

balance

What it's all about.

BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities

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Things to Know About Our On-Call Service

BY VALERIE SHAVER At PROP, we offer 24-hour telephone support through our On-Call Service.

After the office closes, calls are directed to our answering service which takes a message. Then, the service asks one of our on-call Registered Respiratory Therapists (RRT) to return your call and answer your questions.

The answering service does **not** screen calls and is obligated to put all after hours calls through to the on-call therapist. The answering service and the therapists are paid for providing this service. It's important for PROP and our clients to use the On-Call service wisely.

When you are on hold, the message states that, if this is a call for an appointment or supplies, to please call back during office hours. However, we have been receiving calls that should not be going through to this service.

Our On-Call Service is available to help answer your questions, help troubleshoot your equipment or help you to adjust your settings. So when should you use the service?

Do Call:

- if you are having issues with your mask, tubing or circuits that need to be resolved so you can go to sleep
- if your equipment does not seem to be working properly
- if your machine does not sound normal or is making a strange noise
- an alarm is going off and you don't know what to do (before you call us, make note of the alarm, e.g., "patient disconnect," "check keys," "error code 10", so we can help you more efficiently)
- you are not getting enough air to breathe comfortably from your machine and would like the settings changed
- you can't get your mask back together to wear it or your mask is leaking since you washed it
- your equipment or mask appears to be broken
- your doctor has given you a new prescription for setting changes
- you are having a difficult time and are unsure whether your equipment is working properly, if you are sick or if you are unable to trigger your machine



When to use—and when not to use—PROP's 24-hour service.

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- you have gone to the hospital and the staff are not familiar with your machine or if the staff need to make changes to your machine while you are in hospital. They can call us to find out how to enter the clinical menu on your machine.
- a care worker was cleaning the machine and thinks they may have accidentally changed your settings or pressed an incorrect/wrong button
- if you can't remember or are unsure what your therapist advised you, if you need clarification with respect to how and when to use the equipment
- if you are unsure, please call. We are here to help.

Do Not Call:

- if you feel you are in an emergency situation. Call 911, your doctor or go to the hospital.
- to reschedule or change an appointment
- to leave a message
- to order supplies



24-Hour On-Call Service
1-866-326-1245

Last Thoughts About On-Call

We do not mind helping you in the middle of the night or troubleshooting your equipment. There are no silly questions, only unanswered ones.

However, please use this service wisely as there are costs associated with this resource.

Remember to call when a problem occurs, not a few days later. For example, "My BiPAP hasn't been working properly since Wednesday night." If it is now Friday night, we will not be able to ship new equipment to you until Monday.

If you have a medical issue, rather than an equipment issue, we may ask that you call 911 or go to the hospital—especially if we feel that we have exhausted our resources and believe you are in need of immediate medical attention.

Occasionally, we cannot fix a problem over the phone, no matter how hard we try. Sometimes the equipment has to be exchanged or sent in for repair.

We will start the procedure at the office the following morning to have your equipment replaced or sent in for repair.

We advise all of our clients to always be prepared. Have an extra mask, hose and supplies in case something breaks or your dog chews it up! Yes, we have heard it all.

We make every effort to return your call as soon as possible but please remember that we may be on another call.

Your patience is greatly appreciated by everyone at BCITS! ●

Wearing Shoes on the Job

BY ELAINA ZEBROFF



By the time this article is printed and distributed we will probably already have a change in weather. This past August and September have been one of BC's driest on record.

As clients of BCITS, many of you have regular yearly visits from our PROP Respiratory Therapists, others have visits from our TIL Biomedical Engineers, and many clients see members of the BCITS team more frequently in the home environment.

So, how does the weather and home visits affect BCITS and our clients?

The subject of footwear has come up at BCITS. With rain and snow, we all know the outdoors can become very wet and mucky. It is important to let our clients know that, when members of the BCITS team visit your home, we are required by Work Safe BC to wear footwear at all times while working.

Unfortunately, this means if a Respiratory Therapist or BioMed comes to your home, by law, we must keep our shoes on. However, when visiting clients' homes, we make all efforts to keep our footwear as clean as possible.

