



New Zealand  
**Medical Radiation  
Technologists Board**  
*Te Poari Ringa Hanganua Iraruke*

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR MEDICAL  
IMAGING AND RADIATION THERAPY  
PRACTITIONERS IN AOTEAROA NEW  
ZEALAND

DECEMBER 2019

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Code of Ethical Conduct for Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand</b>
<b>Reference Number</b>	2019-Dec-V4-MRT Code of Conduct
<b>Scope</b>	The Code of Ethical Conduct applies to all medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners registered with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board

<b>Associated Policy Documents</b>

<b>Revision Schedule</b>			
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Version Date</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Next Review</b>
<b>One</b>	2004	Medical Radiation Technologists Board	
<b>Two</b>	2012	Medical Radiation Technologists Board	
<b>Three</b>	July 2017	Medical Radiation Technologists Board	
<b>Four</b>	December 2019	Medical Radiation Technologists Board	2021

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Code of Ethical Conduct: Context and Purpose .....	3
Legal Authority of the Code of Ethical Conduct.....	4
Ethical Conduct Principles and Standards.....	4
Principle 1: Patient Health and Wellbeing .....	5
Standards .....	5
Principle 2: Patient-Centred Service Delivery .....	6
Standards .....	6
Principle 3: Collaborative Practice to Optimise Health Outcomes .....	7
Standards .....	7
Principle 4: Honesty and Integrity .....	8
Standards .....	8
Principle 5: Responsibility for Professional Decisions.....	9
Standards .....	9

## Introduction

The Medical Radiation Technologists Board (the Board) is appointed by the Minister of Health to regulate the practice of medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act).

Protection of the health and safety of the public is the underpinning cornerstone of the Act and the Board has a responsibility to have mechanisms in place to ensure medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners are competent and fit to practise their profession.

Setting and monitoring standards in the interests of the public and the profession is a core responsibility of the Board whose primary concern is public safety. This Code articulates the standards of ethical conduct set by the Board under section 118 (i) of the Act.

The Code applies equally to all medical imaging and radiation therapy scopes of practice:

- Medical Imaging Technologist
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologist
- Nuclear Medical Imaging Technologist
- Radiation Therapist
- Sonographer
- Trainee Nuclear Medicine Technologist
- Trainee Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologist
- Trainee Sonographer

## Code of Ethical Conduct: Context and Purpose

*The Code of Ethical Conduct for Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand* (the Code) are standards set out by the Board to describe the conduct or behaviour expected of registered medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners.

The Code provides a framework against which a practitioner's behaviour may be measured. It serves as an educational source for those entering the medical imaging and radiation therapy profession, as well as a guide for the public as to the conduct expected of this class of health professionals.

It is important for medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners to understand that there is an expectation they will adhere to these standards. The Code applies equally to all medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners who are registered with the Board. Failure to uphold the standards as set out in the Code could lead to a disciplinary investigation.

The Code complements the legal obligations medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners have under the Act, the Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996, and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994.

The Code is the overarching document that describes professional conduct and should be read in conjunction with other Board-issued conduct specific documents such as *Guidelines for the Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication* (2017).

The Code acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. Its principles of partnership, protection, and participation are integral to providing appropriate medical imaging and radiation therapy services for Maori. The Board's

*Cultural Competence Policy (2018)* provides specific guidelines for medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners in respect of culturally competent practice.

The Code articulates the values fundamental to the practice of medical imaging and radiation therapy in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is not exhaustive and does not aim to provide specific advice on every situation practitioners may encounter in their professional practice. Medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners are professionally accountable for their practice. This includes taking responsibility for their actions (or inactions) irrespective of advice or direction given by a manager or professional colleague. The principles encapsulated in this Code should be the basis for making decisions, and can be of particular assistance in situations where there is a conflict of interest or competing professional responsibilities.

## Legal Authority of the Code of Ethical Conduct

Setting and monitoring standards in the interests of the public and the profession is a core responsibility of the Board whose primary concern is public safety.

