

COLLEGE OF PHYSICAL THERAPISTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

PRACTICE STANDARD

Number 2

Effective: April 1, 2008

Replaces: September 1, 2006

December, 1996

March 1, 1990

ELECTRO-PHYSICAL AGENTS

A. Purchase and Maintenance

1. All electrical equipment must be inspected, and approved by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or Certification Europe (CE) prior to patient use. A record of inspection, calibration, and approval must be kept.
2. Annual servicing must be completed by qualified personnel, and must be documented. Repairs must be made when indicated and a repair history must be kept for each piece of equipment.
3. Integrity of leads, cords, plugs and all accessories must be ensured. Conductivity of carbon-impregnated rubber electrodes must be tested to ensure that they are replaced when their conductivity becomes unacceptable (i.e. resistance greater than ~ 500 ohms).
4. Extension cords or adapters should be avoided. Where necessary, Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters and AC/DC Power Converters must be used. All cords must be of the shortest possible length.

B. Application of Electro-physical Agents

1. A patient's informed consent must be obtained prior to the application of electro-physical agents. See the Practice Standard on Consent to Treatment.
2. Appropriate sensation testing must be performed.
3. Self-adhesive electrodes must be used for a single patient and must remain moist.
4. When electrodes are used, they must be secured.
5. Appropriate technique of application of electro-physical agent must be used e.g. angle and speed of movement of ultrasound transducer.
6. When light radiation is used, the patient must wear appropriate protective eyewear as mandated by the Radiation Protection Division of the BC Centre for Disease Control (www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=52).
7. The patient must be checked at least once during treatment and be instructed in how to obtain immediate assistance during treatment.

8. All treatment parameters must be recorded: modality, dosage, and specific area of the body treated with accurate description of the electrode placement. Treatment must be documented as per the Practice Standard on Clinical Records.
9. Patient's skin must be inspected after treatment. If an abnormal reaction occurs, a detailed description of the response and any subsequent action taken or recommended must be recorded in the clinical record.
10. Effects of treatment and subsequent treatment techniques and parameters must be modified appropriately, and documented as per the Practice Standard on Clinical Records.
11. World Health Organization standard precautions must be followed (www.wpro.who.int/sars/docs/practicalguidelines/dec2004/chapter3.pdf). Any accessory that comes into contact with the patient must be cleaned according to current infection control procedures (www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=194).

Additional Resources:

For information on informed consent see the *Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act* at www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/H/96181_01.htm and the *Infant's Act* at www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/I/96223_01.htm.

For information on Standard Precautions see the World Health Organization website at www.wpro.who.int/sars/docs/practicalguidelines/dec2004/chapter3.pdf.

For information on infection control visit the BC Centre for Disease Control website at: www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=194 or the Public Health Agency of Canada website at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dpg_e.html#infection.

For information on protective eyewear and LASER visit: www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=52.

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