Thank you for your understanding!

balance

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Travelling with your PROP Equipment

BY GILLIAN HARNEY Our short summer has come to an end, but we seem to be lucky and are having an "Indian summer".

Over the spring and summer months, many of you have been travelling, often outside of BC.

Because many of our clients do travel, we wanted to give you a few pointers on what you need to know when you are travelling with your PROP equipment.

First, PROP can only assist you with your equipment and supplies, if you reside within BC and travel within BC.

So, please keep in mind that we cannot help you, if you require assistance due to failures with your equipment or replacement of supplies, if you are outside of BC.

This applies whether you travel to other provinces or overseas.

The PROP 24-hour number, 1-866-326-1245, will not work and you will not have access to the after hour On Call services.

When you travel with your equipment, be sure to have this information with you:

- Make and model of your equipment
- Equipment settings
- Make, model and size of your mask
- Location of a supplier that can assist you with your equipment and supplies at your destination or en route

We will be able to assist you by giving you this information about your equipment, supplies and settings.

However, it will be your responsibility to ensure that you know where you can take your equipment should the need arise while outside of BC.

I hope this information will help you to travel safely and, if you have any questions, please contact PROP. ●

Visit Us Online

If you haven't visited our website lately, please come check it out.

Earlier this year, we made some big changes based on your feedback, incorporated lots of new videos and created key sections that we hope will serve you better.

Client Centre Some key things to know about being a BCITS client: how to connect with a peer, order services and supplies, and rate our services.

Learning Centre Now, all our resources are in one place, including instructional and inspirational videos, self-help guides, information on training and workshops, and more.

Health Professionals page Home base for our colleagues in the health professions.

These improvements are a work in progress, so your feedback is most welcome. Visit www.bcits.org, explore and send us a note. You can use the feedback form on the Contact Us page. ●



Respiratory Therapy Week by Miranda Whiteley

PROP currently has five Respiratory Therapists (RT's) on staff. As a PROP client, you have all met at least one of us. We come to your home at least once a year and you speak to us on the phone many times per year.

But who are we? What is a Respiratory Therapist exactly? Since RT Therapy Week was October 21-27, we thought we would shed some light on who we are and what we do.

Education

There are many Respiratory Therapy programs available across Canada, but all RT's are taught the same curriculum and must pass a National Examination.

The Respiratory Therapy Program is a three-year program with two full years in the classroom and one year working in the hospital and community. Although this is not a Degree Program, most RT's have completed a university degree as well.

Many provinces have regulated the profession of Respiratory Therapy by creating a college or governing body to ensure the public is receiving the best possible care. Unfortunately, British Columbia has not yet chosen to regulate our profession,

so we follow the rules set out by the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists. It is important to note that all RT's work under the medical directive of a physician.

Work Environments

You will find RT's working in a vast variety of locations, including but not limited to, hospital operating rooms, intensive care units, labour and delivery wards, general medical wards, emergency rooms, pulmonary function testing labs, sleep labs, asthma and COPD clinics, as well as the home environment.

Our training covers all age groups from pre-term babies to the elderly. Being a Respiratory Therapist is a great career because it offers so many different employment opportunities, based on your interests. All RT's have experience in all aspects of our field.

Here at PROP, we have the opportunity to work in a variety of environments. In our facility, we teach care workers through our Tracheostomy and Ventilator Management Course, in hospitals we are involved in discharge planning meetings, and we travel across the province to see our

clients in their homes or privately-funded facilities.

Equipment Expertise

As RT's, we have spent a lot of time learning about mechanical ventilation (such as the Legendair and PB560 ventilators) and what it entails. As a result, we are often called upon for our technical expertise. New equipment is always coming on the market, so we are involved in continuing education opportunities to keep our knowledge and skills current. We are also experts in airway management which allows us to effectively teach your care workers about the care and maintenance of your tracheostomy tube.

Respiratory Dynamics

Respiratory Therapists understand your respiratory condition and how it affects your ventilation (breathing) requirements and outcomes. This enables us to choose appropriate settings for your ventilator or bilevel unit. Because of this combined knowledge of equipment and respiratory dynamics, we can often trouble shoot with you and solve many issues over the phone.



