

# **SASKATCHEWAN COLLEGE OF PARAMEDICS** COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

# INTRODUCTION



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Saskatchewan Paramedics work across the traditional territories of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Dene, Lakota, and Nakota peoples, as well as the homeland of the Métis Nation. This land is covered by Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10. We respect and honour the Treaties that were made on all territories and acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past. We are committed to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous Nations in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. These treaties serve to govern our relationships with Indigenous people.

We recognize that we all have benefits and responsibilities under these agreements and dedicate our efforts to working together in a spirit of collaboration and reconciliation.

**The Saskatchewan College of Paramedics (SCoP) Council approved the Canadian Organization of Paramedic Regulators (COPR) Pan- Canadian Essential Regulatory Requirements (PERRs) for Paramedics and Emergency Medical Responders competency frameworks for implementation in Saskatchewan. These frameworks have been modified for EMRs and Paramedics in Saskatchewan.**

**This document is based on the original COPR PERRs framework and has been specifically adapted to meet the regulatory requirements for paramedicine in Saskatchewan.**

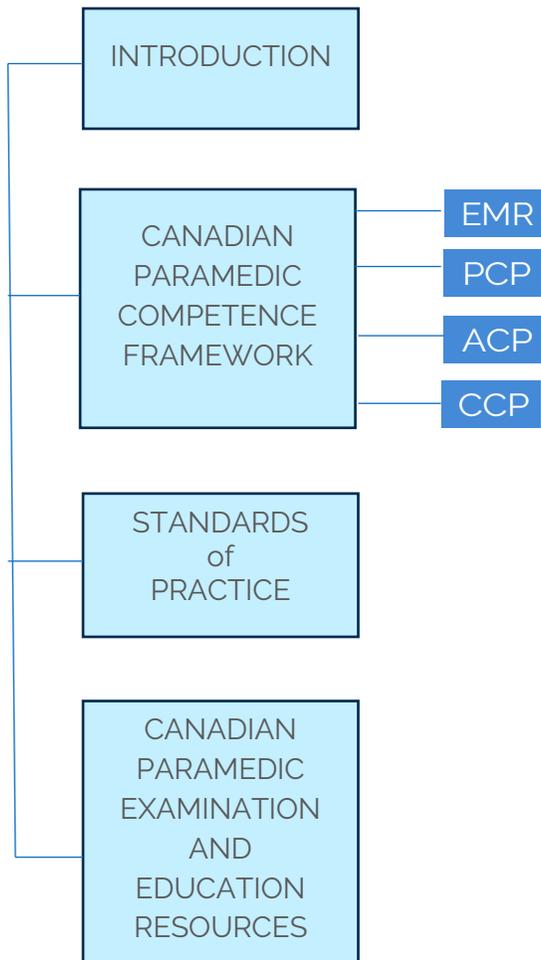
## **Pan-Canadian Essential Regulatory Requirements (PERRs) for Paramedics**

The Canadian Organization of Paramedic Regulators (COPR) advances consistent and best practices in regulation, enhances public accountability, and facilitates mobility of paramedics and emergency medical responders (EMRs) nationally and internationally.

In 2021, COPR agreed to develop a harmonized and unified approach for pan-Canadian essential requirements: competencies and standards that will reflect and specifically focus on the needs of the public and patients for safe, effective care by paramedics and EMRs. COPR's members, the provincial regulators for paramedicine, are committed to facilitating the framework's use to support consistent and uniform practice, regulation, and education in Canada.

As a member of COPR, the SCoP adopted the COPR PERRs for Paramedics documents and adapted them for use in Saskatchewan.

## PERR's Structure



The Pan-Canadian Essential Regulatory Requirements (PERRs) includes four key elements.

1. The Introduction consists of key concepts that apply to all designations, as well as a list of those who contributed to the development of PERRs.
2. The Canadian Paramedic Competence Framework (CPCF) provides a high-level list of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to performance. The CPCF describes current and actual practice, clarifies paramedics' and EMRs' roles and responsibilities, and promotes consistency in measuring competence with a focus on patient safety and desired patient care outcomes. It is aligned with the Paramedic Chiefs of Canada's *10 Principles to Guide the Future of Paramedicine in Canada* (2023). Each paramedic designation has its own CPCF.

