

Standards of Practice for Medical Laboratory Technologists

A standard of practice is defined as the desired and achievable performance level against which actual performance can be judged; it provides a benchmark for evaluating acceptable performance levels.

CSMLS Standards of Practice are designed to measure the accuracy and quality of individual performance and to provide the expectations associated with professionalism for medical laboratory technologists (MLTs); they represent the minimum national standards in Canada.

Provincial regulatory bodies, established under provincial statutes, also have specific, stringent standards of practice which govern disciplinary matters within their mandate and jurisdiction. Employers utilize both these provincial and national frameworks to establish specific workplace responsibilities and to develop job descriptions, policies and procedures.

The CSMLS General Medical Technology Competency Profile establishes the scope of practice for medical laboratory technologists in Canada; it restricts MLTs to performing only those duties specifically outlined within that competency profile. MLTs must skillfully perform laboratory procedures. They must know the theory behind laboratory analyses and understand associated clinical applications. They must be competent, demonstrate sound judgment and possess good interpretive skills. They must be able to adapt to evolving situations related to various tests and outcomes, must follow established laboratory methods and must adhere to relevant quality control protocols. In addition, medical laboratory technologists must demonstrate appropriate professional conduct at all times.

Standard 1: Professional Responsibility and Accountability

Medical laboratory technologists are responsible for their individual professional practice and conduct.

MLTs:

1. Follow the CSMLS Code of Professional Conduct.
2. Are responsible and accountable for continued individual competence.
3. Practice within the legal and ethical framework of their profession.
4. Adhere to accepted standards within their profession.
5. Place patient welfare above all other considerations.
6. Promote interdisciplinary collaboration with other health professionals.

Standard 2: Competent Application of Knowledge

Medical laboratory technologists possess a high degree of scientific knowledge; they understand the theories, techniques and clinical applications associated with medical laboratory analyses. They apply

these skills and scientific knowledge to current practice. They maintain continued competence, commit to lifelong learning and sustain their professional skills.

MLTs:

1. Demonstrate competence as outlined in the current CSMLS General Medical Laboratory Technology Competency Profile.
2. Correlate analyses, diagnoses, clinical data and treatment information to improve and maximize patient outcomes.
3. Apply institutional policies and procedures in day-to-day practice.
4. Adapt to changing practice requirements within the clinical environment.

Standard 3: Competence and Proficiency in Laboratory Practice

Medical laboratory technologists skillfully perform laboratory analyses. They utilize sound judgment and advanced interpretive skills to effectively recognize and quickly respond to developing situations associated with laboratory methods and patient testing, including troubleshooting equipment malfunctions and reviewing abnormal quality control results.

MLTs:

1. Practice according to established protocols, safety guidelines, and existing legislation and regulations.
2. Verify relevant data and ensure that appropriate specimens are properly procured and handled.
3. Perform preanalytical procedures on specimens from a variety of sources.
4. Apply appropriate principles when performing analytical techniques and validating test results.
5. Utilize scientific knowledge to interpret medical data.
6. Practice and promote principles of good quality management and efficient resource utilization.
7. Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills to successfully address workplace challenges.
8. Apply critical thinking skills to day-to-day professional practice.
9. Demonstrate effective ability to research, investigate, evaluate and problem-solve in the workplace.

Standard 4: Communication and Collaboration

Medical laboratory technologists utilize effective communication skills and demonstrate strong teamwork abilities when interacting with patients and health care providers.

MLTs:

1. Respect and support the role of patients and other health care providers.
2. Articulate the role of medical laboratory professionals in planning, developing, delivering and evaluating patient care.
3. Share relevant medical laboratory knowledge with patients, health care providers and the public.
4. Document, protect and maintain confidential information.

References

Definition of Clinical Practice Guidelines, Standards...and other definitions pertaining to medicine/nursing. November 6, 2011 (cited 2014 June). <http://www.findafootnurse.com/?p=1204>

Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science; Competency Profile General Medical Laboratory Technologists, May 2005 (cited 2014 June).
http://www.csmls.org/csmls/media/documents/comp_profile/Comptency-Profile---General-MLT-2005.pdf

Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science; Code of Professional Conduct, March 2007 (cited 2014 June). <http://www.csmls.org/About-Us/Who-We-Serve/Code-of-Conduct.aspx>