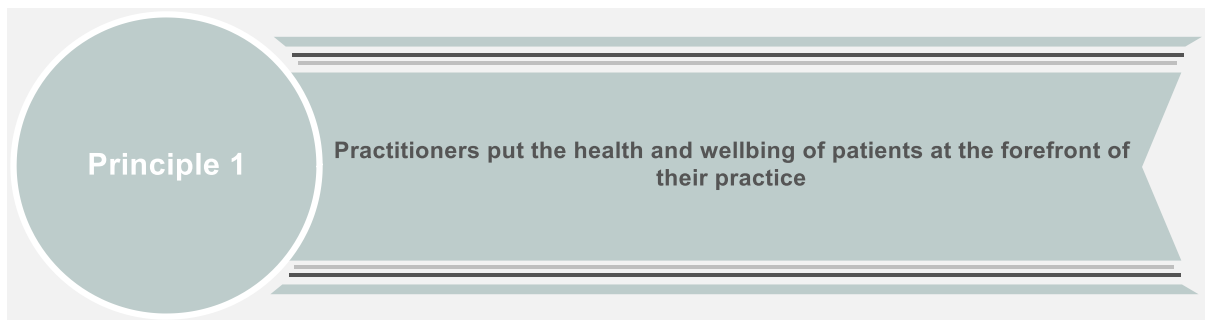
*The Code of Ethical Conduct (2019)* is prescribed by the Medical Radiation Technologists Board pursuant to section 118 (i) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

*The Code of Ethical Conduct (2019)* replaces the *Code of Ethics 2017*. This latest revision more clearly articulates the Board's ethical conduct standards within a principle-based framework which aligns with the ethical conduct guidelines of other New Zealand responsible authorities.

## Ethical Conduct Principles and Standards

Ethical conduct for medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners is expressed as a number of principles. Within each principle a set of practice standards provides additional guidance to support that principle. All five principles are of equal importance.

## Principle 1: Patient Health and Wellbeing



### Standards

Medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners act to:

- 1.1 Consider the health and wellbeing of the patient to be their first priority
- 1.2 Ensure their duty of care is not compromised by other interests, managing all conflicts in the interests of the patient
- 1.3 Respect the dignity of the patient in a culturally safe and responsive manner
- 1.4 Maintain a professional relationship with patients and their families and whanau at all times
- 1.5 Promote patient health and wellbeing
- 1.6 Prevent harm to the patient
- 1.7 Ensure radiation dose is kept as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA) to produce diagnostic results or meet treatment needs

## Principle 2: Patient-Centred Service Delivery

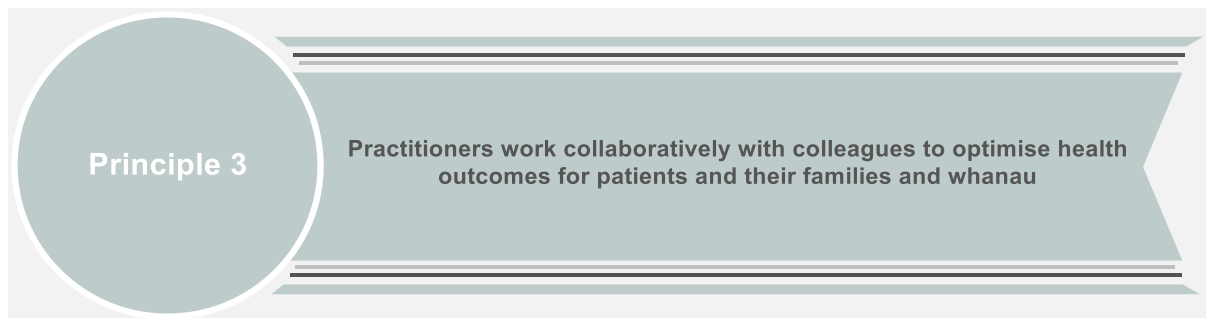


### Standards

Medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners act to:

