



DENTONS

Understanding Your Regulatory Framework: A Guide for Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists in British Columbia

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Grow | Protect | Operate | Finance

Agenda

1. About Us
2. The College of Health Care Professionals of BC
3. The Complaint and Discipline Process
4. What to do when facing a Regulatory Investigation?

Who We Are

Dentons' Litigation and Dispute Resolution



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THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC (CHCPBC)

As an audiologist or SLP practicing in BC, your work is regulated by the **College of Health Care Professionals of BC (CHCPBC)**, which ensures public safety through licensure, standards, and oversight.

CHCPBC's Scope

CHCPBC functions as a **regulatory body** that governs nine health professions in BC:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. registered audiologists | 4. occupational therapists, | 8. psychologists; and |
| 2. dietitians, | 5. opticians | 9. speech-language |
| 3. hearing instrument practitioners, | 6. optometrists, | pathologists (“SLPs”). |
| | 7. physical therapists, | |

THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC

Key Responsibilities of CHCPBC (for Audiologists and SLPs):

As Audiologists and SLPs regulated by CHCPBC, it is important to understand that CHCPBC:

- Sets and enforces **professional and ethical standards** specifically tailored for Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists.
- Registers qualified **Audiologists and SLPs** to legally practice in BC.
- Handles **complaints and disciplinary actions** relating to your professional conduct and competence.
- Ensures **continuing competency** through required professional development for Audiologists and SLPs.

THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC

CHCPBC vs. Speech and Hearing BC

CHCPBC – Your Regulator	Speech and Hearing BC – Your Professional Association
Registration is mandatory to practice legally in BC.	Membership is optional (advocacy, networking, PD).
Ensures public protection through standards, complaints, and discipline.	Advocates for profession-specific issues (e.g., funding, scope expansion).
Governed by the Health Professions Act (HPA).	Accountable to members, not the public.
Key functions: As mandated by the HPA and regulations, setting and enforcing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entry-to-practice requirements• Bylaws• Standards of practice• Codes of ethics/conduct• Requirements for quality practice (quality assurance/continuing competence)	Key Function: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocating for issues that impact the professions• Advocating for practitioners to engage in policy development• Providing education and professional development opportunities• Providing networking opportunities
Investigating complaints about CHCPBC registrants, investigating complaints about unauthorized practice and title violations, and taking disciplinary action where required	No investigative role

THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC

Licensing of Audiologists and SLPs

In BC, only **CHCPBC-registered professionals** may use the titles:

- Audiologist or RAUD
- Speech-language pathologist, Speech therapist, or RSLP

Verify licensure through the [CHCPBC public directory](#) to confirm credentials and scope.

LICENCE VERIFICATION FORM

The Licence Verification Form enables you to verify the registration of a current CHCPBC registrant by any combination of name, registrant number, profession, and/or city of practice. The results displayed below only include current registrants (including full/active/practising, non-practising, provisional/conditional, and suspended registrants), up to a maximum of 50 records. Data for the form is updated once a day. If you are searching for a registrant with an accent in their name, you must include the accent in your search term. If you would like historical information about former registrants that may be available, **contact** the College. All **public notices** for the professions are listed separately from the Licence Verification tool.

Practitioner Name:

Registrant Number:

Profession:

Search all professions ▼

City:

SEARCH / VERIFY LICENCE

THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC

Governing Laws

Your practice is regulated under the following legislation, regulation, bylaw and codes:

1. Health Professions Act (HPA)

- Transitioning to [*Health Professions and Occupations Act*](#) HPOA in 2025.

2. Speech and Hearing Health Professionals Regulation:

- Defines reserved titles, scope, and restricted activities.

3. CHCPBC Bylaws

- Outline registration, ethics, and disciplinary processes.
- [CHCPBC Bylaws](#) (PDF)

4. Codes of Ethics

- Audiologists: [Code of Ethics \(PDF\)](#)
- SLPs: [Code of Ethics \(PDF\)](#)

5. Standards of Practice:

- Audiologists: [Standards of Practice](#)
- SLPs: [Standards of Practice](#)

THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC

CHCPBC Organizational Makeup

- **Board:** 6 public + 6 registrant members (max 1 per profession). Oversees strategic direction.
- **Board Support Committees:** (1) Governance Committee, (2) Finance and Audit Committee, and (3) Human Resource Committee.
- **Regulatory Committees:** Specialized committees, many of which have regulatory authority.
 1. **Registration Committee:** Licenses audiologists/SLPs.
 2. **Quality Assurance:** Audits CPD compliance.
 3. **Inquiry Committee:** Investigates complaints.
 4. **Discipline Committee:** Hears formal complaints.
 5. **Practice & Standards Committee:** Advises on clinical/ethical guidelines.

THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC

Inquiry Committee:

Investigates complaints against audiologists and SLPs, conducting statutory investigations to assess if professional standards have been violated.

- Oversees the investigation process and appoints inspectors.
- Makes order for interim action, including imposing limits or conditions, or a suspension of registration.
- Determines the outcome from the statutory options, including:
 - dismissal with no further action;
 - requesting remedial or disciplinary action by agreement; or.
 - directing a matter for hearing before the Discipline Committee.

Discipline Committee:

Conducts formal public hearings when serious professional misconduct or incompetence allegations arise against audiologists and SLPs. The Committee imposes sanctions if necessary.

