





# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Public Record .....	2
Cost Recovery .....	2
Probation Monitoring Purpose .....	3
Citations .....	3
Stipulated Settlements.....	3
<b>DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Evidence in Aggravation/Mitigation of Penalty .....	5
Disciplinary Guidelines Summary for Use By ALJs .....	5
<b>PROBATIONARY TERMS AND CONDITIONS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Standard Terms and Conditions.....	11
Standard Alcohol/Drug Conditions .....	15
Specialty Conditions .....	16
<b>VIOLATION STANDARDS .....</b>	<b>19</b>

**These guidelines are incorporated by reference in Section 1399.374 of Division 13.6 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations**



## INTRODUCTION

Licensed Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCPs) regularly perform critical lifesaving and life support procedures prescribed by physicians that directly affect major organs of the body. Respiratory care provides relief to millions of Americans, from newborns to the elderly, who have difficulty breathing or cannot breathe on their own due to impaired or nonfunctioning lungs. Typical patients of RCPs suffer from asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchitis, lung cancer, stroke, drowning accidents, heart attacks, birth defects, emphysema, cystic fibrosis, or sleep apnea. Trauma victims and surgery patients are also treated by respiratory therapists. In addition to treatment, respiratory care also includes education and rehabilitation services, plus diagnostic testing.

Typical respiratory care duties include, but are not limited to:

- Employing life support mechanical ventilation including assessment, analysis, application and monitoring.
- Administering of medications in aerosol form.
- Monitoring equipment and patients' responses to therapy.
- Obtaining blood specimens and analyzing them to determine levels of oxygen, carbon dioxide, and other gases.
- Maintaining artificial airways (tracheostomy or intubation).
- Measuring the capacity of patients' lungs to determine if there is impairment.
- Obtaining and analyzing sputum specimens and chest X-rays.
- Interpreting data from tests.
- Assessing vital signs and other indicators of respiratory dysfunction.
- Performing stress tests and other studies of the cardiopulmonary system.
- Assessing and treating people with disruptive sleep patterns.
- Conducting rehabilitation activities.
- Leading asthma education and smoking cessation programs.

Most respiratory care therapists work in hospitals (emergency, intensive care, neonatal/pediatric units, cardiac care, etc.), but there is a growing number being employed in other settings, including:

- Medical flight transports
- Hyperbaric oxygen units
- Private homes
- Skilled nursing facilities
- Various laboratories (e.g., Rehabilitation, Cardiopulmonary, Blood gas, Sleep testing)

The minimum education requirements for licensure as an RCP include an associate degree with completion of an approved respiratory care program. However, over 1/3 of licensed RCPs hold baccalaureate, masters or doctorate degrees. There are approximately 33 schools throughout California that offer respiratory care programs. Areas of study include human anatomy and physiology, chemistry, physics, microbiology, and mathematics. Programs also include clinical practice at local hospitals. Respiratory care students receive on average, 300 hours of intense education and training specific to ventilator assessments and care. Programs take more than two years of full-time dedication to complete.

The Respiratory Care Board of California (Board) has issued over 30,000 RCP licenses since its inception in 1985. Applicants for licensure complete a criminal background check (DOJ/FBI/DMV), are competency tested, and must provide official transcripts and other documentation to verify they have met educational and other requirements.

The Board's mandate is "...to protect the public from the **unauthorized and unqualified practice** of respiratory care and from **unprofessional conduct** by persons licensed to practice respiratory care..." [reference, §3701, *Business and Professions Code*]. In addition, "**Protection of the public shall be the highest priority for the [Board]** in exercising its licensing, regulatory, and disciplinary functions. Whenever the protection of the public is inconsistent with other interests sought to be promoted, the protection of the public shall be paramount" [reference §3710.1, *Business and Professions Code*].

The Board's mission is to protect and serve the consumer by enforcing the Respiratory Care Practice Act and its regulations, expanding the delivery and availability of services, increasing public awareness of respiratory care as a profession, and supporting the development and education of all respiratory care practitioners.

The Board has the authority to issue or deny, suspend, and revoke licenses to practice respiratory care as provided in the Respiratory Care Practice Act and respiratory care regulations (Business and Profession Code, sections 475, 480, 490, 3718, 3732, 3750, 3750.5, 3752.7, 3754, 3754.5, 3755, 3757, 3752.5, 3752.6, and California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 13.6, sections 1399.303, 1399.370, 1399.374).

The Board strives to ensure that only eligible, qualified, capable and competent individuals are licensed, and to expeditiously respond to all consumer complaints by efficiently and effectively investigating every complaint and pursuing disciplinary action in all appropriate cases. Finally, the Board strives to ensure that appropriate and aggressive post-disciplinary monitoring occurs.

The Board's disciplinary guidelines were designed for use by Administrative Law Judges, attorneys, licensees and others involved in the Board's disciplinary process and are to be followed in all disciplinary actions involving the Board. The Board has the final authority over the disposition of its cases, and to complete its work, it utilizes the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of Administrative Hearings.

