialization in medical radiation and imaging technology such as mammography, PET/CT or bone mineral densitometry.

10. When will sonographers be regulated?

Diagnostic medical sonographers are now regulated with the CMRTO. Under the new regulations, effective January 1, 2018, DMSs must be registered with the CMRTO in the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography in order to represent that they are qualified to practice the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography in Ontario and to use the protected title, DMS. After January 1, 2019, a person MUST be a member of the CMRTO (or another authorized profession) in order to be legally authorized to apply soundwaves for diagnostic ultrasound in Ontario.

11. When and how should I apply?

The online application process in the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography is available on the CMRTO website [here](#). Sonographers are encouraged to create their online profile in the CMRTO application portal in the 'About me' section as early as possible to provide your contact information. CMRTO will communicate with you by email only during the application process.

Once you have created your online profile, you are able to return to complete your application as many times as you need, until you have fully completed it and uploaded all the required documents. Review the '[Application Guide for individuals applying for registration with the CMRTO in the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography](#)' for detailed information and step by step directions on the application process. The guide contains the forms that your clinical supervisor and employer will need to complete.

When your application is complete, you can submit it electronically to CMRTO and pay the one-time non-refundable application fee of \$113 (\$100 fee, \$13 HST). CMRTO will then review your application, determine whether your application meets all the requirements set out in the registration regulation, and if so, whether you have requirements to complete before you can become registered.

Due to the large volume of applications CMRTO expects to receive, it may take between 1 to 4 months to process applications. It is advisable to submit your application by July 2018, so that there is sufficient time for the CMRTO to process it.

If you are applying based on your work experience (grandparenting provision), the online application and application fee must be submitted no later than 4:00 pm on December 31, 2018.

A chart containing the recommended timeline and activities can be found at the end of this document.

12. When and how will I become registered?

In order to be eligible for a certificate of registration, you must meet the requirements for registration set out in the registration regulation made under the MRT Act. The CMRTO will review your application for registration and determine whether your application meets all the requirements set out in the registration regulation, and if so, whether you have requirements to complete before you can become registered. CMRTO will then notify you whether you are eligible for registration and the final steps in the process.

On or before December 31, 2018, sonographers may apply for registration with the CMRTO using one of two methods – either through the grandparenting provision or by successfully

completing an approved educational program and an approved examination. After December 31, 2018, the grandparenting provision will no longer be available as a method of registration.

Paying the registration fee is the final step to become registered. This is an annual fee of \$531.10 (\$470 fee, \$61.10 HST). When you first become registered, the registration fee is prorated from the date you become registered to your birthday.

While sonographers can become registered at any time throughout 2018, there is a financial saving if you register later in the year. It is recommended that you become registered sometime in October, November or early December. As the prorated fee will be the same whether you register at the beginning of December or the end, it is recommended that sonographers complete the registration process no later than December 8, 2018 in plenty of time to meet the mandatory registration date of January 1, 2019.

13. What is the grandparenting provision?

The purpose of the grandparenting provision is to enable sonographers who do not meet the registration requirement of having successfully completed an approved educational program AND an approved examination, but who are engaged in competent practice in the scope of practice of the profession, to become registered and authorized to work in the specialty in Ontario.

These individuals may have completed an educational program a number of years ago, and their program is not one of the approved educational programs. Or they may have received on-the-job training in a limited area of practice under the supervision of their employer.

The grandparenting provision is available to a person who was engaged in practice within the scope of practice of the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography on December 31, 2017, or for at least 400 hours in 2017, or at least 1200 hours in the three years before January 1, 2018.

If you are working or have previously worked as a DMS in another province and you think you may wish to practice in Ontario at some time in the future, you should consider applying to the CMRTO under the grandparenting provision no later than the deadline. After December 31, 2018, the grandparenting provision is no longer available to applicants and all applicants will have to complete an approved educational program AND an approved examination.

14. How much are the fees?

There are two fees for this process – the application fee and the registration fee. All fees are paid on-line using a credit card (Visa or Mastercard) or Interac.

The application fee is a one-time fee of \$113 (\$100 fee, \$13 HST) and is paid at the time you submit your application for the specialty.

