

REQUIREMENTS TO BE DESIGNATED PHARMACIST-IN-CHARGE OF A PHARMACY

Interpretation Guide

Approved January 31, 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

When a pharmacist applies to CPNL to be designated the pharmacist-in-charge of a pharmacy, they must do so with the understanding that this designation carries significant professional responsibility and specific legislative duties. A pharmacist-in-charge (PIC) is responsible for establishing and implementing policies and procedures for a given pharmacy and for ensuring that the pharmacy provides safe and quality services in accordance with the *Pharmacy Act, 2024*, *Pharmacy Regulations, 2024*, Standards of Pharmacy Operation, Standards of Practice, other applicable provincial and federal legislation, and any other requirements established by CPNL.

The *Pharmacy Regulations, 2024*, state that a pharmacist may be designated as a pharmacist-in-charge where the pharmacist applies in a manner and form prescribed by CPNL, and meets any other requirements established by CPNL. This interpretation guide has been developed to provide pharmacists with the eligibility criteria for becoming a pharmacist-in-charge and the application process to receive this designation for a pharmacy.

2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1 To be eligible to be designated as the pharmacist-in-charge of a pharmacy, the pharmacist must:

- a) have practiced pharmacy in Canada for at least 12 months immediately before making the application;
- b) be currently registered as a pharmacist in the province, in good standing with no restrictions or conditions on their practice;

- c) successfully complete an education program on the responsibilities of a pharmacist-in-charge and/or pharmacy management as required by CPNL;
- d) agree to fulfill all the duties of a pharmacist-in-charge as described in section 9 of the *Pharmacy Regulations, 2024*;
- e) agree to have an active presence in the pharmacy to personally supervise day-to-day operations to a sufficient extent to ensure that the Standards of Pharmacy Operation and applicable Standards of Practice are fully met; in general, this should be at least half the operating hours (up to 40 hours) or an alternate proposal deemed acceptable by CPNL;
- f) agree to ensure arrangements are in place for the pharmacy to continue to operate in accordance with CPNL requirements any time the pharmacist-in-charge is not present (including days off and short-term absences); and
- g) agree to ensure that a new pharmacist-in-charge is designated as far in advance as possible if they plan to resign from their duties, or will be unable to fulfill their duties, in accordance with the cessation of duties section described below.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 A pharmacist who meets the criteria in section 2 may apply to become pharmacist-in-charge of either an existing pharmacy or a new pharmacy by submitting the appropriate application, along with any applicable supporting documentation and fees.
- 3.2 To become pharmacist-in-charge of a new pharmacy, the pharmacist must complete an application for a new pharmacy license at least 90 days prior to the date that the pharmacy is scheduled to open.
- 3.3 To change pharmacist-in-charge of an existing pharmacy, the current pharmacist-in-charge and the proposed new pharmacist-in-charge must jointly apply for the change at least 30 days in advance of the requested change date.

PLEASE NOTE:

The out-going pharmacist-in-charge remains the pharmacist-in-charge on record and therefore remains responsible for the operation of the pharmacy, until such time that they are notified by CPNL that the change has been approved.

4. APPROVAL

- 4.1 When the application process in section 3 is completed, CPNL will assess the application and, in certain circumstances, may consider additional information such as the following:
- length of time the pharmacist has been practicing and whether the 12 months of practice experience immediately preceding the application includes practice experience acquired while registered as an intern;
 - length of time the pharmacist has worked at the pharmacy;
 - complaints and discipline history;
 - previous quality assurance assessments;
 - supports in place for the pharmacist to fulfill the duties of a pharmacist-in-charge (for example, a district manager, long-term staff pharmacists, support staff, etc.);
 - the pharmacist's résumé, including professional references; or
 - an interview with the Registrar or designate.
- 4.2 Generally, a pharmacist will only be approved to be a pharmacist-in-charge of one pharmacy at a time, with the exception of a telepharmacy¹ or satellite pharmacy². However, a pharmacist may be permitted to be designated as pharmacist-in-charge of more than one pharmacy under certain circumstances, such as where a pharmacy has been unable to recruit a pharmacist-in-charge, and a pharmacist agrees to fully meet the duties of a pharmacist-in-charge at two pharmacies. In these situations, consideration will be given to:
- the reason(s) for the request;
 - the length of time the pharmacist will be responsible for more than one pharmacy; and
 - any other information that may be relevant to the decision.
- 4.3 Pharmacists will receive notification of approval of their designation to be pharmacist-in-charge of a pharmacy by email.

¹ See Telepharmacy Services in Hospital Pharmacies Licensing Policy on the [Telepharmacy](#) page of the CPNL website.

² See Satellite Community Pharmacies Licensing Policy on the [Satellite Pharmacy](#) page of the CPNL website.

5. CESSATION OF DUTIES

5.1 If a pharmacist-in-charge:

- plans to resign;
- expects they will be unable to fulfill their duties (including adequate oversight of the pharmacy);
- plans to be away from the pharmacy for more than 45 days; or
- plans to be away from the pharmacy for an undetermined period of time.

they must,

- ensure that a new pharmacist-in-charge is in place; or
- close the pharmacy in accordance with section 7 of the *Pharmacy Regulations, 2024*.

5.2 Ensuring that a new pharmacist-in-charge is in place means:

- a) completing an application to change pharmacist-in-charge as described in section 3 above;
- b) receiving approval that the application to change pharmacist-in-charge has been approved; and
- c) meeting with the new pharmacist-in-charge to:
 - provide the necessary information to support their successful transition into the role;
 - conduct an inventory count of all controlled substances, with both the outgoing and incoming pharmacist-in-charge signing off on the physical inventory count; and
 - advise the new pharmacist-in-charge that a new data sharing agreement must be established with the Institute of Safe Medication Practices to report medication incidents to the National Incident Data Repository in accordance with the *Standards of Pharmacy Operation-Community Pharmacy* and the *Standards of Practice for Continuous Quality Improvement and Medication Incident Reporting in Community Pharmacies*.

5.3 Where a new pharmacist-in-charge has not been determined and the pharmacist-in-charge needs to cease their duties, the pharmacy license must be terminated, and the pharmacist-in-charge must close the pharmacy in accordance with CPNL's *Permanent Pharmacy Closure* policy.