

Reserved Activities in Physiotherapy

USING INVASIVE FORMS OF ENERGY¹

This reserved activity allows physiotherapists and physical rehabilitation therapists to apply agents producing electromagnetic, electrical, mechanical, or thermal energy to patients to assess or treat physical function impairments or disabilities. A form of energy is considered to be invasive if it penetrates the epidermis or mucus membranes.²

Physiotherapy uses invasive energy mainly in the form of electrotherapy. The most common agents include ultrasound, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), diathermy, iontophoresis, interferential current, and shockwave therapy. These forms of invasive energy enable physiotherapy professionals to achieve a number of therapeutic objectives such as reducing inflammation, easing pain, strengthening muscles, healing tissues, and stimulating nerves, to name just a few examples.

It should be noted that hot packs, paraffin baths, and whirlpool baths are not covered by this reserved activity.

PLEASE NOTE!

Although the general public can buy electrotherapy devices over the counter, unauthorized persons may not use them to assess or treat an impairment or disability in another person.

AUTHORIZED MEMBERS

Physiotherapists
Physical rehabilitation therapist³

CERTIFICATION

No OPPQ training certificate is required to perform this reserved activity.

COMPLEMENTARY

Physiotherapy professionals may have to apply topical medications in combination with certain forms of invasive energy. If so, a prescription is required, regardless of the type of medication used.⁴

SHARED

This activity is not reserved exclusively to physiotherapists. It is shared among a certain number of healthcare professionals. For example, physicians, nurses, and acupuncturists may also perform this activity, subject to the aims described in their respective scopes of practice.

¹ Section 37.1, Subsection 3 b) of the *Professional Code*.

² *Cahier explicatif de la Loi modifiant le Code des professions et d'autres dispositions législatives dans le domaine de la santé* (2003). General definitions section. On the OPPQ website (in French): https://www.opq.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/documents/Systeme_professionnel/08_Cahier-explicatif-PL90.pdf

³ Physical rehabilitation therapists can perform this activity subject to the conditions in Section 4 of the *Regulation respecting the categories of permits issued by the Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec*.

⁴ Sections 1 and 3 of the *Regulation respecting the professional activities that may be engaged in by members of the Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec*.