The registration fee is an annual fee of \$531.10 (\$470 fee, \$61.10 HST). The annual registration fee is due on a member's birthday each year. Members who are registered in more than one specialty pay one annual fee.

When you first become registered, the registration fee is prorated from the date you become registered to your birthday. For example, if your birthday is in April and you become registered in November 2018, you would pay \$265.55 (\$235.00 fee, \$30.55 HST) for the six-month period November 2018 to April 2019, and then the annual fee in April 2019 for the year to April 2020. The CMRTO will confirm the amount of your fee at the time you become registered. You can use the [online fee calculator](#) to calculate your fee.

The fees are set by Council in the CMRTO by-laws and are non-refundable. CMRTO is a non-profit organization that is funded by members' fees. CMRTO uses member fees to meet its legal obligation to regulate the profession in accordance with the legislation. The audited financial statements are available on the CMRTO's website in each annual report.

15. I'm already registered with CMRTO in another specialty. Should I add the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography to my certificate of registration?

Many diagnostic medical sonographers are currently members of the CMRTO in another specialty (magnetic resonance, nuclear medicine, radiation therapy or radiography) and will want to add the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography to their certificates of registration. Some diagnostic medical sonographers are past members of the CMRTO in another specialty and will want to add the specialty of diagnostic medical sonography and reinstate their membership with the CMRTO. If you wish to reinstate your membership with the CMRTO in your original specialty, please contact the CMRTO for further information.

The annual registration fee is the same amount even if you have more than one specialty. You will just need to pay the onetime application fee of \$113.00.

16. I'm not performing ultrasound procedures on patients. Should I become registered?

The practice of medical radiation and imaging technology includes not only the delivery of clinical services, but also the functions of education, management, research and administration.

If you would like to use the protected title diagnostic medical sonographer (DMS) in your practice, then you must be a member of the CMRTO in the specialty. Some employers, such as the educational institutions, require their instructors to be registered with the appropriate regulatory body. Especially if you will be relying on the grandparenting provision to meet the registration requirements, you should apply and become registered in 2018 as the grandparenting provision is not available after December 31, 2018.

17. Why will my name appear in the CMRTO Public Register of Members?

An important part of public protection is transparency in health professionals' registration status and past conduct. Like all the other health regulatory colleges in Ontario, CMRTO is required to maintain a register of members and to post certain information which is available to the public on its website in the Public Register of Members section. This contains such items as the member's name, registration status, registration history, specialty(ies), business address(es), and past conduct.

The CMRTO keeps all member information which is not available to the public, such as home address, telephone number and email address, strictly confidential.

Employers use the CMRTO Public Register of Members to confirm the registration status of their employees. The information contained in the Public Register is always current. You can view the CMRTO [Public Register of Members](#) on the website.

18. What are CMRTO's continuing competence requirements?

One of the key components of self-regulation of the profession in the public interest is the quality assurance (QA) program. The purpose of the QA program is to assure the quality of practice of the profession and to promote continuing evaluation, competence and improvement among the members.

The CMRTO QA program is based on the assumption that members come into the CMRTO with appropriate skills and knowledge acquired through educational programs, and that these initial competencies are maintained through lifelong learning and the expectation of adherence to the standards of practice. The QA program is based on the principles of adult

education. This approach allows medical radiation and imaging technologists to choose learning activities based on their individual learning needs and style, resources available, and acknowledges that learning comes from engaging in a variety of activities.

All members are required to complete the QA ePortfolio every year. The ePortfolio consists of a QA profile, a self-assessment based on the standards of practice, and a method to keep a record of continuing education and professional development activities completed each year. Each member is required to complete and record at least 25 hours of continuing education and professional development activities each year.

Further information about the CMRTO QA program can be found [here](#).

19. Do I need to have professional liability insurance?

Professional liability insurance (PLI), also known as malpractice insurance, provides coverage for members with respect to claims that may arise from the practice of medical radiation and imaging technology. All practising members of the CMRTO must be covered by professional liability insurance that meets the requirements of the by-laws of the CMRTO.

