



How the *Health Protection Act* Relates to Medical Laboratory Technologists

What is the *Health Protection Act*?

The *Health Protection Act* is legislation designed to protect the health of the public. It came into force on Nov. 1, 2005.

The Act

- provides the legal framework enabling public health officials to protect the public and to prevent, detect, manage, and contain health threats without unduly interfering with civil rights and liberties
- deals with notifiable diseases or conditions, communicable diseases, health hazards, public health emergencies and food safety
- lays out the duties and responsibilities of public health officials and of the ministers responsible

What are the responsibilities of medical laboratory technologists under this Act?

A medical laboratory technologist

- *must report notifiable diseases or conditions*

A medical laboratory technologist must report to a Medical Officer of Health if he or she has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a person has or may have a notifiable disease or condition or has recently had a notifiable disease or condition. [S31(1)] This includes when the diagnosis is made as the result of an autopsy or biopsy. [S3 of *Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations*]

The list of notifiable diseases and conditions appears in Schedule A of *Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations*. That list and the telephone numbers of all public health offices can be found on the site where you located this fact sheet.

- *must report unexpectedly high rates of diseases and rare or unusual forms of disease*

A medical laboratory technologist must report to a Medical Officer of Health if an illness is serious and occurring at a higher rate than normal, i.e., a disease that is occurring more frequently than would normally be expected or in a rare or unusual form. [S31(5)]

Note: Medical laboratory technologists must follow the system established by the institution or facility in which they work so that all reports are made in accordance with the regulations.

How are reports made to the Medical Officer of Health?

The report

- is made to a Medical Officer of Health who has jurisdiction in the area in which the medical laboratory technologist works [S6 of *Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations*]
- should include the following information (if available) on the person with the notifiable disease or condition:
 - name, age, address, ethnicity, and gender
 - the name of the notifiable disease or condition that is being reported
 - clinical and epidemiological details that are pertinent to the diagnosis and follow-up
 - name, profession, and contact information for the reporting person, and other information required by the Medical Officer of Health for case management and prevention of transmission of the notifiable disease or condition or the illness [S8 of *Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions Regulations*]

More Information

Health Protection Act and Regulations—www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/ (under consolidated public statutes)

User Friendly Guide to the Health Protection Act and Regulations—www.gov.ns.ca/health/ocmoh/

Other Professional Roles and Responsibilities under the *Health Protection Act*—www.gov.ns.ca/health/ocmoh/

Contact Information

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