

# PRACTICE ACROSS JURISDICTIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

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## Virtual Care

Before delivering services through virtual health care across jurisdictions, occupational therapists must ensure that decisions regarding service provisions are in the client's best interest. For CHCPBC's purposes, virtual care is defined as any interaction between clients and registrants that occurs remotely, using any communication or information technologies, to facilitate access to occupational therapy services.

It is the occupational therapist's responsibility to consider whether the quality of service offered in a virtual format will meet the client's needs or whether in-person services would be the most suitable option for service delivery. The occupational therapist's responsibility is to inform clients about the risks, benefits, and limitations of virtual occupational therapy services.

It is expected that occupational therapists providing virtual services to clients residing in British Columbia adhere to the following:

- Disclose the province where they are registered / licensed to the client.
- Notify the client of the location from which they are providing the service.
- Ensure their liability insurance provides coverage for virtual activities.
- Ensure they have adequate information about resources where the client is located.
- Have a contingency plan should virtual services no longer be appropriate.

## Occupational Therapy Services Provided When the Client is WITHIN British Columbia

The College requires occupational therapists to register if they provide occupational therapy services for clients with primary residence in British Columbia (BC).

If the client is not a resident of BC but is visiting or vacationing in BC for 45 days or less, the occupational therapist is not required to register with the College; however, if the client's

stay in BC exceeds 45 days, temporary registration would be required. If their stay exceeds 90 days, full registration would be required.

## **Occupational Therapy Services Provided When the Client is OUTSIDE British Columbia**

### **Providing Services for Clients in Other Canadian Provinces & Territories**

Registration requirements, legislation, and restricted activities vary across provinces. Occupational therapists registered with the College who are considering providing services for clients residing either temporarily or permanently in other provinces are advised to check with the province's regulatory body where the occupational therapy services will occur. Links to each of the provincial regulators can be found on the [Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations](#) (ACOTRO) website.

Registrants are responsible for ensuring that their insurance coverage is applicable when providing services for clients residing outside BC.

### **Providing Services for Clients Outside of Canada**

When clients are located outside of Canada (e.g., vacation or job posting), it is important to recognize that regulatory legislation of occupational therapy varies from state to state and country to country. As not all countries have regulatory legislation or regulatory bodies, registrants need to confirm whether registration is required in the jurisdiction where the client is located (refer to the [WFOT International Practice Guide](#)). If registration is not required, this must be documented in the client's occupational therapy record. Registrants must ensure the client knows that occupational therapy services are provided within BC.

## **Providing Services When an Occupational Therapist is OUTSIDE of British Columbia**

If a College registrant is outside the province and wishes to continue to provide virtual services to their clients who reside in BC, they need to ensure that their insurance coverage continues to be applicable. Registrants must notify the client that they are located outside the province during service delivery.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**I have a client who is going to be visiting BC for the next two months, but their primary residence is in Manitoba. I am registered with the College of Occupational Therapists of Manitoba. I wonder if I will be allowed to provide virtual services to them while they are in BC.**

Occupational therapists must register with CHCPBC if they wish to provide occupational therapy services to clients located in BC for longer than 90 days. If the client will be in BC for less than 45 days, registration with the College is not mandatory. Please see the Registration page for more information.

**I am a registered occupational therapist in BC, and my client will be on a temporary job posting in Nova Scotia for the next six months. They have indicated they do not want to switch to a different occupational therapist. Would it be okay for me to continue to work with them virtually?**

You should contact the College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia to determine their requirements for providing occupational therapy services when a client is in Nova Scotia (either temporarily or permanently). It is also your responsibility to ensure that your liability insurance covers you when providing virtual services outside the province of BC.

**I am a registered occupational therapist in BC, and my client will visit Italy for the next three months. Would it be okay for me to continue to work with them virtually?**

It is recommended that you follow up with the regulatory body, if applicable, in that jurisdiction ([refer to the WFOT International Practice Guide](#)). If registration is not required, this must be documented in the client's occupational therapy record. Registrants must ensure the client knows that occupational therapy services are provided within BC.

**I am registered with COTBC and would like to touch base with some clients virtually while I'm out of the country for three months. Other OTs will see my clients who need in-person treatment in our company. Would it be okay for me to continue to see some clients virtually?**

Yes, you may continue to see appropriate clients for virtual services. You would need to ensure that your insurance coverage continues to be applicable. Registrants must notify the client that the therapist is outside the province during service delivery.

**I am registered in Ontario and did a medical legal assessment for one of my clients last year. The lawyer in BC is now asking me to testify regarding my assessment in the Supreme Court of BC, as the legal action is related to a motor vehicle accident that occurred in BC several years ago. Am I able to provide testimony in BC with my Ontario registration?**

You can provide testimony in BC without needing to purchase registration, as your testimony is related to your assessment conducted in Ontario. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that your liability insurance coverage is applicable when you leave the province of Ontario to perform your business activities outside that province.

**I am registered outside BC and scheduled to facilitate a course for occupational therapists in two months. Will I need to register with CHCPBC to teach the course?**

No, you would not need to register with the College to teach a course. However, the presenting therapist(s) must introduce themselves as an occupational therapist registered or licensed to practice in their respective jurisdictions.

**I am an occupational therapist registered with the Alberta College of Occupational Therapists (ACOT). I can supervise a student occupational therapist from UBC, completing a clinical fieldwork placement. Would I need to register temporarily with COTBC to provide supervision?**

Yes, temporary registration would be required since you would be supervising a student occupational therapist in BC and working with clients who reside in BC. The College has two options for temporary registration (i.e. practicing 1-45 consecutive days twice a year or 1-90 consecutive days in 12 months).