This manual includes factors to be considered in aggravation or mitigation, guidelines to be used by Administrative Law Judges for a violation(s) of specific statutes, and standard and speciality probationary terms and conditions.

The Board recognizes that these recommended penalties and conditions of probation are merely guidelines and that aggravating or mitigating circumstances and other factors may necessitate deviation from these guidelines in particular cases.

## **PUBLIC RECORD**

It is the Board's policy that all letters of license denial, citations issued, legal pleadings filed and final decisions will be published as a matter of public record.

## **COST RECOVERY**

The Board seeks recovery of all investigative and prosecution costs in all disciplinary cases. The costs include all charges incurred from the Office of the Attorney General, the Division of Investigation, and Board services, including but not limited to expert consultant opinions and services. The Board seeks recovery of these costs because the burden for payment of the costs of investigation and prosecution of disciplinary cases should fall upon those whose proven conduct had required investigation and prosecution, not upon the profession as a whole.

### **References**

#### **§ 3753.5. Payment of costs of investigation and prosecution of disciplinary action**

(a) In any order issued in resolution of a disciplinary proceeding before the board, the board or the administrative law judge may direct any practitioner or applicant found to have committed a violation or violations of law or any term and condition of board probation to pay to the board a sum not to exceed the costs of the investigation and prosecution of the case. A certified copy of the actual costs, or a good faith estimate of costs where actual costs are

not available, signed by the official custodian of the record or his or her designated representative shall be prima facie evidence of the actual costs of the investigation and prosecution of the case.

(b) The costs shall be assessed by the administrative law judge and shall not be increased by the board; however, the costs may be imposed or increased by the board if it does not adopt the proposed decision of the case. Where an order for recovery of costs is made and timely payment is not made as directed in the board's decision the board may enforce the order for repayment in any appropriate court. This right of enforcement shall be in addition to any other rights the board may have as to any practitioner directed to pay costs...

### **§ 3753.7. Items included in costs of prosecution**

For purposes of this chapter, costs of prosecution shall include attorney general or other prosecuting attorney fees, expert witness fees, and other administrative, filing, and service fees.

## **PROBATION MONITORING PURPOSE**

The purpose of the probation monitoring program is to maintain public protection by proactively monitoring probationers to ensure terms and conditions are met. **The purpose is NOT for the Board to rehabilitate the probationer.** Probation is a privilege afforded by the Board to:

- 1) Allow for the probationer's rehabilitation if that is his/her choice;
- 2) Allow the probationer an opportunity to practice in a professional manner with restrictions and guidance from a community support system and designated probation monitor to prevent future occurrences, and
- 3) Allow for education of the individual as to the responsibilities, requirements and professionalism mandated of a respiratory care practitioner.

It is the policy of the Board that if a probationer is found to be in violation of any term of probation at any time during the probation period, the Board shall immediately be notified of the violation so that disciplinary action may be considered.

## **CITATIONS**

The Board has the authority to issue citations and fines for violations of several sections of the Respiratory Care Practice Act and its regulations. Citations issued may include an order for abatement, a fine, or both. Citations are issued at the discretion of the Board. The issuance of a citation is separate from and may be in addition to any other administrative discipline, civil remedies, or criminal penalties. [Reference: California Code of Regulations section 1399.380(h)]. Any prior citation may be used in future actions as aggravating evidence.

## **STIPULATED SETTLEMENTS**

The Board will consider stipulated settlements to promote cost effectiveness and to expedite disciplinary decisions if such agreements are consistent with the Board's mandate.





# **DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES**

## **2011 Edition**

### **EVIDENCE IN AGGRAVATION/MITIGATION OF PENALTY**

The following are examples of aggravating and mitigating circumstances which may be considered by Administrative Law Judges in providing for discipline in their proposed decisions:

#### **EVIDENCE IN AGGRAVATION OF PENALTY**

1. Patient's trust, health, safety or well-being was jeopardized.
2. Patient's or employer's trust violated (i.e. theft, embezzlement, fraud, etc...).
3. History of prior discipline.
4. Patterned behavior: Respondent has a history of one or more violations or convictions related to the current violation(s).
5. Perjury on official Board forms.
6. Violent nature of crime or act.
7. Violation of Board Probation.
8. Failure to provide a specimen for testing in violation of terms and conditions of probation.
9. Commission of any crime against a minor, or while knowingly in the presence of, or while caring for, a minor.

#### **EVIDENCE IN MITIGATION OF PENALTY**

1. Recognition by Respondent of his or her wrongdoing and demonstration of corrective action to prevent recurrence.
2. Respondent was forthcoming and reported violation or conviction to the Board.
3. A substantial amount of time since the violation or conviction occurred.
4. No prior criminal or disciplinary history.

