

# Here's how BCCNP resolves a complaint

The steps below detail how BCCNP investigates and resolves complaints related to registered nurses and nurse practitioners in British Columbia. This is for general information only, and exceptions may apply. The Health Professions Act and the college's bylaws govern the college's inquiry and discipline process.

## INQUIRY PROCESS

## DISCIPLINE PROCESS

### STEP 1 BCCNP receives a written complaint



BCCNP investigates complaints related to the conduct or competence of registered nurses and nurse practitioners.

All complaints must be made in writing.

In appropriate cases, the Registrar may investigate the complaint, and dismiss or reach a consent agreement with the nurse.

Resolution of a complaint by the Registrar is subject to the approval of the Inquiry Committee.

### STEP 2 Inquiry Committee review



The Registrar sends complaints to the Inquiry Committee for investigation. (Unless the complaint is resolved by the Registrar.)

The Inquiry Committee consists of nurses and public representatives.

The Inquiry Committee reviews the complaint and directs further investigation. Nurses are generally informed of the complaint at this time.

### STEP 3 Investigation



An inspector will investigate the complaint.

The inspector gathers information and prepares a report for the Inquiry Committee.

The nurse is given an opportunity to respond to the investigation report. The complainant may be asked to provide additional information. Nurses are entitled to access legal counsel or advocacy services.



**Extraordinary Action**  
During an investigation, the Inquiry Committee may — following a formal legal proceeding — impose interim limits or conditions on, or suspend, a nurse's registration to practice. The Inquiry Committee takes this action when it appears necessary for public protection even though allegations remain unproven.

### STEP 4 Inquiry Committee decision



The Inquiry Committee reviews the investigation report, including the evidence and the nurse's response, and makes its decision.

The Inquiry Committee has the following options for proceeding with a complaint:

- Take no further action,
- Send a letter of expectation,
- Reach a consent agreement with the nurse, or
- Direct that a citation for a discipline hearing be issued against the nurse.

The nurse and the complainant are notified of the disposition in writing. In appropriate cases, the consent agreement will be made public.

The majority of complaints are resolved at this stage, with no further action or a consent agreement. Citations for discipline hearings are issued for a small percentage of complaints.

### STEP 5 Inquiry Committee directs Registrar to issue a citation



Citations are typically issued for very serious matters where efforts by BCCNP to obtain a consensual resolution have not succeeded.

A citation is a formal document that sets out the allegations against the nurse and provides public notice that there will be a public hearing before the Discipline Committee.

After a citation is issued, the nurse may still make a proposal to the Inquiry Committee to resolve the citation. These types of resolutions are public.

### STEP 6 Discipline hearing



Discipline hearings are formal adjudicative processes before Discipline Committee panels that must follow established rules of law.

Discipline Committee panels consist of nurses and public representatives.

The nurse is entitled to appear with legal counsel at a hearing of the Discipline Committee. Most hearings are public.