

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY FAQ

September 2025

WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OBLIGATIONS?

Registered nurses must uphold privacy and confidentiality in their professional practice and are held accountable for their decisions. A broad spectrum of outcomes can occur, including Investigation, discipline, termination, or formal charges.

When in doubt, consult with authoritative sources for assistance in navigating your privacy and confidentiality-related practice questions.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY, AND HOW THEY APPLY IN MY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND WORKPLACE?

Here is a starting point for resources and guidance on privacy and confidentiality in professional practice.

LEGISLATION & REGULATION

- Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Saskatchewan ([OIPC](#))
 - [The Health Information Protection Act \(HIPA\)](#)
 - [Resource Directory](#) & [Dictionary](#)
 - [Snooping: When will people learn? \(2015\)](#)
 - [Unauthorized Access \(2016\)](#)
 - [Recent Headlines Give Me Concern \(2024\)](#)

REGULATORY RESOURCES

- College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan ([CRNS](#))
 - [Nursing Practice Resources](#)
 - [Legislation That Supports Your Practice](#)
 - [Documentation Guideline \(2021\)](#)
 - [Electronic Distractions in Health Care: Toolkit for Managers of RNs](#)
 - [Professional Boundary Considerations for Nurse-Client Relationships \(2021\)](#)
 - [Social Media Resource \(2021\)](#)
 - [Social Media: Toolkit for Managers of RNs](#)
 - [What do I need to consider when being asked to use my cell phone to communicate patient updates with colleagues, clients/families, and/or physicians? Ask a Nursing Advisor](#)

- College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Saskatchewan (CRPNS)
 - [Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics & Practice Resources](#)
 - [Documentation: Guideline for Registered Psychiatric Nurses \(2022\)](#)
 - [Boundaries in the Therapeutic Relationship: Guideline for Registered Psychiatric Nurses \(2024\)](#)
 - [Social Media Use: Guidelines for Registered Psychiatric Nurses \(2025\)](#)
- Canadian Nursing Protective Society (CNPS)
 - Publications:
 - [InfoLAW: Communicating with the Police](#)
 - [InfoLAW: Confidentiality of Health Information](#)
 - [InfoLAW: Legal Risks of Email – Part 1: Privacy Concerns](#)
 - [InfoLAW: Legal Risks of Email – Part 2: Practical Considerations](#)
 - [InfoLAW: Mobile Devices in the Workplace](#)
 - [InfoLAW: Privacy](#)
 - [InfoLAW: Privacy and Electronic Medical Records](#)
 - [InfoLAW: Social Media](#)
 - [Ask a Lawyer: Accessing One's Own Personal Health Information](#)
 - [Ask a Lawyer: Social Media](#)
 - [Webinars](#)

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- [Canadian Nurses Association](#)
 - [Code of Ethics for Nurses \(2025\)](#)
- [Registered Nurses Association of Ontario – Best Practice Guidelines](#)

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

- Saskatchewan Health Authority ([SHA](#))
 - [Privacy & Access](#)
 - [Privacy Guidance Documents](#)
 - [Policy & Clinical Standards Document Finder](#)
 - [Clinical Documentation & Communication Standards](#)

WHAT MUST I KNOW ABOUT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY WHEN I FILL OUT A WORK SITUATION REPORT (WSR)?

SUN members must remember that The Health Information Protection Act (HIPA) and employer policies apply when documenting professional practice concerns on WSRs. Members should not include any patient or personal health information in their documentation. Documentation shouldn't address "people-related" problems like personnel or physician-related concerns.

Work Situation Report documentation should describe what you are expected to do as a registered nurse (e.g., work, tasks, roles and responsibilities). Keep in mind that you are documenting your registered nursing practice, patient safety, workload, staffing, or any other factor that negatively affects registered nursing care.

WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED ADVICE ABOUT PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE?

You can contact various experts, including your SUN Local Executive, organizational Privacy Officer/department, SUN Nurse Practice Officer, regulatory bodies, and the Canadian Nurses Protective Society, which provides professional liability protection to members.

- [SUN Nurse Practice Officers](#)
- [CRNS – Nursing Practice Consultation](#)
- [CRPNS – Practice Program](#)
- [CNPS – Legal Advice](#)