

Breathing Matters

RESPIRATORY CARE BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 2025

New Regulation Strengthens the Role of RCPs in Patient Care—Effective October 1, 2025

The Respiratory Care Board of California (RCB) is pleased to inform all licensed Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCPs) of a newly-approved regulation that reinforces the critical role RCPs play in protecting patient safety and delivering specialized respiratory care.

On June 5, 2025, the Office of Administrative Law approved the RCB's regulation concerning Basic Respiratory Tasks and Services, now codified under California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 1399.365. This regulation will take effect October 1, 2025.

What This Means for RCPs

For the first time, California has a clearly defined framework distinguishing between basic respiratory tasks that may be performed by non-RCP staff and specialized services that must remain under the expertise of licensed RCPs.

This important distinction:

- Promotes patient safety by ensuring only trained RCPs perform services requiring clinical judgment.
- Provides clarity for healthcare teams about delegation and staffing practices.
- Highlights the advanced skills and knowledge that only RCPs bring to patient care.

Key Points to Know

- **Delegable basic tasks** (such as pulse oximetry, aerosol medication administration without ventilator adjustment, or tracheostomy hygiene care) may be performed by non-RCP personnel, reducing routine workload and allowing RCPs to focus on higher-level clinical responsibilities.
- **Non-delegable tasks** (such as ventilator management, suctioning*, tracheostomy tube changes, cuff adjustments, and any service requiring assessment or evaluation) remain the exclusive responsibility of RCPs.
- This regulation does not change the RCP scope of practice. Instead, it clearly affirms which responsibilities are unique to RCPs, underscoring their indispensable role on the healthcare team.

**This regulation does not alter the scope of practice for Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) who are authorized under Business and Professions Code §2530.2(d)(4) to perform suctioning with appropriate facility training.*

Why This Matters

RCPs are essential to the safe and effective delivery of respiratory care. By drawing a clear line between routine basic tasks and complex clinical services, this regulation ensures that RCP expertise remains central to patient outcomes. Healthcare facilities will also benefit from improved guidance when designing staffing models and delegation policies, reducing confusion and strengthening team-based care.

Healthcare facilities will benefit from improved guidance when designing staffing models and delegation policies, reducing confusion, and strengthening team-based care. Clear definitions of delegable and non-delegable tasks support compliance with state law, promote consistent care standards across settings, and help reduce conflicts or compliance concerns. Ultimately, the regulation protects the public while reinforcing the vital role of RCPs in California's healthcare system.

Resources to Support You

To help RCPs and facilities prepare for this transition, the Board has developed:

- **A Facility Self-Audit Tool** to identify and correct non-compliant delegation practices.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** that address common concerns from RCPs, healthcare facilities, and non-RCP personnel.

These resources are available at

https://rcb.ca.gov/enforcement/reg_updates_basic_tasks.shtml.

Questions?

For further clarification, please contact the Respiratory Care Board:

✉ rcbinfo@dca.ca.gov | ☎ (916) 999-2190

RCB sincerely appreciates the expertise, dedication, and leadership that RCPs provide every day. This regulation is a strong step toward safeguarding patients while elevating the specialized role of RCPs in California's healthcare system.



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NEXT BOARD MEETING

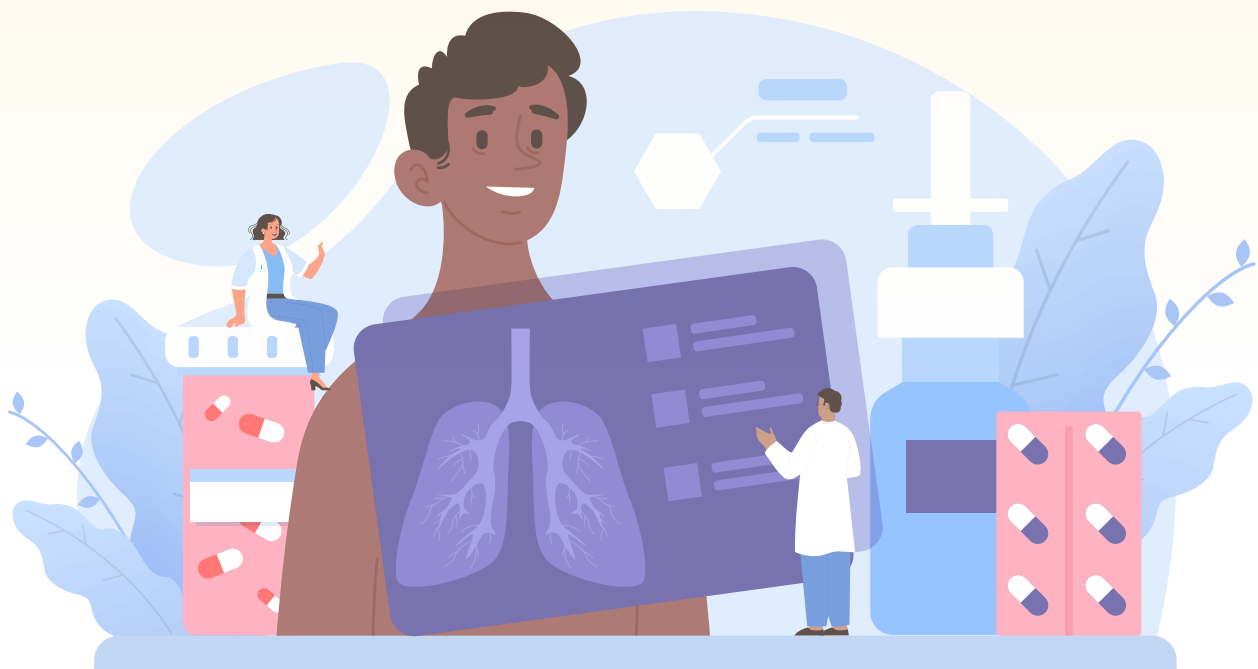
Friday, October 24, 2025, in Sacramento.

Visit the Board **Meetings** page of RCB's website for meeting details, including how to earn continuing education units for attending!



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Respiratory Care Board of California

3750 Rosin Court, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95834

Phone: (916) 999-2190 | Fax: (916) 263-7311

rcbinfo@dca.ca.gov | www.rcb.ca.gov



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