3. The Standards of Practice document describes specific, expected outcomes that must be met by paramedics and EMRs in Saskatchewan regardless of their designation, job description, or practice setting. The Standards of Practice focuses on both patient and paramedic outcomes and applies to the usual day-to-day work performance and tasks completed by paramedics.
4. COPR's Examination and Education Resources (EERs) is a supplement to the CPCF. It is written with COPR's examination writers and Canadian educators in mind. It includes an expanded list of foundational knowledge and minimum entry to practice skills for the Care Along a Health and Social Continuum competence area. This appendix is incorporated into each competency framework for ease of use.

## Designations in Canada

PERRs was developed for the four designations currently regulated, via registration, licensure, or certification by provincial regulatory authorities in Canada. Nine of the provincial regulatory authorities are COPR members.

<b>Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)</b>	EMRs have basic training, including resuscitation and theoretical and practical training in life-saving and patient assessment skills. EMRs provide fundamental out-of-hospital care, working with other health care providers in a wide variety of settings or providing care at events or in remote locations.
<b>Primary Care Paramedic (PCP)</b>	PCPs have paramedic-specific education and provide context-specific basic life support and patient care in a wide variety of settings. They collaborate with other health care providers. When appropriate, PCPs hand over care to other team members in a clinical setting or at transfer of care, or discharge following assessment and treatment.
<b>Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP)</b>	ACPs have enhanced paramedic-specific education that builds on PCP education. ACPs provide context-specific, advanced life support and patient care for medically complex patients. They collaborate with other health care providers. When appropriate, ACPs hand over care to other team members or engage in transfer of care or discharge patients following assessment and treatment.
<b>Critical Care Paramedic (CCP)</b>	CCPs have specialized and multidisciplinary education that builds on PCP and ACP education so that they can provide context-specific, tertiary-level care for medically complex and undifferentiated patients. CCPs are expected to work autonomously in the provision of complex care to high-acuity patients. CCPs might have enhanced independent practice because they have few other health care providers who are immediately able to assist in patient care. CCPs often work in or lead highly specialized teams within the health care or public safety systems or as independent practitioners. They provide sophisticated handover of care to other specialized health team members.

Each designation has specific responsibilities that reflect both the paramedic's education and the needs of the patients for whom they provide care. Each designation has greater complexity than the previous level, and builds on previous education and experience.

CCPs need sophisticated skills in order to provide care for medically complex patients for prolonged periods of time when transferring care from one location to

the other, compared with the practice of many EMRs, PCPs, and ACPs, where patient care is more time-limited.

Paramedic education is modular. ACPs must have PCP education before moving to ACP education. CCPs need ACP and PCP training before becoming educated and registered as CCPs. However, EMR education, which is more general, is usually not part of an educational pathway to PCP education and competencies.

**PERRs describes the expectations for safe, effective, and ethical performance by paramedics and EMRs to inform provincial regulatory practice standards and support its use by educators, employers, and other interested parties.**

## **Why is PERRs Needed?**

Development in paramedicine comes with the responsibility to clearly describe what the public and patients can expect from a regulated paramedic to ensure safe, effective patient care.

While the majority of paramedics and EMRs work in emergency services roles, the profession is seeing an increasing diversity of practice settings and employment roles (for example, provincial and private air ambulances, palliative care teams, community health care, and immunization centres). Some of these settings and roles have additional voluntary or mandatory education.

As the regulation of paramedicine practice evolves, PERRs will be updated to ensure that it accurately reflects current practice in Canada.

## **Who will use PERRs?**

### **COPR**

COPR administers entry to practice examinations for three of the four designations: EMR, PCP, and ACP. PERRs informs the COPR examination blueprints—that is, what to test on the exams and what to assess for credentialing purposes. Additionally, COPR uses the content of PERRs to assess the credentials of internationally educated paramedics prior to their completion of provincial regulatory requirements. Finally, COPR uses PERRs to respond to national (pan-Canadian) and

federal (government) health issues related to health professional regulations, standards, and labour mobility. Labour mobility refers to paramedics' and EMRs' ability to practise in more than one province. Through its committees, COPR advocates for and coordinates national labour mobility activities.

