

## Career Profile RESPIRATORY THERAPIST

### What is a Respiratory Therapist? – Career Description/Scope

Respiratory Therapists (RT's) are regulated health professionals who monitor, evaluate and treat individuals with respiratory and cardio-respiratory disorders. Respiratory Therapists are an essential part of the cardiac arrest team, are leaders in the use of mechanical ventilators and other life support equipment, and use medications, therapies and tests to assist in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart and lung disease. Whenever and wherever breathing is an issue, Respiratory Therapists are there to provide care.

### Education Requirements to work in Ontario

- Three year Diploma or four-year joint diploma/degree program, offered at colleges and universities that work with teaching hospitals and other health care organizations

### Respiratory Therapist Practice Requirements

To practice in Ontario, Respiratory Therapists must be registered with the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario and perform the following requirements:

- Entry to Practice
  - National certification exam
- Ongoing
  - Participate in mandatory ongoing professional development requirements that help to maintain high standards for patient care.

### How does a Respiratory Therapist Practice at TBRHSC?

- Work to scope of practice as outlined by various legislation and authorities including:
  - College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario
  - Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)
  - Respiratory Therapy Act
  - Public Hospitals Act
- In addition, may work under delegation through medical directives or direct orders
- Work in many practice settings including: intensive care unit, operating rooms, diagnostics, emergency, neonatal unit, research, pulmonary rehabilitation, educational institutions, patient education and chronic ventilation

### What does a Respiratory Therapist Do?

Respiratory Therapists are an integral part of the health care team and are highly trained in areas such as: ventilation and airway management, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), oxygen and aerosol therapy. They care for patients during: cardiac stress testing, pulmonary function testing, cardiorespiratory disease prevention such as smoking cessation, high risk births, rehabilitation, and surgery. They treat patients with health issues such as: asthma,

bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, heart disease, and pneumonia. Patients frequently receive care from Respiratory Therapists in a hospital setting. RT's also apply expertise in areas of home care, family health teams, patient and student education, research, and medical equipment sales. Respiratory Therapists care for adults, children and newborns. Post diploma education opportunities for RRT's in specialized areas include: Anesthesia Assistants, Pulmonary Perfusionists and Certified Respiratory Educators.

### Web Resources

- College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario [www.crto.on.ca](http://www.crto.on.ca)
- Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists [www.csrt.com](http://www.csrt.com)
- Respiratory Therapy Society of Ontario [www.rtso.ca](http://www.rtso.ca)
- American Association for Respiratory Care [www.aarc.org](http://www.aarc.org)