### **DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES SUMMARY FOR USE BY ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES**

These guidelines were developed for use by Administrative Law Judges. In determining the appropriate discipline, consideration should be given to any mitigating or aggravating circumstances. All decisions shall include cost recovery in accordance with Business and Professions Code section 3753.5.

B&P Code	KEY "R" - Required Term and Condition "W" - Include Term and Condition if Warranted	CONDITIONS OF PROBATION											
		1-13. Standard Terms & Conditions	14. Work Schedules	15. Biological Fluid Testing	16. Abstinence from Mood Altering Sub.	17. Suspension	18. Restriction of Practice	19. Direct Supervision	20. Education	21. Competency Exam	22. Alcohol/Drug Treatment	23. Psychological Evaluation	24. Physical Examination
<b>3750 (a) False/Misleading Advertising</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 2 years probation		R				W	W	W					
<b>3750 (b) Fraud in Procurement of License</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R				W	R	W					
<b>3750 (c) Knowingly Employing Unlicensed Persons</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 2 years probation		R				W	R	R					
<b>3750 (d) Conviction of a Crime</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 2 years probation		R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
<b>3750 (e) Impersonating/Acting as a Proxy for Applicant</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 5 years probation		R				W	R	W					
<b>3750 (f) Negligence</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R				W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W
<b>3750 (g) Violation of Any Provision</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 2 years probation		R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W

B&P Code	KEY "R" - Required Term and Condition "W" - Include Term and Condition if Warranted	CONDITIONS OF PROBATION											
		1-13. Standard Terms & Conditions	14. Work Schedules	15. Biological Fluid Testing	16. Abstinence from Mood Altering Sub.	17. Suspension	18. Restriction of Practice	19. Direct Supervision	20. Education	21. Competency Exam	22. Alcohol/Drug Treatment	23. Psychological Evaluation	24. Physical Examination
<b>3750 (h) Aiding or Abetting a Violation</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 2 years probation		R				W	R	W					
<b>3750 (i) Aiding or Abetting Unlawful Practice</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 2 years probation		R				W	R	W					
<b>3750 (j) Fraudulent, Dishonest or Corrupt Act</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R				W	R	W			W		
<b>3750 (k) Patient, Hospital, or Other Records - Entries</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R				W	W	R			W	W	
<b>3750 (l) Falsifying Verbal or Written Order/Prescription</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R				W	R	W			W		
<b>3750 (m) Discipline Taken by Another Agency</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 2 years probation		R				W	W	W			W	W	
<b>3750 (n) Failure to Follow Infection Control Guidelines</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R				W	W	W			W	W	

B&P Code	KEY "R" - Required Term and Condition "W" - Include Term and Condition if Warranted	CONDITIONS OF PROBATION											
		1-13. Standard Terms & Conditions	14. Work Schedules	15. Biological Fluid Testing	16. Abstinence from Mood Altering Sub.	17. Suspension	18. Restriction of Practice	19. Direct Supervision	20. Education	21. Competency Exam	22. Alcohol/Drug Treatment	23. Psychological Evaluation	24. Physical Examination
<b>3750 (o) Incompetence</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R				W	W	R	R			W	W
<b>3750 (p) Pattern of Substandard Care</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R				W	W	R	R			W	W
<b>3750.5 (a) Obtained, Possessed, Used, or Administered Controlled Substance or Dangerous Drug</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R	R	R	R	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	
<b>3750.5 (b) Used Drugs or Alcohol in Dangerous Manner or Impaired Ability to Practice Safely</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R	R	R	R	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	
<b>3750.5 (c) Applied for Employment or Worked While Under the Influence of Alcohol</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation		R	R	R	R	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	
<b>3750.5 (d) Conviction of Offense Involving (a) or (b), Falsify Record Pertaining to Substances</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 5 years probation		R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	
<b>3750.5 (e) Committed or Confined for Use of or Addiction to Substances Described in 3750.5 (a) (b) &amp; (c)</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 5 years probation		R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W

B&P Code	KEY "R" - Required Term and Condition "W" - Include Term and Condition if Warranted	CONDITIONS OF PROBATION											
		1-13. Standard Terms & Conditions	14. Work Schedules	15. Biological Fluid Testing	16. Abstinence from Mood Altering Sub.	17. Suspension	18. Restriction of Practice	19. Direct Supervision	20. Education	21. Competency Exam	22. Alcohol/Drug Treatment	23. Psychological Evaluation	24. Physical Examination
<b>3752.5</b>	<b>Bodily Injury or Attempted Bodily Injury</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 2 years probation	R	W	W	W	W	R	W		W	W		
<b>3752.6</b>	<b>Sexual Misconduct</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation or Denial	See Statute											
<b>3752.7</b>	<b>Sexual Contact w/Patient or Conviction of Sexual Offense</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation or Denial	See Statute											
<b>3755</b>	<b>Unprofessional Conduct</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 2 years probation	R				W	W			W	W		
<b>3760</b>	<b>Unlawful Practice</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation	R				W	R			W			
<b>3761</b>	<b>Misrepresentation</b> Maximum: Revocation or Denial Minimum: Revocation stayed, 3 years probation	R				W	R			W			

