

Out-of-Hospital Premises Standard: Image Guidance When Administering Nerve Blocks for Adult Chronic Pain

The use of image guidance is widely accepted as a critical component of administering nerve blocks in order to reduce the risk of complications, ensure the injection is delivered to the target, and enhance patient safety.

In keeping with our mandate to serve the public interest, this Standard sets out the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario's (CPSO) expectations for physicians administering nerve blocks for adult chronic pain in Out-of-Hospital Premises.

Standard

1. With the exception of superficial facial nerve blocks¹, physicians administering nerve blocks for adult chronic pain **must**:
 - a. use image guidance;
 - b. capture an image of needle placement, appropriate contrast spread and/or local anesthetic spread to demonstrate appropriate placement and maintain a copy of the image in the patient's medical record;
 - c. ensure that the level of imaging used (e.g. ultrasound, computerized tomography (CT) and/or fluoroscopy) is appropriate for the type of nerve block being performed;
 - i. For example, it is not appropriate for ultrasound to be used for all nerve blocks. CT and/or fluoroscopy must be used where clinically indicated;²
 - d. be qualified and able to perform the required level of imaging within their premises or have a written procedure in place for the timely referral of patients to a qualified health care professional;³
 - e. practise in a manner that is consistent with this Standard, any relevant practice standards, quality standards, and clinical practice guidelines.

¹ For example, superficial facial nerve blocks include: supraorbital blocks, infraorbital blocks, supratrochlear blocks, and mental branch of mandibular nerve blocks.

² Please see the *Frequently Asked Questions* document for additional information on practice standards, quality standards, and clinical practice guidelines that indicate where CT and/or fluoroscopy are necessary for proper visualization.

³ For example, physicians practising in premises with only ultrasound available, need to have written procedures in place for the referral of patients in the event that CT and/or fluoroscopy is indicated for proper visualization.