

Confidentiality Policy

Policy Number: G-02.03.00	Next Review Date: 2027
Approved by: NSRDDA Board	Approval Date: October 10, 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard the integrity, privacy, and confidentiality of information obtained, accessed, or generated in the course of the NSRDDA's work. This includes personal, professional, organizational, and other sensitive information entrusted to the Regulator through its regulatory and administrative functions. Maintaining confidentiality is essential to protect the public interest, uphold the rights of individuals, and ensure the credibility of the regulatory body.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who access or handle confidential information in connection with the work of the NSRDDA, including but not limited to:

- Board members
- Statutory and Advisory Committee members
- The Registrar
- Staff and contractors
- Consultants and external advisors
- Volunteers or trainees, where applicable

All individuals covered by this policy are expected to understand and uphold their responsibilities to protect confidential information in accordance with relevant legislation (such as applicable provincial health privacy laws), organizational policies, and professional obligations.

3. Definition of Confidential Information

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Personal or identifying information about registrants, applicants, complainants, patients/clients, and staff
- Information related to complaints, investigations, disciplinary matters, or fitness to practice proceedings
- Financial, strategic, or operational information not publicly disclosed
- Legal opinions, advice, or privileged communications
- Any information designated as confidential by the NSRDDA or protected under applicable legislation (e.g., personal health information, legal privilege, solicitor-client communications)

4. Legislative Framework

In addition to the Act, the NSRDDA is subject to the provisions of:

- the Nova Scotia *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPOP) and its Regulations, and
- the Nova Scotia *Personal Health Information Act* (PHIA) and its Regulations.

5. Policy Statement

(a) Obligations and Responsibilities

All individuals subject to this policy must:

- i. Treat all confidential information as private and not disclose it unless authorized by the NSRDDA or legally required
- ii. Take reasonable steps to protect confidential information from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure
- iii. Use confidential information only for the purposes for which it was provided and in the course of performing assigned duties
- iv. Refrain from discussing confidential matters in public or unsecured environments
- v. Refrain from using confidential information gained by virtue of their association with the NSRDDA for their personal gain, or to benefit others
- vi. Return or securely destroy confidential documents and records when they are no longer required, or upon termination of their role

(b) Exceptions

Confidential information may be disclosed only in the following circumstances:

- When required or permitted by law (e.g., by court order or under statutory reporting obligations)
- When disclosure is authorized in writing by the Registrar or another designated authority
- When necessary in the performance of duties and consistent with the NSRDDA's policies and applicable legislation

6. Confidentiality Process

The NSRDDA depends on the integrity of its Board members, Committee members, the Registrar, employees or contractors to respect their obligations of confidentiality. Board members, Committee members, the Registrar and employees will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix A) upon their appointment or reappointment, and annually during their term. Requirements for confidentiality will be incorporated into the NSRDDA's standard contract templates for negotiated arrangements with other contractors.

A Board member, Committee member, the Registrar or an employee who feels that they have or may have breached the requirement for confidentiality should raise the matter at a board meeting (and/or Committee meeting as the case may be) at the earliest opportunity. Contractors should contact the Board Chair to disclose any breaches or potential breaches of confidentiality.

If a Board member, Committee member or the Registrar is unsure of whether they have breached confidentiality, they should raise the matter with the Board Chair (or Committee Chair, as the case may be) at the earliest opportunity. Employees or contractors should raise the matter with the Registrar. Similarly, if any Board member, Committee member or the Registrar considers that another person to whom this policy applies has or may have breached confidentiality, they should raise the matter with the Board Chair (or Committee Chair) or the Registrar, as the case may be.

If the person with the alleged breach and the Board Chair, Committee Chair or Registrar are unable to resolve the issue, the situation will be brought to the Board (Committee) as a whole. The Board (Committee) should determine by majority vote whether a breach of confidentiality occurred. Of course, the individual involved should refrain from voting on the matter.

7. Breach of Confidentiality

A breach of this policy is considered a serious matter and may result in corrective action, depending on the degree or severity of non-compliance:

- Disciplinary action (in accordance with applicable policies or codes of conduct)
- Removal from a position or Committee
- Termination of employment or contract
- Legal action, where applicable

Any suspected or actual breach must be reported immediately to the Registrar or designate.

The Registrar will determine the corrective action for employees, contractors and advisors. The Board Chair, in consultation with the Governance and Human Resources (GHR) Committee will determine the corrective action for Board or Committee members. The Registrar or the Board Chair may consult legal counsel as required.

8. Monitoring and Policy Review

The Chair of the GHR Committee will ensure that this policy is reviewed in accordance with the Board's policy review cycle or as required by significant operational or environmental changes.

9. Accountability

The Board Chair and the Registrar are accountable for ensuring compliance with this policy.

Appendix A – Confidentiality Agreement

I, _____, understand that during the course of my work with the NSRDDA, I may view confidential information and records (e.g., patient information, licensee information, Board information, etc.).

In keeping with the NSRDDA's confidentiality policy, I agree to:

1. Respect the confidentiality of the individuals whose information I may view.
2. Not disclose any data viewed to any party while I have access to this data or anytime subsequently.
3. Respect the confidentiality and integrity of the Board's deliberative processes and communications.
4. Respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature, including confidential proceedings of the NSRDDA.

I have read and understand this confidentiality agreement.

Dated at _____, this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Witness: _____ Print Name: _____