Miranda



Elaina



Esther



Gillian



Valerie

Clinical Skills

In the home environment, we have limited monitoring capabilities. So we rely on our clinical skills, respiratory assessments and the symptoms you are experiencing.

For example, we always ask you if you have headaches in the morning because, if your breathing is compromised, carbon dioxide (CO₂) can build up in your blood. CO₂ causes the blood vessels in your brain to dilate. This dilation causes an increase in pressure in your head which ultimately leads to a headache in the morning! We can make adjustments to your ventilation equipment to relieve these headaches.

Miranda, Elaina, Esther, Gillian and Valerie are proud to serve you with our ever-growing knowledge and experience. Here's what they had to say about working with PROP!

"We are grateful to work at PROP because we love to help you live independently in your own home."

"We often have the opportunity to be creative and 'think outside the box' to make ventilation meet your individual needs."

"PROP and our clients have given us an advanced education in ventilating the unique respiratory needs of many neuromuscular conditions and spinal cord injuries."

"It is very fulfilling to see our clients engaged in their lives and doing amazing things!"

"What I love about my job is that it is always evolving; I'm constantly looking at better ways to improve respiratory care." ●

Help Us Fulfill Our Vision

BCITS, proud home of PROP and TIL, is a registered non-profit and charitable organization. The funds to operate these programs come from the Ministry of Health, through the Vancouver Coastal Health region. We are very grateful for this generous support.

However, this funding does not cover the costs to provide equipment to TIL clients. For example, a special telephone for a person with a high level disability can cost as much as \$1000 and an automatic door opener can cost \$3000.

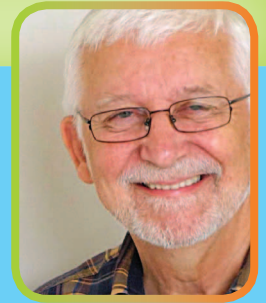
We provide many devices like these to adults—at no cost—to fulfill our vision of people living in the community as independently as possible.

You can help us continue this work through your donation. Any contribution large or small will be gratefully accepted. You'll also receive a "thank you" in *BALANCE* and on our website. **And, 100% of your donation will go toward equipment and assistive devices.**

Thank you

Simon Cox, BCITS Executive Director

Charitable Registration Number 807477070RR0001



Yes, I would like to support TIL's equipment program.

- ☐ I enclose a cheque for \$ _____.
- ☐ I will make a donation by credit card through CanadaHelps.org. [Donate in minutes by clicking on the CanadaHelps button on our home page at www.bcits.org.]

Please be sure to fill in all your contact details, so we can send your tax receipt (for donations of \$10 or more).

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY & PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

PHONE

EMAIL

Please return this form to: BCITS, #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6



Llama Party 2012! BY ROWDY "CANINE" JR.

Oh boy, oh boy! I had so much fun at the Peer Support Llama Party this year! I'd never been before, but my parents decided to take me and I'm so happy they did.

The food was amazing—burgers, fire roasted corn, cream puffs and veggies. I ran around free in the yard the whole time and rolled around on my back in a state of pure



bliss! I saw horses, chickens, sheep, dogs and I hear there was a llama somewhere, but I can't say for sure because I never actually saw it! I had the great pleasure of meeting some of the PROP and TIL clients and their families.

My mom is always telling me about how amazing they are, so it was nice to put faces to the names. The highlight of the event for me, personally, was getting on top of the picnic table to finish off the leftover scraps when no one was watching! Then all I heard was, "Rowdy Jr. get off the table!"

I hope they invite me back next year in spite of my behaviour because I had the time of my life on that farm.

Thanks again everyone for all of your hard work in organizing this event. See you all again next year. Please? ●

Check Your Closets BY WAYNE POGUE

Closets can be a scary place for young and old alike. Sure, there may be ghosts, monsters or elephants in your closets.

What's even scarier is that mountain of unused BCITS (TIL and PROP) equipment teetering on your top shelf...it could come crashing down at any moment!

If this sounds like your living space, please consider returning any BCITS equipment you don't currently use.

