



Nova Scotia  
Occupational Therapy  
Regulator

# New Registrant Guide

Congratulations! You are now licensed with the Nova Scotia Occupational Therapy Regulator (NSOTR). You may practice occupational therapy and use title in Nova Scotia. We are pleased to welcome you to the profession in this province.

## Who We Are:

NSOTR is the governing body established by the provincial government to regulate the practice of occupational therapy in Nova Scotia.

Our mandate is to protect the public's interest by:

- setting requirements for entry to the profession
- creating standards for practice,
- establishing programs to ensure that occupational therapists practice safely and competently, and
- investigating complaints and concerns about registrant's practice.

## Your Responsibilities:

As a regulated professional, there are standards and requirements you must meet. It is your responsibility to know your professional obligations and meet the deadlines for your regulatory requirements.

Please **read this guide carefully** for an overview of your regulatory requirements and the resources available to you as a regulated professional. All NSOTR Practice Standards and Guidelines as well as relevant legislation, regulations, policies, and Bylaws are available on the Regulator's website: [www.nsotr.ca](http://www.nsotr.ca)

If you have any questions, please contact the Regulator at 902-455-0556 or [info@nsotr.ca](mailto:info@nsotr.ca).

We look forward to working with you in the interest of ensuring safe, effective, and ethical occupational therapy practice for the people of Nova Scotia.

Kevin Wong, OT Reg. (N.S.)  
Executive Director & Registrar



# Occupational Therapist Title and Proof of Licensure

## Occupational Therapist Title:

You can now use occupational therapist title in Nova Scotia, depending on your licence and situation.

The following titles are protected by law and can only be used by licensed registrants of the Regulator who have completed the National Occupational Therapy Certification Examination (NOTCE):

- **Occupational Therapist**
- **OT**
- **OT Reg. (N.S.)**

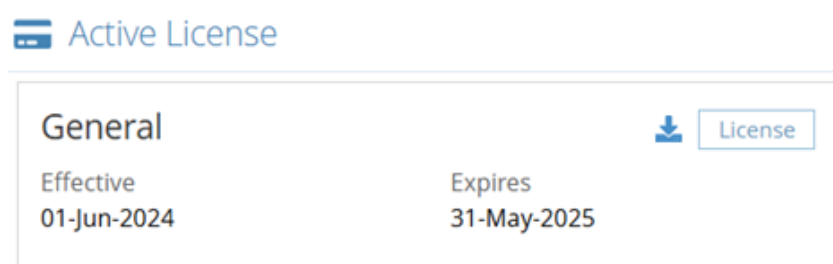
However, if you hold a Conditional licence because you have not yet completed the NOTCE, you may only use the following titles:

- **Provisional Occupational Therapist**
- **Provisional OT**
- **Provisional OT Reg. (N.S.)**

## Proof of Licensure:

Up-to-date proof of licensure for anyone who is or has ever been licensed with the Regulator can be found using our Public Registry: [Search for an Occupational Therapist](#)

You can obtain a free Confirmation of Licence through your online Portal. This Certificate is only current and valid as of the date of printing. To download the document, on the main page of your online Portal, click on the “License” button underneath the “Active License” heading:





# Updating Your Information

## Your Responsibility to Keep Your Information Up-to-Date:

NSOTR collects more information from registrants than you provided on your application form. You must **promptly** update your profile **when you start practicing** and **after there are any changes** to the following information:

- Employment information, practice area(s), and role
- Liability Insurance
- Whether you are engaged in any higher-risk practice approaches

## How To Update Your Profile:

You can update your employment, insurance, practice, and contact information through your [Online Portal](#). After logging into your Profile, select “My Profile” on the left-hand side, then click “Edit Profile.” After making changes, don’t forget to click “Submit”, otherwise your changes may be lost!

## Contact Information:

You are responsible to provide up-to-date contact information to the Regulator and ensure that your e-mail account is configured to accept NSOTR e-mails. (*Tip: if you haven’t heard from NSOTR recently, check your spam folder!*)

Many registrants use work or institutional e-mail addresses as their contact e-mail with the Regulator. This is allowed, but carries some risks:

- Using an e-mail account linked to a specific employer can result in missed notifications and difficulty accessing the Portal when you change jobs or go on leave
- The contents of employer-linked e-mails are not private
- The Regulator may send confidential or personal correspondence to your work e-mail, if this is the only e-mail address which you provide

For these reasons, the Regulator encourages all registrants to list a reliable personal e-mail address (for example, through a service such as Gmail, Outlook, Hotmail, etc.) as their contact e-mail with the Regulator.



