

National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (Queensland)

Information for health care workers



Protecting yourself and your clients

Generally, health care workers deliver services to improve the health of their clients, but sometimes may operate outside the bounds of what is ethical or safe health care. In Queensland, the National code is recognised as the *National code of conduct for health care workers (Queensland)* (National code (Queensland)).

The National code (Queensland) applies in Queensland from 1 October 2015.

In 2015 Australian state and territory government health ministers agreed to the terms of the National code to help give greater protection to consumers for services provided by certain health care workers. Each state and territory is responsible for ensuring the code is enforced within their jurisdiction, with the ability to investigate breaches and issue prohibition orders in relation to serious matters.

What are my responsibilities under the National code (Queensland)?

The National code (Queensland) outlines the minimum standards that must be followed by unregistered health care workers, and registered health care workers providing a service unrelated to their registration.

Under the National code (Queensland), health care workers must:

1. Provide services in a safe and ethical manner.
2. Obtain consent from their clients.
3. Display appropriate conduct when giving treatment advice.
4. Report concerns about treatment or care provided by other health care workers.
5. Take appropriate action in response to adverse events.
6. Adopt standard precautions for infection control.

7. Practice safely if diagnosed with infectious medical conditions.
8. Not make claims to cure certain serious illnesses.
9. Not misinform their clients.
10. Not practice under the influence of alcohol or unlawful substances.
11. Modify or stop practicing if they have certain mental or physical impairments.
12. Not financially exploit clients.
13. Not engage in sexual misconduct.
14. Comply with relevant privacy laws.
15. Keep appropriate records.
16. Be covered by appropriate insurance.
17. Display the code and other information (unless exempt).

Health care workers must also display, or make available, a copy of the National code (Queensland) in all premises or locations where they practice and give information to consumers about how and where complaints can be made if they have concerns about the service provided to them.

What actions may be taken against health practitioners to whom the National code (Queensland) applies?

The majority of health care workers already follow the minimum standards outlined in the National code (Queensland) when they practice.

Amendments to the *Health Ombudsman Regulation 2024* will identify the National code (Queensland) in Queensland as a prescribed conduct document to which the Health Ombudsman and Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) may refer when considering what actions to take in relation to a health care worker, including the issuing of an interim prohibition order or prohibition order.

The Health Ombudsman may issue an interim prohibition order to protect the health and safety of the public, whether or not a complaint has been made.

The Health Ombudsman must notify an employer if an interim prohibition order is issued or if a complaint is investigated. The Health Ombudsman must also give notice of a QCAT decision to an employer.

A penalty of 200 penalty units applies if a person contravenes an interim prohibition order, a prohibition order or a corresponding interim prohibition order.

Interim prohibition orders issued by the Health Ombudsman in Queensland must be published and can be found at <https://www.oho.qld.gov.au/>

For additional information relating to the powers of the Health Ombudsman, please refer to the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013 and the Health Ombudsman Regulation 2024*.

Do prohibition orders apply interstate?

There will be mutual recognition of prohibition orders between states and territories, so that a corresponding order issued across borders is recognised. Queensland currently recognises prohibition orders issued in New South Wales and South Australia, and this will expand as other states and territories implement the National code.

Consumers can check online to see if a health care worker is subject to an order by visiting the Queensland Office of the Health Ombudsman.

How can consumers make a complaint?

If consumers are concerned with the health, conduct or performance of a registered or unregistered health practitioner, or believe a health care worker has not adhered to the National code (Queensland), they are entitled to make a complaint.

If the complaint is not resolved after first talking with the health care worker or provider, then consumers can lodge a formal complaint with the Office of the Health Ombudsman, by:

- submitting an online complaint form at www.oho.qld.gov.au
- filling in a complaint form (available at www.oho.qld.gov.au) and
 - sending it to:
PO Box 13281, George Street Brisbane Qld 4003
 - faxing it to (07) 3319 6350
 - emailing it to complaints@oho.qld.gov.au
- making an appointment to speak to them by calling 133 OHO (133 646). They are open from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday.

Consumers requiring an interpreter can access the Office of the Health Ombudsman using the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) by calling 131 450.

Consumers with a hearing or speech impairment can access the Office of the Health Ombudsman using the National Relay Service:

- TTY/voice call – 133 677
- Voice relay – 1300 555 727
- SMS relay – 0423 677 767
- Website – [National Relay Service | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)

More information

To find out more about the National code (Queensland), visit [The National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers \(Queensland\) | Queensland Health](#)

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