Job Class Profile: Respiratory Therapist I

Pay Level: CG-34 Point Band: 742-765

Factor	Knowledge	Interpersonal Skills	Physical Effort	Concentration	Complexity	Accountability & Decision Making	Impact	Development and Leadership	Environmental Working Conditions	Total Points
Rating	5	4	4	6	4	4	5	2	5	
Points	233	67	25	29	120	87	103	43	54	761

JOB SUMMARY

The Respiratory Therapist I is responsible for performing specialized medical and diagnostic tests and procedures to evaluate patients' respiratory status, and operate equipment and computerized programs to obtain patient's lung flows, volumes and diffusion to obtain diagnosis of respiratory abnormalities. Work also involves assessment, treatment, evaluation of care, and education for patients with cardiopulmonary disorders. May be the only position within a site of a multi-site organization and may work within a specialized area such as the Pulmonary Functions Laboratory, ICU, Emergency, or other areas, or serve as part of a Respiratory Therapy team to rotate through these areas as assigned.

Key and Periodic Activities

- Performs patient assessment which includes general inspection and auscultation of the lungs; reviews radiological and laboratory data, vital signs, and physiological calculations; establishes appropriate therapeutic interventions; initiates titrate; discontinues oxygen therapy; and administers medications.
- Performs a variety of respiratory tests or invasive or non-invasive procedures such as diagnostic pulmonary function tests, tests to diagnose asthma, oropharyngeal and tracheal suctioning, procurement of sputum samples, tube care, swallowing assessments, and invasive procedures such as arterial line insertions and aspirations, and needle punctures for arterial line samples.
- Prepares patients for procedures such as bronchoscopy by administering sedative and topical anesthesia, sets up equipment, monitors patients, prepares, and obtains samples of lung tissue.
- Performs arterial blood gas sampling and interpretation.
- Documents assessment findings, therapeutic interventions, treatment plans, and recommendations, and prepares reports to referring physicians.
- Responds to emergencies (i.e. respiratory and cardiac arrests), providing airway management procedures including endotracheal intubation. Assists with the medi-vac or ambulance team during sea, air, and ground transfers of critically ill patients. Independently, determines and performs respiratory procedures during transports.
- Manages invasive and noninvasive respiratory life support equipment of critically ill patients such as mechanical ventilators, medical gas supply lines, and other specialized modalities. Determines suitability for weaning from life support, consults with physicians, and if

Key and Periodic Activities
applicable, weans and/or discontinues patient from devices. — Performs home oxygen assessments/reassessments. — Sets up sleep recording equipment for patients in hospital or at home who require sleep testing. Tests patients for obstructive sleep apnea, setups of complex sleep recording equipment, and monitors patients during sleep studies. — Downloads, analyses, edits, and scores patient diagnostic sleep studies, generates reports and discusses with respirologist. — Performs exercise testing on patients to assess shortness of breath and oxygen levels to determine whether the patient needs home oxygen therapy and then determines the levels required by administering oxygen. — Obtains patient blood samples, prepares sample for analysis, and analyses blood samples on blood gas analyzer machines. — May attend caesarean sections and high risk deliveries as part of the resuscitation team. — Educates clients and families regarding respiratory disease, treatment, device (i.e. oxygen for home use), and counsel's patients on smoking cessation, lifestyle changes, etc. — Cleans and sterilizes equipment after use. Performs preventative maintenance, troubleshoots, and repairs equipment. — Participates in multi-disciplinary rounds; and assesses and recommends therapy and equipment in discharge planning process. — Participates in the development and delivery of educational programs to patients, families, and members of the healthcare team. — Participates in the development and implementation of quality initiatives and risk management programs. — Performs quality assurance and calibration on pulmonary function equipment. — Acts as a preceptor for students during their clinical placement including supervision and evaluation. — Orders supplies, and replaces equipment. — Completes workload measurement statistics.

SKILL

Knowledge
General and Specific Knowledge: — Pulmonary function testing guidelines and procedures — Computer software programs — Operation of diagnostic equipment and mechanical ventilators — New equipment and machines **Formal Education and/or Certification(s):** — Minimum: 3 Year specialized program in Respiratory Therapy, Registration with the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists with a professional designation as a Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT).

— Certification in Basic life support (BLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), and Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP).

Years of Experience:

— Minimum: less than 1 year of experience

Competencies:

— Calibrate machines and equipment
— Computer skills
— Communication skills
— Assessment skills

Interpersonal Skills

— A range of interpersonal skills are used to perform activities such as listening, asking questions and gathering information from healthcare employees and patients, providing complex information and direction, providing care/comfort/nurturing to patients, gaining the cooperation of others, instructing/teaching/training students, making formal presentations to groups, providing expert advice and counselling, and dealing with patients and their families who may be upset. Skills are most frequently used to listen and provide support and care to patients.
— Communications occur with a range of contacts including employees within immediate work area and department, students, patients, supervisors and professional advisors.
— The most significant contact is with patients to perform various tests and procedures.

EFFORT

Physical Effort

— The demands of the job occasionally result in considerable fatigue requiring periods of rest.
— Physical effort includes constantly moving or lifting objects up to 10 lbs. (i.e. compressors, portable suctions, oxygen setups, and supplies), and occasionally moving objects and equipment, (i.e. oxygen cylinders and ventilators), and repositioning or assisting patients to move from stretcher to bed or pushing and pulling stretchers up to and over 50 lbs. Occasionally assists with the transport of patients on ambulances and airplanes, and bends, stretches or is required to reach around patients to affix apparatuses, or to give injections.
— Regularly stands and walks in the performance of their activities. Also, regularly sits to type information into the computer. Occasionally required to drive.
— Regularly uses gross and fine motor skills to obtain miniscule lung samples with cytology brushes or pathology forceps and uses tools and machines which require very controlled, as well as rapid physical movement and reflexes.