# Annual Renewal

Occupational therapists must apply to renew their licence with the NSOTR each year.

NSOTR's licensing year runs from June 1 to May 31 each year. **All licenses expire on May 31 annually if not renewed.**

Renewal applications are completed entirely through the NSOTR's [online portal](#). NSOTR accepts renewal applications between **April 1 and May 31**. However, any renewal applications completed after May 15 are subject to a \$100 late renewal fee.

If you do not intend to renew your licence, you must request to **surrender** your licence before May 31. This can be done through the [online portal](#).

## **Non-renewal:**

If you do not renew your licence by May 31:

- your licence expires;
- you cannot practise occupational therapy or use title until you are issued a new licence;
- you will need to apply for re-licensure;
- you must pay the reinstatement fee of \$100 in addition to any other fees.

## **To renew your licence, you must:**

- Pay the licensing fees for the next year
- Update your employment, contact, and practice information
- Enter your Currency hours
- Enter your Continuing Competence Program Learning Goals and Activities



# Professional Liability Insurance

Every occupational therapist licensed in Nova Scotia must have a personal professional liability insurance policy that includes:

- Coverage to a minimum of \$5,000,000.00
- A legal expenses endorsement for investigation of complaints by a regulatory body

We do not accept employer-based insurance in place of a personal insurance policy. We review each insurance certificate to ensure your policy meets our requirements.

## Important Liability Insurance Reminders:

Failure to maintain **continuous** liability insurance coverage while licensed with NSOTR is a very serious matter. Every OT must have personal professional liability insurance coverage at all times, *even if you are not currently practicing*. You cannot practice occupational therapy, use OT title, or hold a licence with NSOTR unless you have liability insurance.

Liability insurance protects both you and the clients you serve. It ensures clients can receive compensation for an injury or loss due to the services you provide to them as an occupational therapist. Generally, it will also provide you with legal and financial support if a client brings a claim against you.

You can face fines from NSOTR if you fail to maintain liability insurance coverage while licensed, *even for one day*. More serious or repeated lapses of coverage may result in further disciplinary action.

## When Your Policy Expires:

When your policy expires, you have **30 days** from the date of expiry to upload your new policy certificate through the “Profile Update” section of your Portal. The certificate must show continuous liability insurance coverage (i.e. if the last day of your old policy is April 1, the new policy must begin on April 2 at the latest).

If you do not upload a new policy certificate within 30 days, we will suspend your licence and inform your employer. You will need to apply for re-licensure before you can continue practicing.

## Options to Get Insurance Include:

- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT), if you are a member.
- Private insurance brokers, such as AON Healthcare Advantage, Lloyd’s, etc.



# Currency

It is important that OTs practice occupational therapy to maintain their skills and keep up-to-date with changes in practice.

Whenever an OT applies for a licence or for renewal of a licence they must:

- Have at least 600 currency hours in the past 3 years; OR
- Have graduated from their OT program in the past 18 months

Currency Hours are defined as **paid** hours of service that are in the scope of practice of the profession of occupational therapy and involve the use of occupational therapy title. [NSOTR *Bylaws*, section 12]

If you are unsure if specific work experience is eligible for Currency, please contact NSOTR for clarification.

## **Moving from Non-clinical to Clinical practice:**

If you have not practiced clinically for more than 3 years, you must notify NSOTR that you are moving back to clinical practice and satisfy the Registrar you are competent to provide clinical services in the area(s) in which you wish to practice.

## **What if I do not meet the Currency Requirement?**

If you do not meet the Currency requirement when you apply for re-licensure, you will need to complete the [Re-Entry Program](#).



# Vulnerable Sector Check

Current registrants are required to provide a new Vulnerable Sector Check at renewal every five years. However, if you surrender your licence or let your licence expire, you will be required to provide a new check when you apply for re-licensure.

NSOTR will notify registrants at least two months before a new Vulnerable Sector Check is required.

## **Requirements for Vulnerable Sector Checks:**

The Regulator only accepts Vulnerable Sector Checks issued within the past three (3) months.

- The Vulnerable Sector Check must be completed using all the names and aliases you currently use and have used in the past.
- You are responsible for ensuring that the full legal name, previous names (if applicable) and date of birth on the Vulnerable Sector Check match the information provided to the Regulator during the application process. If the information does not match, the Vulnerable Sector Check will not be accepted by the Regulator.
- You are responsible for obtaining the correct type of Check and paying all related fees (including submitting to and paying for fingerprints, if required).