# PROBATIONARY TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A probationary or conditional license is generally issued for a period between 2 and 5 years (see corresponding code violations on pages 6-9), with consideration given to any aggravating or mitigating factors present. Following is a summary of terms and conditions of probation:

## STANDARD CONDITIONS

1. Obey All Laws
2. Quarterly Reports
3. Probation Monitoring Program
4. Probation Monitoring Costs
5. Employment Requirement
6. Notice to Employer
7. Supervisor Quarterly Reports
8. Changes of Employment or Residence
9. Cost Recovery
10. Tolling for Out-of-State Residence or Practice
11. Valid License Status
12. Violation of Probation
13. Completion of Probation

## STANDARD ALCOHOL/DRUG CONDITIONS

14. Work Schedules
15. Biological Fluid Testing
16. Abstention from Use of Mood Altering Substances

## SPECIALTY CONDITIONS

17. Suspension
18. Restriction of Practice
19. Direct Supervision
20. Education
21. Competency Examination
22. Alcohol and Drug Treatment
23. Psychological Evaluation
24. Physical Examination

## STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Standard conditions are imposed on each and every probationer, regardless of cause for discipline.

- 1. OBEY ALL LAWS** Respondent shall obey all laws, whether federal, state, or local. The Respondent shall also obey all regulations governing the practice of respiratory care in California.

Respondent shall notify the Board in writing within three days of any incident resulting in his/her arrest, or charges filed against, or a citation issued against, Respondent.

- 2. QUARTERLY REPORTS** Respondent shall file quarterly reports of compliance under penalty of perjury, on forms to be provided, to the probation monitor assigned by the Board. Omission or falsification in any manner of any information on these reports shall constitute a violation of probation and shall result in the filing of an accusation and/or a petition to revoke probation against Respondent's respiratory care practitioner license.

Quarterly report forms will be provided by the Board. Respondent is responsible for contacting the Board to obtain additional forms if needed. Quarterly reports are due for each year of probation and the entire length of probation as follows:

For the period covering January 1st through March 31st, reports are to be completed and submitted between April 1st and April 7th.

For the period covering April 1st through June 30th, reports are to be completed and submitted between July 1st and July 7th.

For the period covering July 1st through September 30th, reports are to be completed and submitted between October 1st and October 7th.

For the period covering October 1st through December 31st, reports are to be completed and submitted between January 1st and January 7th.

- 3. PROBATION MONITORING PROGRAM** Respondent shall comply with requirements of the Board appointed probation monitoring program, and shall, upon reasonable request, report to or appear to a local venue as directed.

Respondent shall claim all certified mail issued by the Board, respond to all notices of reasonable requests timely, appear as requested by the Board, and submit Annual Reports, Identification Update reports or other reports similar in nature, as requested and directed by the Board or its representative.

Respondent shall provide to the Board the names, physical work addresses, work mailing addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of all employers, human resources personnel, directors, managers, supervisors, and contractors, and any person providing direct supervision, and shall give specific, written consent that the Respondent authorizes the Board and its representatives and the employers, human resources personnel, directors, managers, supervisors, and contractors, and any person providing direct supervision, to communicate regarding the Respondent's work status, performance, and monitoring. Monitoring includes, but is not limited to, any violation or potential violation of any probationary term and condition.

Respondent is encouraged to contact the Board's Probation Program at any time he/she has a question or concern regarding his/her terms and conditions of probation.

- 4. PROBATION MONITORING COSTS** All costs incurred for probation monitoring during the entire probation shall be paid by the Respondent. The monthly cost may be adjusted as expenses are reduced or increased. Respondent's failure to comply with all terms and conditions may also cause this amount to be increased. Probation monitoring costs will not be tolled.

All payments for costs are to be sent directly to the Respiratory Care Board and must be received by the date(s) specified. (Periods of tolling will not toll the probation monitoring costs incurred.)

If Respondent is unable to submit costs for any month, he/she shall be required, instead to submit an explanation of why he/she is unable to submit the costs, and the date(s) he/she will be able to submit the costs including payment amount(s). Supporting documentation and evidence of why the Respondent is unable to make such payment(s) must accompany this submission.

Respondent understands that failure to submit costs timely is a violation of probation and submission of evidence demonstrating financial hardship does not preclude the Board from pursuing further disciplinary action. However, Respondent understands that by providing evidence and supporting documentation of financial hardship it may delay further disciplinary action.

In addition to any other disciplinary action taken by the Board, an unrestricted license will not be issued at the end of the probationary period and the respiratory care practitioner license will not be renewed, until such time all probation monitoring costs have been paid.