- 2.1 Protect the autonomy, dignity, and privacy of patients at all times
- 2.2 Recognise and respect patients' diversity and do not discriminate against patients and their families and whanau on the basis of ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, political or other opinion, disability, or age
- 2.3 Protect vulnerable patients from exploitation and harm
- 2.4 In accordance with organisational protocol, clearly inform patients of the purpose and nature of the medical imaging or radiation therapy intervention to enable patients to make an informed choice
- 2.5 Advise the patient when it will be necessary to disclose information to others in the healthcare team
- 2.6 Respect the patient's choice including the right to refuse an examination and/or treatment, care or advice, or to withdraw consent at any time
- 2.7 Respect and safeguard the privacy of all patients' personal information
- 2.8 Treat all patient information as confidential, using it for professional purposes only
- 2.9 Store patient records and images securely
- 2.10 Only access patient information when involved in that patient's care or they have specific permission to do so from the patient or their legal guardian. Patient information accessed for research purposes must have appropriate ethics approval

## Principle 3: Collaborative Practice to Optimise Health Outcomes



### Standards

Medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners act to:

- 3.1 Treat colleagues with respect, working with them in a professional, collaborative, and cooperative manner, recognising that others have a right to hold different opinions
- 3.2 Recognise the expertise and experience of colleagues, respecting the contribution of all practitioners involved in the care of the patient
- 3.3 Exercise independence and professional judgement working within their scope of practice when providing support and advice to other health professionals
- 3.4 Clearly, effectively and respectfully communicate with colleagues both within the profession and the wider healthcare setting. Communication is timely and accurate and for the benefit of the patient



## Principle 4: Honesty and Integrity



### Standards

Medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners act to:

- 4.1 Interact with patients and their families and whanau with respect and honesty, including when facing matters of complaint or criticism and uphold their right to make a complaint
- 4.2 Promptly address any compromise of patient safety
- 4.3 Avoid conflicts of interest by not offering, requesting, or accepting incentives, gifts, or hospitality that may be perceived as, and/or result in, a personal benefit
- 4.4 Not enter into a business arrangement with a patient or former patient that may result in a personal benefit
- 4.5 Declare and manage any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest in a clear and timely manner
- 4.6 Maintain a professional boundary between themselves and the patient and their families and whanau, or other people nominated by the patient to be involved in their health care
- 4.7 Not engage in sexual or intimate behaviour or relationships with a patient in their care or with those close to the patient
- 4.8 Ensure their practice is not compromised by the use of alcohol or drugs
- 4.9 Take responsibility to maintain their personal health and wellbeing, promptly seeking assistance if their health compromises their ability to practise safely
- 4.10 Advise their employer and/or relevant regulatory authority if they believe a colleague's health, conduct, or competence is compromising public safety or bringing the profession into disrepute
- 4.11 Maintain a high standard of professional and personal behaviour which is inclusive of their use of social media and electronic communication

## Principle 5: Responsibility for Professional Decisions



### Standards

Medical imaging and radiation therapy practitioners act to:

- 5.1 Make sound professional judgements within their scope of practice and level of expertise, taking accountability for their professional decisions and actions
- 5.2 Seek collegial advice and assistance when care may be compromised due to a lack of knowledge or skill
- 5.3 Comply with all legal obligations and organisational policies and protocols
- 5.4 Practise in accordance with the competence standards articulated for their scope of practice
- 5.5 Ensure the safety of patients and colleagues through incorporating safety and risk management strategies into their everyday practice
- 5.6 Provide appropriate direction and support for less experienced colleagues and support staff, ensuring they communicate in a clear and unambiguous manner
- 5.7 Ensure the medical imaging or radiation therapy services they provide are clinically justifiable
- 5.8 Keep clear and accurate records
- 5.9 Actively engage in ongoing learning and ensure their clinical and professional skills are up to date
- 5.10 Reflect on their practice and engage in peer review activities