# Mandatory Reporting

## Self-Reporting:

You must **self-report** to the Regulator if:

- you are charged with or convicted of a crime [*Registration and Licensure Policy 9 - 14*]
- you are subject to disciplinary action in another jurisdiction or by another regulator [*Registration and Licensure Policy 9 - 15*]
- there is something that is preventing you from delivering occupational therapy services safely and competently and/or you are incapable or unfit to practice

## Sexual Misconduct:

Occupational Therapists must complete an **immediate, mandatory report** if they acquire information giving reasonable grounds to believe another regulated health professional has engaged in sexual misconduct. The report must be to the employer **and** to NSOTR or the relevant regulator. For more information, see the [Standards for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct](#).

## Reporting Regulated Health Professionals:

If you have reasonable grounds to believe that any other regulated health professional, including another Occupational Therapist:

- has committed professional misconduct,
- is incapacitated,
- is incompetent or practicing in a manner that is a danger to the public, and/or
- has engaged in conduct unbecoming of the profession,

you are **required by law** to make a report to that professional's regulatory body. [*Regulated Health Professions Act Section 60(1)(g)(h)*]

## Other Reporting Obligations:

Occupational Therapists must also be aware of their reporting obligations under any other laws, regulations, or statutes in Nova Scotia and any other jurisdiction in which they practice. Nova Scotia legislation with which you must be familiar includes:

- *Protection of Persons in Care Act*
- *Children and Family Services Act*
- *Personal Health Information Act, 2010*
- *Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act*
- *Adult Protection Act*





# Practicing Through a Corporation

Some occupational therapists in private practice offer their services through a professional corporation. This can be because:

- They are employed by a professional corporation
- They practice alone and want to practice through a corporation for tax or legal reasons

Professional Corporations can be quite large (dozens of staff and multiple professions) or very small (only one OT practicing alone).

Regardless of size, **a corporation cannot offer occupational therapy services unless it has a permit from NSOTR or has received a waiver.** If you have any questions about whether a specific corporation can offer occupational therapy services, please contact NSOTR directly.

## **How to Apply for a Corporate Permit:**

To apply for a corporate permit, please complete the [Corporate Permit Application Form](#), and submit via mail or e-mail to [registration@nsotr.ca](mailto:registration@nsotr.ca). The application fee for a corporate permit is \$150.

## **How to Renew a Corporate Permit:**

All permits expire yearly on December 31. To renew a permit, please submit the [Corporate Permit Renewal Form](#) via mail or e-mail to [registration@nsotr.ca](mailto:registration@nsotr.ca). The renewal fee is \$100.



# Continuing Competence Program

## What is the Continuing Competence Program?

The NSOTR Continuing Competency Program (CCP) is a quality-assurance program based on the principle that licensed occupational therapists in Nova Scotia are professionals whose goals include maintaining and improving their level of skills and knowledge based on accepted standards of professional practice. The CCP aims to support, monitor, and verify that occupational therapists are competent practitioners.

## Components of the Continuing Competence Program





# Competence Maintenance

## What is Competence Maintenance?

Competence Maintenance includes the basic yearly activities required of all occupational therapists to demonstrate that they are engaging in reflective practice and complying with regulatory requirements. You must fully participate in all Competence Maintenance activities as a condition of your licensure.

## Professional Development Plan

All registrants must complete a **Professional Development Plan (PDP)** annually when renewing their licence. Registrants will first complete the **Self-Assessment Tool**, which will help to inform their **Learning Plan** - two competence related goals that they will work towards throughout the registration year by completing Learning Activities. NSOTR allows registrants to select the Learning Activities that are relevant to their goals and their practice, and therefore **do not** require specific Continuing Education Credits (CECs) to be reported.

Registrants will:

- complete relevant learning activities to meet their Learning Goals, and
- at renewal, complete a reflection on how the completed learning activities enhanced their skills, attitudes, and judgment in relation to their selected Learning Goal.
  - These reflections should describe impacts on practice and may include examples that do not contain confidential client information.
- create a new PDP for the upcoming registration year as part of the renewal process.

It is mandatory for all registrants to complete a PDP **every year** and to retain any relevant documents for a period of 7 years. Registrants may upload these documents to the online portal if they wish to store them there, but this is not required.

### Note for New Registrants:

You are **encouraged** to create your PDP and submit goals when first licensed, but are **required** to have goals and learning activities for your first licensing year.

You will need to report on your progress towards your Learning Goals and submit learning activities when you renew your licence next April-May. We strongly recommend starting now and planning ahead!