The filing of bankruptcy by the Respondent shall not relieve the Respondent of his/her responsibility to reimburse the Board for costs incurred.

- 5. EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENT** Respondent shall be employed a minimum of 24 hours per week as a respiratory care practitioner for a minimum of 2/3 of his/her probation period.

Respondent may substitute successful completion of a minimum of thirty (30) additional continuing education hours, beyond that which is required for license renewal, for each 8 months of employment required. Respondent shall submit proof to the Board of successful completion of all continuing education requirements. Respondent is responsible for paying all costs associated with fulfilling this term and condition of probation.

- 6. NOTICE TO EMPLOYER** Respondent shall be required to inform all current and subsequent employers, directors, managers, supervisors, and contractors during the probation period, of the discipline imposed by this decision by providing his/her current and subsequent human resources personnel, directors, managers, supervisors, and contractors with a complete copy of the decision and order, and the Statement(s) of Issues or Accusation(s) in this matter prior to the beginning of or returning to employment or within 3 days from each change in a supervisor or director.

If Respondent is employed by or through a registry [and is not restricted from working for a registry], Respondent shall also make each hospital or establishment to which he/she is sent aware of the discipline imposed by this decision by providing his/her human resources personnel, manager, and supervisor for each shift, at each hospital or establishment with a copy of this decision, and the Statement(s) of Issues or Accusation(s) in this matter prior to the beginning of employment. This must be done each time there is a change in supervisors or administrators.

The employer will then inform the Board, in writing, that he/she is aware of the discipline, on forms to be provided to the Respondent. Respondent is responsible for contacting the Board to obtain additional forms if needed. All reports completed by the employer must be submitted from the employer directly to the Board.



In addition, any employer, director, manager, supervisor or contractor, shall report to the Board immediately, within 24 hours, if he/she suspects Respondent is under the influence of alcohol or any substance or has had any occurrence of substance abuse.

**7. SUPERVISOR QUARTERLY REPORTS** Supervisor Quarterly Reports of Performance are due for each year of probation and the entire length of probation from each employer, as follows:

For the period covering January 1st through March 31st, reports are to be completed and submitted between April 1st and April 7th.

For the period covering April 1st through June 30th, reports are to be completed and submitted between July 1st and July 7th.

For the period covering July 1st through September 30th, reports are to be completed and submitted between October 1st and October 7th.

For the period covering October 1st through December 31st, reports are to be completed and submitted between January 1st and January 7th.

Respondent is ultimately responsible for ensuring his/her employer(s) submits complete and timely reports.

**8. CHANGES OF EMPLOYMENT OR RESIDENCE** Respondent shall notify the Board, and appointed probation monitor, in writing, of any and all changes of employment, location, and address within 3 days of such change. This includes but is not limited to applying for employment, termination or resignation from employment, change in employment status, change in supervisors, administrators or directors.

Respondent shall also notify his/her probation monitor AND the Board IN WRITING of any changes of residence or mailing address within 3 days. P.O. Boxes are accepted for mailing purposes, however the Respondent must also provide his/her physical residence address as well.

**9. COST RECOVERY** Respondent shall pay to the Board a sum not to exceed the costs of the investigation and prosecution of this case. That sum shall be \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and shall be paid in full directly to the Board, in equal quarterly payments, within 12 months from the effective date of this decision. Cost recovery will not be tolled.

If Respondent is unable to submit costs timely, he/she shall be required, instead to submit an explanation of why he/she is unable to submit these costs in part or in entirety, and the date(s) he/she will be able to submit the costs including payment amount(s). Supporting documentation and evidence of why the Respondent is unable to make such payment(s) must accompany this submission.

Respondent understands that failure to submit costs timely is a violation of probation and submission of evidence demonstrating financial hardship does not preclude the Board from pursuing further disciplinary action. However, Respondent understands that by providing evidence and supporting documentation of financial hardship may delay further disciplinary action.

Consideration to financial hardship will not be given should Respondent violate this term and condition, unless an unexpected AND unavoidable hardship is established from the date of this order to the date payment(s) is due.

The filing of bankruptcy by the Respondent shall not relieve the Respondent of his/her responsibility to reimburse the Board for these costs.

**10. TOLLING FOR OUT-OF-STATE RESIDENCE OR PRACTICE** Periods of residency or practice outside California, whether the periods of residency or practice are temporary or permanent, will toll the probation period but will not toll the obey all laws, quarterly reports, probation monitoring program, probation monitoring costs, or cost recovery requirements. Travel out of California for more than 30 days must be reported to the Board in writing prior to departure. Respondent shall notify the Board, in writing, within 3 days, upon his/her return to California and prior to the commencement of any employment where representation as a respiratory care practitioner is/was provided.