- Conducts discipline hearings of citations referred by the Inquiry Committee.
- Considers findings or admissions of unprofessional conduct by registrants while practising in other jurisdictions.
- Makes findings and determinations regarding the allegations in a citation. If allegations are proven, impose an appropriate penalty.
- Provides written decisions.

COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Understanding how the complaints and discipline process works is essential for audiologists and SLPS regulated by CHCPBC, especially if you want to protect your professional reputation and practice.



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COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINE PROCESS

What Triggers Complaint Process

CHCPBC investigates complaints about:

- **Clinical incompetence** (e.g., misdiagnosis, unsafe practice).
- **Ethical breaches** (e.g., confidentiality violations, sexual misconduct).

Excluded: Employment disputes, financial compensation, or treatment recommendations.

COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Inquiry Committee Investigation

- Registrants receive the complaint **and may respond**.
- Your lawyer can help you understand what is happening and how to respond.
- Investigations may involve:
 - Interviews with complainants, registrants, and witnesses.
 - Review of client records (with consent).

COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Disposition Options

After the investigation, you and the complainant will receive **updates** and final disposition. The Inquiry Committee has four options:

1. **No action** (if complaint unfounded).
2. **Remedial action** (e.g., mentoring, education).
3. **Consent agreement** (e.g., practice limits).
4. **Discipline hearing** (for serious misconduct).

Length of Proceeding: The Inquiry Committee must resolve complaints within 255 days (approximately nine months) to resolve a complaint.

Right of review: Within 30 days of an investigation committee decision, you may appeal in writing to the **Health Profession Review Board**.

COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Discipline Hearings

If the investigation concludes that professional misconduct, incompetence, or incapacity has occurred, then it is referred to Discipline Committee for a hearing:

- **Public process** with testimony and evidence.
- Possible outcomes: **Reprimand, suspension, or license revocation.**
- **No authority to award compensation.** Civil claims must proceed separately.

COMPLAINTS & DISCIPLINE PROCESS

Judicial Review

- Discipline hearings are governed by rules of procedural fairness and administrative law.
- This means are entitled to procedural fairness at every stage of the complaint, investigation, and discipline process.
- Speak to your regulatory lawyer to ensure procedural fairness was afforded to you in the decision-making process!

WHAT TO DO WHEN FACING A REGULATORY INVESTIGATION

Regulators don't always arrive with a formal "Notice of Investigation."

Sometimes, it's a vague email or a call informing you that a complaint has been lodged against you.

How you respond in these early moments can shape the trajectory of the case, your reputation, and even your livelihood.



WHAT TO DO WHEN FACING A REGULATORY INVESTIGATION

- **Step 1: Decode the Regulator's Intent**
 - Treat every communication from the CHCPBC's seriously.
 - Preserve your documents carefully.
 - Avoid contacting the complainant.
 - Contact a regulatory lawyer ASAP to get in touch with regulator on your behalf.
- **Step 2: Check Your Insurance and Assemble Your Team**
 - Review your professional liability insurance – look for strict notification windows.
 - Send your insurance policy to your regulatory lawyer to review.
 - Reputational considerations – law firms with regulatory law experience can coordinate with public relations professionals to help with crisis management.

WHAT TO DO WHEN FACING A REGULATORY INVESTIGATION

- **Step 3: Balance Cooperation with Caution**
 - Address concerns without conceding fault – your regulatory lawyer can help you craft language around this.
 - Negotiate deadlines for deliverables.
 - Prepare for interviews rigorously!
- **Step 4: Building a Defense Grounded in Evidence**
 - Gather all documentary evidence.
 - What is the alleged breach? Which section of which law?
 - Your regulatory lawyer can help to parse through CHCPBC's accusations and prepare a defense.
 - Consider challenging the accusations head-on versus entering into a consent order to avoid a lengthy process.
 - Consent order requires admitting fault, so faster is not always better!

WHAT TO DO WHEN FACING A REGULATORY INVESTIGATION

- **Step 5: Navigate Employment Implications Carefully**
 - Speak to your regulatory lawyer before discussing the case in detail internally at work.
 - Employers may have an obligation to report information to the CHCPBC.
 - Resigning vs. going on extended leave?
 - If you are not self-employed, consider retaining a firm with both regulatory and employment law experience.
- **Step 6: Post-Hearing Strategy**
 - Favourable outcomes also require very proactive reputation management!
 - Your regulatory lawyer will work with CHCPBC to ensure a public citation contains language that is not prejudicial to you.
 - For adverse rulings, consider judicial review.
 - In rare cases – Professionals can sue their regulators for malicious prosecution or abuse of power!

WHAT TO DO WHEN FACING A REGULATORY INVESTIGATION

Conclusion: Navigate the Storm with Expert Guidance

Regulatory investigations are rarely black-and-white and unfortunately the perception often outweighs fact. The key to survival lies in three principles:

1. **Never go at it alone.** Regulators have teams of lawyers and experts. You need the same firepower.
2. **Control the narrative.** From document preservation to engaging PR experts, every action should be deliberate.
3. **Think long-term.** Even if a hearing goes against you, options like judicial reviews or civil claims remain. Most importantly, protect your ability to work against and rebuild your reputation.

WHAT TO DO WHEN FACING A REGULATORY INVESTIGATION

Finally, protect your mental health.

Investigations can affect not just your livelihood, but your identity. It can also strain your relationships and finances.

Lean on peers, therapists, or faith communities for perspective.

Your career won't be defined by the investigation—but by how you respond and rise afterward.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!



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