## To create your Professional Development Plan:

1. Log into the Online Portal: [nsotr.alinityapp.com](https://nsotr.alinityapp.com)
2. Click on "Continuing Competence" in the left hand menu
3. Click on arrow "next" to current registration year (2025/2026)
4. Complete the form following directions on the webpage

## Practice Education Modules

The Regulator may require registrants to complete a specific eLearning module(s) at any time during the registration year including renewal. Registrants will be notified of the timeline for the completion of required eLearning modules.



# How is Competence Assessed?

## Competence Maintenance Audit

Cohorts of registrants will be selected to complete Competence Maintenance Audits throughout the year, which involve the registrant's PDP and learning activities being reviewed by NSOTR staff, and having feedback provided on the strengths and areas for growth in their goals, activities, and reflections. All registrants are eligible for selection for the Competence Maintenance Audit.

## Competence Review

The Competence Review is a peer-based interview used to assess a registrant's competence specific to their area of practice. More information on the Competence Review can be found on our website under Continuing Competence Program, and further information is provided to those registrants selected to participate.

Cohorts of registrants are selected throughout the year to complete the Competence Review using a **risk-based selection**. This means that registrants with a higher number of risk indicators are more likely to be selected to participate. The risk indicators are based on evidence in the health profession literature and data from other Canadian OT regulators that identify factors that are associated with risk to the public.

Examples of risk indicators used by the Regulator include but are not limited to: employment factors, use of higher-risk practice approaches, compliance history in continuing competence and registration, and professional conduct history with the Regulator.

While all registrants are eligible to be selected, only those selected are required to participate and will be notified by NSOTR staff of their selection.



# Practice Standards and Guidelines

The Regulator develops Standards and Guidelines to set the **minimum expectations** for how occupational therapists should practice. The Standards and Guidelines support professional practice by:

- Increasing therapists' knowledge of their responsibilities,
- Describing expectations for practice,
- Defining safe, ethical, competent practice, and
- Guiding critical thinking for everyday practice.

All Standards and Guidelines, as well as related FAQs, can be found at **nsotr.ca**.

Registrants are responsible for being knowledgeable in the Standards and Guidelines and practice in keeping with the expectations of the Standards and Guidelines. If registrants have questions about these documents, they can contact the Regulatory Program Coordinator at **902-455-0556 ext. 2**, or at **practice@nsotr.ca**

NSOTR Standards and Guidelines are reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and new Standards and Guidelines may be introduced. Registrants are notified and may be consulted on changes to these documents prior to them being implemented.

Other documents that all registrants should review are the **Code of Ethics** and the **Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada**, both which can be found on the same webpage as the Standards and Guidelines.



## Practice Questions

Registrants are able to connect with the Regulatory Program Coordinator via phone or email for private and confidential support with ethical and regulatory questions.

Questions the Regulatory Program Coordinator can answer include, but are not limited to:

- Practice questions related to Standards of Practice, Guidelines, legislation, or other regulatory requirements
- Ethical considerations in practice

You can contact the Regulatory Program Coordinator via phone or email at the following:

**902-455-0556 ext. 2**

**practice@nsotr.ca**



# Who to Contact at NSOTR

*If your question or issue is not listed here, or you are not sure who to contact, please reach out to [info@nsotr.ca](mailto:info@nsotr.ca) or 902-455-0556 and ask! We will redirect you to the correct person or resource.*

## **Josef Méthot, Administration and Registration Associate**

**902-455-0556, ext. 1   [registration@nsotr.ca](mailto:registration@nsotr.ca)**

Josef is the best person to contact if you need help with:

- Renewing a licence
- Surrendering a licence or going on leave
- Updating a profile or insurance information
- Moving from a Conditional to a Practicing licence
- Applying for or renewing a corporate permit
- Additional proof of licensure from the Regulator
- Accessing or using the Portal or another NSOTR resource
- Sending a Regulatory History Form to an employer or another regulator
- Verifying the licence of another OT

## **Rachel Avery, OT, Regulatory Program Coordinator**

**902-455-0556, ext. 2   [practice@nsotr.ca](mailto:practice@nsotr.ca)**

Rachel is the best person to contact if you need help with:

- Continuing Competency Program
- Creating Learning Goals
- Scope of Practice for OT
- Interpreting the Standards of Practice
- Support with an ethical or professional practice-related issue

## **Kevin Wong, OT, Executive Director & Registrar**

**902-455-0556, ext. 3   [registrar@nsotr.ca](mailto:registrar@nsotr.ca)**

Kevin is the best person to contact if you need help with:

- Making a complaint/understanding the professional conduct process
- Reporting a medical condition that prevents someone from practicing safely
- Self-reporting a criminal charge or professional discipline from another regulator
- Volunteering to serve on the Board or a Committee of the Regulator
- Returning to clinical practice after more than three years in a non-clinical role