Respondent's license shall automatically be cancelled if respondent's cumulative period tolling is greater than five years. However, the cancellation of the license does not relieve the respondent from outstanding cost recovery or probation monitoring costs.

**11. VALID LICENSE STATUS** Respondent shall maintain a current, active and valid license for the length of the probation period. Failure to pay all fees and meet CE requirements prior to his/her license expiration date shall constitute a violation of probation.

**12. VIOLATION OF PROBATION** If Respondent commits a "Major Violation," as identified in the Disciplinary Guidelines, incorporated by reference pursuant to section 1399.374, he/she shall receive a notice to cease the practice of respiratory care, as directed by the Board. The Board shall attempt to contact Respondent by electronic and/or telephonic means to advise him/her of the notice to cease practice and shall deliver such notice by certified and regular mail. The Board shall update its licensing database to reflect the status of the license.

If the Respondent is ordered to cease practice, he/she may file a written appeal, within ten days of the date of the notice to cease practice, to provide additional evidence disputing the finding of the violation(s) that was cause for the notice to cease practice. The Executive Officer will review the appeal and make a determination in the matter, within ten days from the date the written appeal and all supporting evidence or documentation is received. The probationer shall be notified of the outcome by certified mail.

Respondent shall not resume the practice of respiratory care until a final decision on an accusation and/or petition to revoke probation is made or until such time as the Board delivers written notification that the notice to cease practice has been dissolved. The cessation of practice shall not apply to the reduction of the probationary time period.

The Board will contact the Respondent and his/her employers, human resources personnel, directors, managers, supervisors, and contractors and notify them that Respondent has been issued a notice to cease practice.

In addition, if Respondent violates any term of the probation in any respect, the Board, after giving Respondent notice and the opportunity to be heard, may revoke probation and carry out the disciplinary order that was stayed.

If a petition to revoke probation is filed against Respondent during probation, the Board shall have continuing jurisdiction and the period of probation shall be extended until the matter is final. No petition for modification of penalty shall be considered while there is an accusation or petition to revoke probation or other penalty pending against Respondent.

**13. COMPLETION OF PROBATION** Upon successful completion of probation, Respondent's license shall be fully restored.

## STANDARD ALCOHOL/DRUG CONDITIONS

**14. WORK SCHEDULES** Respondent shall be required to submit to the probation monitor work schedules on a weekly/monthly basis for the length of probation for each and every place of employment. Respondent shall ensure the Board has a copy of her/his current work schedule at all times for each place of employment.

**15. BIOLOGICAL FLUID TESTING** Respondent, at his/her expense, shall participate in random testing, including but not limited to biological fluid testing (i.e. urine, blood, saliva), breathalyzer, hair follicle testing, and/or any drug screening program approved by the Board.

Respondent shall be required to make daily contact, to determine if he/she is required to submit a specimen for testing, each day, including weekends, holidays, and vacations in or outside of California, at a lab approved by the Board. Board representatives may also appear unannounced, at any time to collect a specimen. All collections will be observed.

At all times, Respondent shall fully cooperate with the Board or any of its representatives, and shall, when directed, appear for testing as requested and submit to such tests and samples for the detection of alcohol, narcotics, hypnotic, dangerous drugs or other controlled substances. All alternative testing sites, due to vacation or travel outside of California must be approved by the Board, 30 days prior to the vacation or travel.

If Respondent is unable to provide a specimen in a reasonable amount of time from the request, while at the work site, Respondent understands that any Board representative may request from the supervisor, manager or director on duty to observe Respondent in a manner that does not interrupt or jeopardize patient care in any manner until such time Respondent provides a specimen acceptable to the Board.

If Respondent tests positive for a banned substance (including testing positive for ETG), the Board will contact the Respondent and his/her employers, human resources personnel, directors, managers, supervisors, and/or contractors and notify them of the positive test, including the substance(s) and levels detected. Thereafter, the Board may contact the specimen collector, laboratory, Respondent, treating physician, treatment provider and/or support group facilitators to determine whether the positive test is evidence of prohibited use. If the Board determines the positive test is not evidence of prohibited use, the Board shall inform the Respondent and others previously contacted, that the positive test was not a violation of his/her probationary order.

**16. ABSTENTION FROM USE OF MOOD ALTERING SUBSTANCES** For purposes of these terms and conditions, a banned substance includes alcohol, marijuana, controlled substances and any and all other mood altering drugs and substances. Respondent shall completely abstain from the possession or use of all banned substances and their associated paraphernalia. Respondent may take other medication when lawfully prescribed by a licensed practitioner as part of a documented medical treatment. Respondent shall provide the Board a copy of a prescription within five days of the date the prescription was filled.

Respondent shall execute a release authorizing the release of pharmacy and prescribing records as well as physical and mental health medical records. Respondent shall also provide information of treating physicians, counselors or any other treating professional as requested by the Board.