As our client pool grows, we are constantly looking for more equipment to help as many clients as possible live an independent lifestyle.

You could be a great help to your fellow BCITS clients, future BCITS clients, and BCITS staff, if you would package up your unused equipment and ship it to BCITS, drop it off (we always enjoy the visit) or have one of our staff members pick it up when they are in your area. Thank you!

If you would like help returning your unused equipment, or if you are unsure whether that dusty equipment belongs to BCITS, please contact us for clarification at 604-326-0175. ●



Ask the BioMed | Personalized Solutions

BY ROGER DESMARAIS Physical disability can make it very hard to operate some technological devices.

However, we have a growing assortment of technology and adaptations we are able to provide to people with a range of disabilities.

Many years ago, we mounted cameras onto wheelchairs. These days, we are mounting high-tech tablets that can take pictures, browse the internet, play hundreds of songs and lots more!

But, we are still happy to provide mounting solutions for more basic devices, like the camera or the cellphone, if that works best for our client.

We provide clients with the means to control their home environment, including household items like a TV, DVD players and sound systems. Physical devices, such as lamps, electric fans and window shutters can also be made accessible and provide much more independence.

Some of the Environmental Control Systems can be used for extra fun. It is possible to spook friends with a mechanical zombie! You can switch it on and off like a lamp or electric fan.

In the winter, you could control Christmas lights or even an electric train running around the tree.

Call us. We'd love to talk with you about what is possible. ●

If You Have:	We Could Provide:
Land-line for you to make and receive calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A home phone that is adapted to your needs
Cellphone * with Bluetooth and Voice Activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted Bluetooth earpiece with a switch • Device mounting
Touch Tablet* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iPad, iTouch, iPhone • Android 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch access interface box and switch(es) • Device mounting
eBook Readers *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaption and switch access • Device mounting
*Note: If you have not yet purchased your device, please consult with the BioMed Department to ensure that the device will meet your needs.	
Audio-Visual Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Television • DVD player, stereo/radio, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote programming with switch(es) • Remote mounting
Lamps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plugged into wall outlet • No ceiling lamps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Automation System (X-10) with switch(es)
Electric Fan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plugged into wall outlet • No ceiling fans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Automation System (X-10) with switch(es)
Door <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door opener with a remote • Not a garage door 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote control adaption and switch(es) • Remote mounting
Window Shutters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not blinds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Automation System (X-10) with switch(es)

Yes, I Accept Your Invitation To Join BCITS



The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS)
Home of Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) & Technology for Independent Living (TIL)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please Check One

☐ **Membership for registered BCITS clients**

Please mail completed form to BCITS
(the cost of postage constitutes your membership fee)

☐ **Non-client membership fee**

Please mail completed form along with
\$20.00 annual membership fee payable
to BCITS.

Please mail this form along with any applicable membership fees to BCITS - The Home Of PROP and TIL, #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6

NEWS BITS



A Potential Research Project

PROP clients may soon have the opportunity to contribute to a large research study hoping to accurately measure Quality of Life while living in the community with respiratory support. This study has not yet received approval from the Ethics Board but if it does, surveys will be sent out to clients all across the province of BC and the province of Victoria in Australia this coming November. The more surveys completed and returned, the more powerful and accurate the study. This data can then be used to determine best practices and can help us improve on services if needed. This is a win-win situation for everyone so we hope you are as excited as we are about this potential study.

Proper Hand-Washing Technique

BY MIRANDA WHITELEY It is important for your friends, family members and care workers to practice proper hand-washing techniques to keep you healthy and happy. Hand-washing should be done before and after all contact with you and/or your respiratory equipment.

1. Wet your hands with warm running water.
2. Add soap, then rub your hands together, making a soapy lather. Do this away from the running water for at least 15 seconds, being careful not to wash the lather away. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between your fingers and under your nails.
3. Rinse your hands well under warm running water.
4. Pat hands dry with a paper towel.
5. Turn off the water using the same paper towel and dispose of it in a proper receptacle.

* From http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/pubhealth/handwashing/handwashing_mn.html. ●