

If you ask a busy professional: What is the first thing you do when you wake up? This answer is often: I check my email. In today's world, we are in constant communication with each other, our clients, our colleagues and even our regulatory body. As an example, if you are reading this article, you likely are actively engaged in communication with the Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (ACSLPA).

It is important that regulated members of ACSLPA stay in touch with us. Frequent updates are sent from ACSLPA that may have an impact on you or your profession. For example, we send renewal reminders or emails with opportunities for providing input on changes to our standards or guidelines. We also send out correspondence that requests a response.

This Insights article reviews the responsibilities of regulated members and describes the concept of *ungovernability*.



**Do you have a responsibility to respond to correspondence?**

**What does it mean to fail to cooperate with a request from ACSLPA?**

**What if your contact information is out of date?**

## What is ungovernability?

Ungovernability is frequently referred to as an inability or unwillingness to cooperate with a request from a regulatory body. In order for a regulatory body to fulfil their mandate of protection of the public, they must be able to effectively self-regulate their profession(s). If a regulated member does not cooperate with requests, it undermines the regulatory body's ability to regulate. It subsequently can erode the trust that the public places in a regulatory body, and its profession(s), to ensure adequate self-regulation.

## What are my responsibilities?

Being responsive to ACSLPA is strongly encouraged to ensure effective regulation. Some types of cooperation are mandatory, as outlined in the *Health Professions Act (HPA)*, meaning that failures to cooperate could be defined as unprofessional conduct. Some examples are failing or refusing to:

- cooperate with an *investigator* in the complaints process (this could be as a potential witness being asked to give a statement);
- comply with a *notice to attend* (this could be as a potential witness being asked to attend a hearing) or with an *inspector* (during a practice visit); and
- cooperate with the *continuing competence program* (this could include if you are selected for an audit).

It is equally as important that a regulated member respond and reply to communications from ACSLPA in a timely manner and be responsive to requests for information or replies. Finally, it is important that you keep your contact information current with ACSLPA. You are required by the *Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists Profession Regulation* to update the College if you change your place of employment, mailing address, phone number or other relevant information.

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## How is potential ungovernability addressed?

Concerns of ungovernability, failing to cooperate with a regulatory body's requirements or failing to respond to a regulatory body where a response is requested may lead to an allegation of unprofessional conduct, or a complaint of unprofessional conduct initiated by the Complaints Director. The potential penalty for ungovernability is assessed on a case-by-case basis. However, in some cases, fines or suspensions have been ordered. In the most serious of cases where there is a serious pattern of failing to comply or cooperate with a regulatory body's directions, orders and requirements, revocation has been ordered by other regulatory bodies.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, if you are a regulated member of ACSLPA, it is important to respond and cooperate with ACSLPA when asked, and to ensure you can be responsive, it is important to update your information regularly.



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