



PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR RADIOGRAPHY AND CLINICAL TECHNOLOGY

SCOPE OF PRACTICE: SUPPLEMENTARY DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION:

This document serves to guide the performance levels, limits and scope of practice for supplementary diagnostic radiographers registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), as regulated by the Professional Board for Radiography and Clinical Technology (PBRCT – herein after referred to as the Board). This document aims to guide professional, safe and effective supplementary diagnostic radiography practice and to protect members of the public against unsafe and unethical professional conduct.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT:

A scope of practice defines the procedures, actions and processes for which a professional has the knowledge, skills and expertise to practice safely and effectively in keeping with the terms of the governing bodies without posing any danger to the public or the practitioner.

The purpose of this document is thus to define the scope of practice to ensure the delivery of safe, high quality diagnostic radiography imaging services in public health or South African mines settings. The document, furthermore, describes the role of a supplementary diagnostic radiographer as a member of the healthcare team and provides a framework for the quality of improvement programs. As legislation and technology are ever evolving this document is dynamic in nature and may be amended when relevant new legislation or technologies relevant to supplementary diagnostic radiography are introduced.

CERTIFICATION FOR SUPPLEMENTARY DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHERS:

Supplementary diagnostic radiographers must be deemed competent in the diagnostic procedures they perform through having obtained appropriate, Board approved education and training in their area/s of practice from a Board approved and accredited training institution and having passed the Board Exam for Supplementary Diagnostic Radiographers.

A supplementary diagnostic radiographer may only perform diagnostic examinations if they have obtained Board approved certification and are registered with the HPCSA in the category: Supplementary Diagnostic Radiography.

NOTE: Those practitioners who are registered in the category: Restricted Supplementary Diagnostic Radiographer, may only perform the restricted examinations for which they have been registered.

PROFESSIONAL DUTIES OF SUPPLEMENTARY DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHER:

Supplementary diagnostic radiographers are skilled professionals who work under the supervision of a qualified, registered diagnostic radiographer, to integrate patient history, supporting clinical data and imaging protocols with the radiographic examination to obtain quality diagnostic results. Supplementary diagnostic radiographers must demonstrate accuracy in the production of images, use of diagnostic technology, evaluation and analysis of their diagnostic images for medicolegal requirements and technical quality.

Supplementary diagnostic radiographers must work under the supervision of a qualified, registered diagnostic radiographer who will take responsibility for their work. The supervisor does not always need to be present but, must meet with the supplementary diagnostic radiographer at least once a week and review the assigned tasks to ensure that appropriate examinations/ tasks are being performed.

Supplementary diagnostic radiographers need to possess problem solving and ethical decision-making skills in order to practice as healthcare professionals. They are expected to engage in continuing professional development (CPD) to keep abreast of advanced technologies and new healthcare practices within their scope of profession; as well as to uphold their knowledge, insight and technical competence. A sound knowledge of human anatomy, pathophysiology, medical terminology, science of imaging, patient care, human rights, ethics and health law and radiation effects, underpins this profession.

Supplementary diagnostic radiographers work in close collaboration with other healthcare professionals. They may only work in public healthcare settings, or institutions operated /subsidised by government or provincial authority, or institutions operated by the South African Chamber of Mines. Supplementary diagnostic radiographers may not work in private practice, and they may not own a private practice.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR SUPPLEMENTARY DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHERS:

The list of work activities presented in this document are to be read in conjunction with the current *Regulations defining the scope of the profession of supplementary diagnostic radiography*, and must also be read in conjunction with the *Ethical Rules of Conduct* and *Annexure 10* of these Rules as well as all relevant Board policies and guidelines. Annexure 10 provides a framework of professional and ethical practice standards for all radiographers. The activities below are practiced under the supervision of a qualified, registered diagnostic radiographer provided they fall within the Board approved education, training and competence of the supplementary diagnostic radiographer. Their practice is subject to having the requisite education, clinical competence and experience to perform such examinations under the supervision of a qualified, registered diagnostic radiographer.

- General x-rays examinations – conduct conventional diagnostic imaging of anatomical regions according to prescribed protocols; examining soft tissue, skeletal system, chest, abdomen and identification of foreign objects. Skull includes cranium, mandible, sinuses and facial bones.
- The above conventional diagnostic images include projections in the antero-posterior, postero-anterior, lateral, oblique, or relevant modified planes, dependent on the imaging request.
- Paediatric radiography – perform general skeletal, chest and abdomen examinations. This does not include mobile examinations in ICU/NICU.
- Mobile radiography – perform relevant general skeletal, chest and abdomen examinations using mobile equipment in the wards and emergency departments where patients are unable to be taken to the radiography department. Special precautions are to be used to prevent cross infection and protect health personnel and patients from radiation.

- Fluoroscopy – assist the qualified diagnostic radiographer and radiologist in the performance of Barium studies, in accordance with the Board's *Guidelines for the use of Fluoroscopy Units*. The role of the supplementary diagnostic radiographer in fluoroscopy is to assist in the duty of care to the patient, but not to perform the fluoroscopy. The supplementary diagnostic radiographer may not operate the C-Arm fluoroscopy unit.
- Forensic radiography - perform forensic imaging studies for medico-legal purposes within their scope of training. This will only include basic conventional diagnostic examinations of the skeletal system, chest and abdomen.

Tasks for Supplementary Diagnostic radiographers involve:

- Correctly identifying the patient and explaining the procedure to the patient;
- Assessing the request form for justification of the examination being requested;
- Ensuring that the request form has been completed and signed by a healthcare practitioner who is registered in terms of any legislation regulating healthcare practitioners in South Africa and who may request x-ray examinations subject to the scope of their profession;
- Assessing patients and their clinical history to determine appropriate radiographic protocols and techniques;
- Performing a range of radiographic examinations on patients to produce high-quality, diagnostic images, and evaluating these images for medico legal requirements and technical quality;
- Observing the wellbeing of patients and maintaining contact with them during their waiting, examination and post-examination stay in the radiography department;
- Working with radiographers, radiologists and other specialists to produce images in a variety of procedures that need radiographic imaging systems or equipment;
- Providing support and reassurance to patients, considering their physical and psychological needs;
- Recording the imaging identification and patient documentation accurately and observing protocols to ensure compliance with the patients' rights to privacy and confidentiality;
- Understanding and observing health and safety at work as well as welfare issues, including infection control policies and ionising radiation regulations in order to protect themselves and others;

- Ensuring that equipment is regularly checked for malfunctions and reporting any faults immediately.
- Performing quality control tests on imaging accessories and x-ray equipment in collaboration with officials from the Radiation Control Directorate of the Department of Health and the technicians from the technical companies.
- Performing professional duties, respecting the basic human rights of patients and others, and always observing ethical responsibilities and health law.

Document compiled by:

Radiography and Clinical Technology Board

Health Professions Council of South Africa (Pretoria).

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