Concentration

— **Visual concentration** is required when observing patients during procedures in case they experience respiratory or cardiac distress, to interpret and monitor their physical conditions, and to monitor screens during sleep studies. **Visual concentration** is also required to document information on the patients chart and on the computer.
— **Auditory concentration** includes listening for alarms on ventilator or monitors, to hear acuity of patients' lungs, to determine whether patients are breathing adequately, and for monitoring

patients' blood pressure.

— **Other sensory demands include touching** a patient during a procedure to determine various temperature changes, to provide resuscitation or ventilation, as well as to locate body parts, to palpate pulses, and to administer medication. The therapist uses **smell** to detect a patient's changing condition such as anaerobic growth (i.e. pneumonia).

— **Repetitive tasks that require alertness** are performing similar procedures and tests on patients, checks on ventilator functioning, and calibration of equipment.

— **Higher than normal levels of attentiveness or alertness** are required when transporting patients by ambulance, storing gas cylinders, and when performing procedures.

— Does not have **control over the pace of the work** due to the unpredictable number of patient admissions, tests, and procedures that have to be performed, emergency calls or situations that require a response, and changes in a patient's condition.

— There are **time pressures and deadlines** to complete regularly scheduled appointments and to respond to emergencies as they occur. **Interruptions** are frequent from requests for service, calls from physicians, and other healthcare professionals for service.

— Examples of **eye/hand coordination** is required to put needles into arteries to obtain blood gases samples, to perform procedures such as manipulate tiny brushes or biopsy forceps within patients lungs, and to trigger computer software to capture long flows and volume efforts.

— **Exact results and precision** are required when performing testing or procedures such as inserting arterial lines, determining treatments, and obtaining tissue samples.

Complexity

— Tasks and activities are different/unrelated, but allow for the use of similar skills and knowledge to determine patient diagnosis and care.

— Occasionally tasks are repetitive/well defined, different, but related with some unrelated aspects (i.e. clinical work and teaching).

— Problems typically have obvious solutions and can be addressed by following procedures/guidelines or solved in a team setting.

— Typical complexities occur during testing such as being able to recognize the differences between poor tests results and patient effort, being able to recognize patient intolerance to invasive procedures, and being able to identify and treat causes of respiratory distress.

— Complexities tend to be solved by reviewing policies and procedures, user manuals for equipment, and consulting with other healthcare professionals and advisors.

RESPONSIBILITY

Accountability and Decision-Making

— Work tasks and activities are moderately prescribed or controlled.

— Decisions related to respiratory care such as performing tests and procedures, developing treatment plans, administering oxygen and medications are made independently within professional standards. Can also order small-scale supplies and arrange for maintenance and repair of equipment. For sole-charge therapists, make independent decisions regarding the day-to-day activities of their department and in developing educational material for patients.

— Requires approval for large-scale purchases, scheduling changes, policy development or

changes, and for attendance or travel for educational opportunities.

— Has some discretion in relation to patient care, procedures, and treatments and exercises a high degree of discretion with patients who may be upset or in distress, regarding the release of confidential information, and in making decisions regarding equipment that may not be working and whether to have it removed or repaired. Discretion to call in extra staff is also given in emergency situations or to help assist with patient transports.

— Discretion and judgment are used to make decisions in patient care within professional standards.

— Provides information, advice, training, and recommendations to members of the interdisciplinary team, patients, and their families, physicians, and students related to the respiratory conditions, treatments, procedures, tests, and results.

Impact

— Work activities have an impact on the immediate work area, within the department, outside the organization, and on patients.

— There are positive and negative impacts resulting from the decisions made regarding assessments, and tests being delivered to the patient.

— Resources impacted include equipment, finances, material, human resources, health and safety, and corporate image.

— Errors that could occur include when intubating a patient such as improper placement of the tube.

— The most significant impacts are on health and safety of patients (i.e. if patient is misdiagnosed they could be denied surgery as a result), the immediate work area, information that it is accurate and correct, and corporate image such as the services provided.

— Errors or mistakes are typically resolved within hours of identification and detected by either the therapist(s), patient, or other members of the healthcare team.

Development and Leadership of Others

— Not responsible for the supervision of staff.

— Does provide development and leadership responsibilities such as on the job advice, guidance, feedback, orientation to new employees, and on the job training to staff and students. May provide a team lead role such as acting as a technical mentor, organizing the work, and evaluating students' performance. In addition, provides training, as well as formal classroom training to nursing staff, new medical students, and residents.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Environmental Working Conditions

— Required to wear masks (sometimes n-95 respirators), gowns, and gloves for all invasive procedures and to practice universal and safety precautions. When attending to patients requiring diagnostic services, will wear special lead-lined gowns and neck protection.

— There is limited likelihood of receiving minor injuries or illnesses, a partial or total disability.

— Regularly exposed to infectious diseases, awkward/ confining spaces, sharp objects, odours, bodily fluids and waste, toxic or poisonous substances, and hazardous chemicals. Occasionally, exposed to unusual or distracting noise, dirt/dust/filth, wet/slippery surfaces,

radiation, and physical dangers. Some travel may be required between sites, sometimes in adverse weather conditions.