



# *Keeping People Safe*

## **Toolkit for Infection Prevention & Control in Dental Offices**

Legislation, Regulations and Oversight: Fitting it All Together

This reference summarizes the Ontario legislation, regulations, and regulatory authorities that govern Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) practices in dental offices.

IPAC compliance in Ontario is legally mandated for all health care providers and clinical settings to ensure safety and prevent disease transmission. Statutes establish authority, regulations guide enforcement, and regulatory colleges and [Public Health Units](#) share oversight responsibilities.

**RCDSO** | Royal College of  
Dental Surgeons of Ontario

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## A) Related Legislation

- [Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 \(RHPA\)](#): Enables regulatory colleges to establish and enforce standards as part of safe professional practice.
- [Dentistry Act, 1991](#): Defines the scope of practice and authorized acts of dentistry and establishes the authority of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO) as the Dental Regulator.
- [Dental Hygiene Act, 1991](#): Defines the scope of practice and authorized acts of dental hygiene and establishes the authority of the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO).
- [Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990 \(HPPA\)](#): Establishes the structure and responsibilities of Ontario's Public Health Units to deliver programs and services to prevent disease and promote the health of Ontarians.
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act \(OHSA\)](#): Sets out rights and duties for the protection of Oral Health Care Workers (OHCWs) in dental offices, including protection from infectious hazards and requirements for training, protective equipment and other control measures.

## B) Regulations and Provincial Requirements

- [Ontario Public Health Standards \(OPHS\)](#): Sets minimum requirements for mandatory public health programs and services delivered by Public Health Units, including responding to IPAC complaints.
- [Infection Prevention and Control Complaint Protocol, 2022](#): Provides operational direction for public health response to IPAC complaints, including investigation, corrective action, reporting, and patient notification.
- [Quality Assurance Regulation under the Dentistry Act](#): Defines the quality assurance program and associated expectations for all dentists.

## C) Oversight

- [Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario \(RCDSO\)](#): Sets and enforces IPAC standards.
- [Local Public Health Units \(PHUs\)](#): Investigate IPAC complaints in various settings including dental offices to identify and mitigate IPAC lapses (e.g., instrument reprocessing failures, reuse of single use items). Notify the regulatory college in the event an IPAC complaint is linked to a member.
- [Local Medical Officer of Health \(MOH\) or designate \(e.g., public health inspector\)](#): May issue orders under the HPPA when there are reasonable and probable grounds a health hazard exists. Orders may require action such as closure, sterilization of instruments, or the provision of patient records. Orders are legally binding and must be followed as prescribed.
- [Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development \(MLITSD\)](#): Sets, communicates and enforces OHCW health and safety requirements under the OHSA and its regulations (e.g., PPE, needle safety, exposure).

## D) Evidence and Guidance

- RCDSO [Standard of Practice Infection Prevention and Control in the Dental Office](#), [list of frequently asked questions](#) and [Self Audit Review Form Infection Prevention and Control](#).
- [Public Health Ontario \(PHO\)](#): provides scientific evidence and expert guidance that shapes policies and practices, including [Resources for Preventing Infection Prevention and Control \(IPAC\) Lapses | Public Health Ontario](#).
- [Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee \(PIDAC\)](#): provides evidence-based guidance and best practice recommendations to Public Health Ontario.
- IPAC Canada: [Infection Control Resources - IPAC-Canada](#)
- Canadian Standards Association group (CSA): [Product Certification & Standards Development - CSA Group](#).