Respondent shall ensure that he/she is not in the presence of or in the same physical location as individuals who are using illegal substances, even if Respondent is not personally ingesting the drug(s). Respondent shall also ensure he/she is not ingesting or using any product that contains trace amounts of alcohol or any other banned substances (e.g. cold/flu medications, cough syrups, diet pills/products, mouth wash, skin care or hygiene products, perfumes, poppy seeds, dessert or any foods, etc...).

Any positive result that registers over the established laboratory cutoff level for a banned substance, shall be reported to each of Respondent's employers.

## SPECIALTY CONDITIONS

The following conditions imposed are dependent upon the violation(s) committed.

**17. SUSPENSION** As part of probation, Respondent shall be suspended from the practice of respiratory care for a period of \_\_\_\_\_, beginning the effective date of this decision. If not employed as a respiratory care practitioner or if currently on any other type of leave from employment, the suspension shall be served once employment has been established or reestablished and prior to the end of the probationary period. Respondent shall ensure that each employer informs the Board, in writing, that it is aware of the dates of suspension.

Respondents required to engage in Biological Fluid Testing, shall be suspended for a minimum of 10-60 days.

Respondents required to undergo a Psychological Evaluation, shall be suspended for a minimum of 30-90 days.

**18. RESTRICTION OF PRACTICE** Respondent may not be employed or function as a member of respiratory care management or supervisory staff during the entire length of probation. This includes lead functions. Respondent is prohibited from working as part of a transport team.

Respondent is prohibited from working in home care or for a registry. Respondent is also prohibited from providing instruction or supervision to respiratory care students or applicants whether in a clinical or classroom setting.

Respondent is prohibited from working with \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. neonates, elderly, comatose patients, children).

**19. DIRECT SUPERVISION** During the period of probation, Respondent shall be under the direct supervision of a person holding a current and valid non-restricted Board license, who has not previously been disciplined by the Board. The Respondent shall not have a financial, personal, or familial relationship with the licensee, or other relationship that could reasonably be expected to compromise the ability to provide supervision and render impartial and unbiased reports to the board.

Respondent shall be required to provide a copy of the Statement of Issues or Accusation and decision in this matter and the person providing direct supervision shall inform the Board in writing that he/she is aware of the discipline. "Under the direct supervision" means assigned to a respiratory care practitioner who is on duty and immediately available in the assigned patient area. The Board shall be informed in writing of and approve the persons authorized to provide supervision and the level of supervision prior to the commencement of work.

Respondent shall be required to submit to the probation monitor work schedules on a weekly/monthly basis for the length of probation and identify who is providing supervision for each shift. Respondent shall ensure the Board has a copy of her/his current work schedule identifying supervisor(s) at all times for each place of employment.

In addition to completing supervisor quarterly reports, any employer, director, manager, supervisor or contractor, shall report to the Board immediately, within 24 hours, if he/she suspects Respondent is under the influence of alcohol or any substance or has had any occurrence of substance abuse.

## 20. EDUCATION

[ ] **CONTINUING EDUCATION** Respondent shall be required to complete additional Continuing Education, approved by the Board, beyond that which is required for license renewal. A minimum of fifteen (15) additional hours is required for each year of probation. Respondent shall submit proposed courses to the Board 30 days in advance for approval consideration. Respondent shall also submit proof to the Board of successful completion of all continuing education requirements.

[ ] **EDUCATION/COURSE WORK** As directed by the Board, Respondent shall be required to successfully complete 3-12 semester units (or its equivalent) of education courses in California at an institution approved by the Board in addition to the continuing education required for the renewal of licensure. The course selection shall be submitted to and approved by the Board in advance. The Board, at its discretion, may require the education to be in a specific area of study. Successful completion is a grade of "C" or "70%" or better for any completed course.

Respondent shall be required to submit proof of successful completion in the form of official transcripts no later than twelve (12) months prior to the date probation is scheduled to end.

Failure to timely and successfully complete approved courses at an approved institution(s), or provide documentation thereof shall constitute a violation of probation.

Respondent is responsible for paying all costs associated with fulfilling this term and condition of probation.

**21. COMPETENCY EXAMINATION** Within 6 months of the effective date of this decision and/or as designated by the Board, Respondent shall be required to take and pass a written competency examination as designated by the Board. This examination shall be taken on a date specified by the Board and Respondent shall pay all examination fees.

Respondent's failure to appear for or pass any scheduled examination will be noted as failure to pass or failure to successfully complete the examination. Respondent's failure to successfully complete the examination after one scheduled examination, shall constitute incompetence and a violation of probation. Failure to pay costs for the examination, shall also constitute a violation of probation.

**22. ALCOHOL AND DRUG TREATMENT** Respondent, at his/her expense, shall successfully complete a treatment regimen at a recognized and established program in California of at least six months duration approved by the Board. The treatment program shall be successfully completed within the first nine months of probation. The program director, psychiatrist or psychologist shall confirm that Respondent has complied with the requirement of this decision and shall notify the Board immediately if he/she believes the Respondent cannot safely practice. Respondent shall execute a release authorizing divulgence of this information to the Board.