## **NATIONAL AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Although health care is a provincial mandate, national agencies and organizations regularly seek a national resource on the paramedicine profession as it relates to such areas as regulation, education, labour mobility, and practice. PERRs enables federal and national policymakers to reference clearly articulated scopes of practice and standards for each of the designations, while promoting consistency of entry to practice requirements across Canada and supporting labour mobility.

## **PARAMEDIC REGULATORS**

Public safety is paramount to regulators, so clarity about safe, effective care is important to their mandate. Both government regulators and self-regulatory organizations may adapt or adopt the competence framework and regulatory practice standards in their provincial jurisdiction as appropriate. This may include referencing PERRs to establish requirements for entry into the profession, monitoring registered paramedics' and EMRs' continuing competence throughout their career, and investigating complaints.

## **GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND MINISTRIES OF HEALTH**

For government regulators, PERRs provides further structure. Self-regulating bodies accountable to ministries affirm to the government that they are regulating consistently, fairly, and with transparency. Additionally, PERRs serves to inform governments when amendments to provincial regulations are being considered. Government agencies can be assured that amending existing legislation to align with their provincial counterparts supports consistent entry to practice requirements, resulting in safe, competent patient care.

## **EDUCATORS**

Entry to practice education programs can use PERRs to develop curricula for students to achieve desired outcomes. PERRs ensures that students graduate with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to provide safe, effective paramedic care. Seven of the 10 provinces require graduates to complete one of COPR's three entry to practice examinations, the content of which is blueprinted to the competence framework (the CPCF) and the regulatory practice standards (the

CPRPS). Finally, continuing education providers may also use PERRs to focus course content for upgrading or remediation.

## **EDUCATION PROGRAM ACCREDITORS**

Accreditors can use PERRs to confirm that the content and processes delivered by education providers address the essential regulatory requirements, most notably the competencies and standards necessary for paramedics to provide safe, effective care for their registered designation.

## **PARAMEDICS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONDERS**

PERRs describes the requirements for practising in each of the four designations. The transparency of the competencies and standards clarifies expectations in practice for:

- students to have a clear picture of what is needed to practise safely and appropriately
- paramedics and EMRs returning to practice, to inform where upgrading might be necessary.

## **INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED PARAMEDICS AND EMRs**

PERRs assists individuals from other countries to compare regulatory requirements with their country's practice standards. This is of particular interest to individuals wishing to move to Canada and work as paramedics or EMRs. For example, COPR's self-assessment tool is based on the competencies and standards contained in PERRs; it can therefore help international applicants assess their readiness for registration in Canada. Because PERRs also informs the blueprints of the COPR examinations and details what might be tested on them, PERRs is useful for internationally educated paramedics and EMRs who decide to challenge one of the examinations.

## **EMPLOYERS AND SERVICE PLANNERS**

Employers and service or policy planners are also responsible for the provision of safe, effective care. This includes attending to the recruitment and retention of competent paramedics and EMRs and implementing systems and structures that support the health and well-being of paramedics (CSA Group, 2018)<sup>1</sup>. Employers and organizations can use PERRs to structure job descriptions and individual

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<sup>1</sup> CSA Group. (2018). CSA Z1003.1:18 (R2022): Psychological health and safety in the paramedic service organization.

performance reviews, recommend training, and better understand what is needed at each level of practice to deliver the required services.

### **OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

In the world of growing interprofessional care teams, PERRs helps other health professionals understand the roles paramedics and EMRs can play and where they are accountable to their provincial regulator.

### **CANADIANS NEEDING PARAMEDICINE SERVICES**

The public may learn about the profession by reviewing PERRs so that when using services, they will have informed expectations for safe, effective paramedic care.

### **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

Provincial and national associations representing the profession may use PERRs to advocate for inclusion in health care delivery systems and to support efforts to advance excellence in paramedicine.

### **RESEARCHERS**

Given that PERRs was developed using rigorous and evidence-based methods, researchers can confidently pose research questions knowing that the documents contained therein accurately reflect current paramedic and EMR practice.

### **INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES**

When paramedics and EMRs are deployed outside Canada, international agencies can use PERRs to provide information regarding the expectations associated with each of the designations.

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