

Procedure:	Absence from Clinical Activity & Return to Practice	
Owner of Policy:	Manager, Education	
Department/Program:	Southwest Ontario Regional Base Hospital Program	
Endorsed By:	Director, Southwest Centre for Prehospital Medicine	Endorsement Date: May 2025
Original Effective Date:	June 2019	Date Reviewed: May 2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedure for returning to practice after an absence from clinical activity. Upon new certification by the Regional Base Hospital Program (RBHP), a paramedic must maintain clinical activity to remain certified with the RBHP. Paramedics absent from clinical activity for a period of ninety (90) days or greater are considered clinically inactive and are administratively deactivated. An extended absence from clinical activity can result from a variety of reasons, including (but not limited to) short/long-term disability, parental leave, or any other approved leave granted by the Employer.

The Return to Practice (RTP) process offers a paramedic an opportunity to orient to the clinical environment after a period of absence. RTP is required as per the current Ministry of Health (MOH), [Advanced Life Support Patient Care Standards \(ALS PCS\), Section 5](#), and may include a consolidation phase as outlined within. This process will be initiated upon request by the Employer.

POLICY

The MOH Emergency Health Regulatory and Accountability Branch (EHRAB), at times, republishes the [ALS PCS](#) with amendments. The [Certification Standard, Section 5 of the ALS PCS](#), outlines definitions, processes, and requirements of all parties involved in the certification and authorization to perform medically delegated acts of Ontario Paramedics. The [Certification Standard, Section 5 of the ALS PCS](#), will serve as the policy related to RTP.

PROCEDURE

1. The Employer will notify the RBHP in writing when a paramedic is absent from clinical activity for a period of ninety (90) days or greater by entering the date of the last shift worked by the paramedic into the [Paramedic Portal of Ontario \(PPO\)](#). This can be completed in advance of the ninety (90) day mark if it is known that the absence will extend that long or once the ninety (90) day mark is reached.
2. At the ninety (90) day mark, the RBHP will confirm with the Employer that the paramedic is still clinically inactive and will administratively deactivate the paramedic in the [PPO](#) upon approval by the Regional Medical Director (RMD) or designate.
3. The Employer is responsible for notifying the RBHP when the paramedic is scheduled to return to practice in order to facilitate reactivation and certification for practice. The Employer will notify the RBHP at the earliest time possible when the date for the Paramedic to Return to Practice (RTP) is confirmed (at least five (5) business days' advanced notice is requested).
4. The Employer and the RBHP will determine a mutually agreeable schedule for RTP training/certification for the paramedic.
5. The RBHP will provide any required pre-course materials to the paramedic and the Employer once the training is confirmed. Materials may be in electronic or hard-copy format as determined by the RBHP. Successful completion of all pre-course evaluations is required prior to attending the RBHP RTP training/evaluation day.
6. The certification requirement for all paramedics returning to practice after an absence from clinical activity is based upon the duration of the absence and is described in Table 1. The format of the training may include

online training, virtual and/or in-person sessions, depending on the length of absence from clinical activity, geography, and the individual needs of the paramedic.

Table 1. SWORBHP Return to Practice Process

Days Off	RTP	MCME	Consolidation	In-Person Skills
Up to one day review to complete any missed MCME and ALS PCS review.				
90-185 days (3-6 months)	Complete the form that requires sign-off by Paramedic and Employer to decline an RTP session. Any missed MCME must be completed prior to RTP.			
	RTP - ALS PCS Review 2hrs (optional – see above)	Any missed MCME/ACP Hands on Day (required if missed)		
186-550 days (6-18 months) A gap analysis is completed by SWORBHP	RTP - ALS PCS Review 2hrs	Any missed MCME/ACP Hands on Day		
551-730 days (18-24 months) A gap analysis is completed by SWORBHP	RTP - ALS PCS Review 2hrs	Any missed MCME/ACP Hands on Day	Optional 12hrs	
731-915 days (24-30 months) A gap analysis is completed by SWORBHP	RTP - ALS PCS Review 2hrs	Any missed MCME/ACP Hands on Day	24hrs	PCP – Optional 4hrs ACP – 4hrs
916-1095 days (30-36 months) A gap analysis is completed by SWORBHP	RTP - ALS PCS Review 2hrs	Any missed MCME/ACP Hands on Day	36hrs	PCP – 4hrs ACP – 4hrs
The plan will be created based upon an individual needs' assessment after discussion with the Employer. The final decision on the RTP plan will be determined by the RBHP.				
1096-1280 days (36-42 months) A gap analysis is completed by SWORBHP	RTP - ALS PCS Review 2hrs	Any missed MCME/ACP Hands on Day	48hrs	PCP – 4hrs ACP – 4hrs
	Consult with the Education Team			
> 42months A gap analysis is completed by SWORBHP	Consult with the Education Team			

PLEASE NOTE

Additional requirements may be identified following a review and/or evaluation, which may include up to 48 hours of consolidation with a paramedic of equivalent or higher level of certification/authorization with a minimum of 6 months' experience at the discretion of the RBHP Medical Director

7. In addition to the requirements outlined in Table 1, the paramedic must successfully complete all mandatory education missed during the absence, i.e., Annual Mandatory Continuing Medical Education (MCME) requirements, introduction of new medical directives, and/or skills.
8. The RBHP will notify the Employer of the successful completion of the skill and knowledge review by the paramedic. Successful completion will result in paramedic reactivation. If gaps in skills and knowledge are identified through the RTP process, a remedial learning plan will be developed and shared with the Employer prior to its implementation.
9. The paramedic certification date in the [PPO](#) will be updated to reflect the initial certification training date with an expiry date of January 31 of the following year.

REFERENCES

[Advanced Life Support Patient Care Standards Version 5.4](#)
Emergency Health Services Branch, Ministry of Health

[Ontario Regulation 257/00, Ambulance Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. A. 19](#)

Paramedic Portal of Ontario (www.paramedicportalontario.ca)