Respondent shall inform the program director, psychiatrist or psychologist, of his/her probationary status with the Board, and shall cause that individual to submit monthly reports to the Board providing information concerning Respondent's progress and prognosis. Such reports shall include results of biological fluid testing. Positive results shall be reported immediately to the Board and shall be used in administrative discipline. Respondent shall execute a release authorizing clinical providers to divulge the aforementioned information to the Board.

**23. PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION** Within 60 days of the effective date of this decision, and on a periodic basis thereafter as may be required or directed by the Board, Respondent, at his/her own expense, shall have a mental health examination, including psychological assessment and testing as appropriate, to determine his/her capacity to perform all professional duties with safety to self and to the public.

The examination will be performed by a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist appointed by the Board. The evaluator shall have three years experience in conducting evaluations in accordance with acceptable professional standards. The evaluator shall not have a current or past financial relationship, personal relationship, or business relationship with the licensee.

Respondent shall provide this evaluator with a copy of the Board's disciplinary order prior to the evaluation.

The examiner must submit a written report of that assessment and recommendations to the Board within 10 days, unless additional time is needed, but not to exceed 30 days. If the evaluator determines that a licensee is a threat to himself/herself or others, the evaluator shall notify the board within 24 hours of such a determination. Recommendations for cessation or restriction of practice for the safety of patients, treatment, therapy or counseling made as a result of the mental health examination, will be instituted and followed by the Respondent.

Respondent shall execute a release authorizing the evaluator to divulge all findings and/or information revealed through the evaluation process, to the Board.

All costs incurred for evaluation and treatment are the responsibility of the Respondent. Failure to timely pay for the evaluation shall also constitute a violation of probation.

**24. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** Within 60 days of the effective date of this decision, Respondent, at his/her expense, shall undergo an assessment of his/her physical condition by a physician appointed by the Board. Respondent shall provide the examining physician with a copy of the Board's disciplinary order prior to the examination. The examining physician must submit a written report of his/her findings to the Board. If medically determined, a recommended treatment program will be instituted and followed by the Respondent with the physician providing written reports to the Board on forms provided by the Board.

If the examining physician finds that Respondent is not physically fit to practice or can only practice with restrictions, the examining physician shall notify the Board within three (3) working days. The Board shall notify Respondent in writing of the examining physician's determination of unfitness to practice and shall order the Respondent to cease or restrict licensed activities as a condition of probation. Respondent shall comply with this condition until the Board is satisfied of Respondent's fitness to practice safely and has so notified the Respondent. Respondent shall document compliance in the manner required by the Board.

Respondent shall execute a release authorizing the physician to divulge the aforementioned information to the Board.

Failure to timely pay for the evaluation shall also constitute a violation of probation.

# VIOLATION STANDARDS

## MAJOR VIOLATIONS

Major violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any act that presents a threat to a patient, the public, or the respondent him/herself;
2. Failure to timely complete a board-ordered program or evaluation;
3. Committing two or more minor violations of probation;
4. Practicing respiratory care or making patient contact while under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
5. Committing any drug or alcohol offense, or any other offense that may or may not be related to drugs or alcohol, that is a violation of the Business and Professions Code or state or federal law;
6. Failure to make daily contact as directed, submit to testing on the day requested, or appear as requested by any Board representative for testing, in accordance with the "biological fluid testing" term and condition;
7. Testing positive for a banned substance;
8. Knowingly using, making, altering or possessing any object or product in such a way as to defraud a drug test designed to detect the presence of a banned substance;
9. Failure to adhere to any suspension or restriction in practice;
10. Falsifying any document in connection with the terms and conditions of probation;

If a Respondent commits a major violation, the Board shall issue a notice to cease practice, pursuant to section 1399.375 of Division 13.6, Title 16, California Code of Regulations, and the Board shall refer the matter for formal disciplinary action.

## MINOR VIOLATIONS

Minor violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Failure to submit complete and required documentation in a timely manner to the Board, an employer, or any other party, in accordance with the terms and conditions of probation;
2. Unexcused absence at required meetings;
3. Failure to contact a monitor as required;
4. Failure to submit cost recovery or monthly probation monitoring costs timely.
5. Any other violation that does not present a threat to the Respondent or public.

If a Respondent commits a minor violation, the Board shall determine the appropriate action, up to and including referral of the matter for disciplinary action.

**Disciplinary Guidelines  
2011 Edition**

*Published by*

**Respiratory Care Board of California  
3750 Rosin Court, Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95834**

**T: 916.999.2190 • F: 916.263.7311 • E: [rcbinfo@dca.ca.gov](mailto:rcbinfo@dca.ca.gov)**

**[Contact information was updated to reflect an office move in May 2012]**