Most CMRTO members already hold PLI coverage through their membership in the professional association (Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Sciences, Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists and Sonography Canada), or through the insurance coverage of their employer, such as a hospital, where the employer's insurance provides professional liability protection for the member. Regardless of how the PLI coverage is obtained, practising members are responsible for ensuring that their insurance coverage meets the requirements of the CMRTO by-laws. Members who work in multiple practice locations should ensure that they have insurance coverage for all the locations in which they practise the profession of medical radiation and imaging technology.

Further information about the requirement for PLI can be found [here](#).

20. What are my accountabilities as a regulated professional?

As regulated health professionals, CMRTO members are accountable to their patients and the public to provide safe, effective and ethical medical radiation and imaging technology services. Members do this every day by ensuring that their practice meets the legislative requirements and standards of the profession.

Under provincial legislation, members are also accountable to the College for the quality of care they provide to the public. The College's standards and guidelines have been

developed to assist members to meet their professional obligations and the legal requirements related to their practice.

Member accountabilities include such requirements as:

- adhering to all the legislation governing the practice of the profession
- adhering to the College's standards of practice and code of ethics
- adhering to the College's professional misconduct regulation
- completing the QA program every year
- maintaining PLI in accordance with the College's by-laws
- maintaining their registration with the College in good standing
- ensuring the information the College has about them is accurate and up to date

Further information about how members are required to demonstrate their professional accountability to their patients, the public, and the College can be found [here](#)

21. Where can I get more information?

There is lots of information about the CMRTO, and all its standards, guidelines, policies and publications, available on the website at www.cmrto.org Take some time to review it and consider how your practice as a sonographer already fulfills many of the obligations and accountabilities as a self-regulated professional.

One of the requirements for registration includes the completion of the CMRTO Legislation Learning Package. This is a self-directed learning package available for free on the website. It's a great tool to help you learn about your accountabilities and responsibilities under the legislation governing the profession. You can find it [here](#).

The best way to receive more information in to complete the first step of the application process by creating your online profile and we will send you all the information that current members receive by email. And don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

Summary and timelines for the regulation of diagnostic medical sonographers and the new College of Medical Radiation and Imaging Technologists of Ontario

Date	Activity / Status
January 1, 2018: Registration regulation and form of energy regulation come into force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMRTO has legal authority to start to regulate sonographers • scope of practice expands to include the application of soundwaves for diagnostic ultrasound procedures • revised CMRTO Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics come into effect • revised CMRTO Quality Assurance Program comes into effect • one-year grandparenting period commences • sonography online application process available on CMRTO website
January 1 – December 31, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonographers are able to register with CMRTO, but it's not yet mandatory • Sonographers are able to apply for registration with CMRTO in one of two ways: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. having practised the profession on Dec 31, 2017 (or 400 hours in the prior year, or 1200 hours in the prior 3 years); or 2. having completed an approved educational program and an approved examination • Sonographers who become registered during 2018 are able to use the protected title, diagnostic medical sonographer (DMS), and are required to comply with all the requirements under the MRT Act, including adherence to the standards of practice, professional misconduct regulations, QA program, and others • Sonographers are added to the online Public Register of Members as they become registered • CMRTO prepares for repeal of the MRT Act and replacement with the MRIT Act (updating by-laws, policies, publications, website)
July 1, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative target to submit applications for registration • CMRTO recommends sonographers submit their application no later than this date in order to have sufficient time to meet the December 31, 2018 registration deadline
December 31, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandparenting period closes • All sonographers must be registered by this date in order to be authorized to practise diagnostic medical sonography on January 1, 2019
January 1, 2019 Controlled Acts regulation comes into force. Expected that MRIT Act will be proclaimed in force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonographers must be registered with CMRITO in order to apply soundwaves for diagnostic ultrasound procedures • CMRTO name changes to College of Medical Radiation and Imaging Technologists of Ontario (CMRITO) • CMRITO by-laws, standards, and guidelines come into effect. Updated website and publications • Only one method to apply for registration: having completed an approved program and an approved examination (no grandparenting)
January – June, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DMSs become completely integrated into CMRITO • First election for DMS Council members held



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