



Implementing updated Professional capabilities

November 2025

Communicating safely – if urgent or unexpected findings are identified

Who this policy applies to?

This policy has been developed by the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia (the Board) to assist medical radiation practitioners meet their obligations if urgent or unexpected findings are identified.

The policy also informs other registered health practitioners, employers, healthcare organisations, education providers, patients and the public of the Board's expectations of medical radiation practitioners and the role that they play in patient safety.

Obligation

If a medical radiation practitioner identifies urgent or unexpected findings, they must ensure this information is shared with, and understood by, the appropriate persons who may include the reporting health practitioner, the requesting practitioner and/or other health practitioners, for the immediate and appropriate management of the patient.

The patient and their family and/or carers should be informed if further clinical advice is needed before leaving the healthcare setting.

Documenting critical information in the patient's healthcare record is essential for patient safety and supports subsequent communications and decisions about care. Medical radiation practitioners should record information shared with other health practitioners and/or members of the multiprofessional team in accordance with relevant procedures developed to meet the requirements of *Standard 6 – Communicating for safety in the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards*.

What's expected?

Formal reports are the gold standard

Formal reporting of medical images is usually conducted by a reporting health practitioner. It is recognised that the formal report is the gold standard and the most appropriate way to communicate findings in medical images.

If you see something, say something

If a medical radiation practitioner identifies something urgent or unexpected in a medical image, they must communicate this in a timely way to another health practitioner involved in the care or the patient/client.

In most cases it is appropriate to communicate urgent or unexpected findings to the reporting health practitioner. This allows the report writer to prioritise the production and communication of a formal report.

Timely communication to the point of care is essential

Medical radiation practitioners are expected to exercise good professional judgement in managing the communication of critical and time sensitive information.

If critical information emerges or there is a risk to patient care, timely communication of this information to clinicians involved in the care of the patient/client is essential.

Clinicians directly involved in the care of the patient/client are best placed to make decisions about care requirements, and this includes making decisions about acting on an alert, seeking further advice or a waiting for a formal report.

The focus of the capability is on communicating safely

Medical radiation practitioners must ensure that they deliver safe care for the patient. This includes communicating safely when urgent or unexpected findings are identified.

The [Professional capabilities for medical radiation practice](#) (the professional capabilities) do not impose an obligation on medical radiation practitioners to make specific diagnoses or to issue formal reports. The responsibility for making a definitive diagnosis sits with the formal report writer.