

The employer of the Licensed Practical Nurse is a contributing factor in achieving desirable and safe patient outcomes. Although the LPN is accountable for his or her practice there are aspects of care and care environments that are beyond the control of the LPN.

The SALPN legislated responsibility is to ensure protection of the public through regulation of the LPN profession. In order to ensure safe care and protect the public, several documents have been developed that are helpful to both the LPN practitioner and the employer.

**SALPN Legislative Documents:** Over arching term capturing the legislation, bylaws, and documents referenced into the bylaws that form a base for all SALPN documents.

**The Licensed Practical Nurse Act 2000:** statute of the government declaring the SALPN as the regulatory body of the profession and defines practice. The act exists for the purposes of regulating the LPN profession in the best interest of the public.

The Licensed Practical Nurse Act 2000 states, “practice as licensed practical nurse” means to provide services, within the education and training of licensed practical nurses, for the purposes of providing care, promoting health, and preventing illness.” It is this definition in which all SALPN documents are derived and justified.

**SALPN Regulatory Bylaws:** Rules adopted by the SALPN and approved by the government in which the SALPN must follow to effectively regulate the profession. Regulatory bylaws cannot be changed or altered without the approval of the membership. SALPN Regulatory Bylaws outline:

- a. Requirements of licensure
- b. Categories of Licensure
- c. Fees of Licensure
- d. Disciplinary Process

**SALPN Regulatory / Practice Policy:** These documents guide the carrying out of regulatory functions as outlined in the “Licensed Practical Nurse Act, 2000” and the SALPN Regulatory Bylaws.

**Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada:** The Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada provide a national framework for LPN practice. The Standards of Practice are authoritative statements that define the legal and professional expectations of licensed practical nurse practice. In conjunction with the Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses, they describe the elements of quality LPN practice and facilitate mobility through inter-jurisdictional mutual understanding and agreement of expectations and requirements for practice. The four broad standards are applicable to LPNs in all settings in which they practice. They provide the benchmark to which LPNs are measured. Indicators accompany each standard and describe more specifically the expectations for LPN practice. Neither the standards nor the indicators are in any order of priority.

As members of a self-regulating profession, LPNs are personally responsible for meeting the Standards of Practice. The legislative responsibility for setting, monitoring and enforcing the Standards of Practice lies with the provincial and territorial regulatory authorities. The policies and practices of employing organizations do not relieve LPNs of accountability to meet these standards of practice.

**Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada:** articulates the ethical values and responsibilities that Licensed Practical Nurses uphold and promote, and to which they are accountable. The Code serves to:

- guide LPNs' ethical reflections and decision-making across all areas of licensed practical nurse practice; and,
- inform the public about the ethical values and responsibilities of the LPN profession and convey the profession's commitment to society.

LPNs' primary responsibility is to the client within the context of an inter-professional collaborative environment. "Client" refers to an individual (or their designated representative(s), families, and groups).

Respect for the inherent dignity and rights of clients, colleagues and LPNs underpins the five ethical principles encompassed in the Code. These principles, although distinct, are inter-related and include:

1. Responsibility to the Public
2. Responsibility to Clients
3. Responsibility to the Profession
4. Responsibility to Colleagues
5. Responsibility to Oneself

**SALPN Supportive Documents:** Overarching term capturing the entire suite of differing types of documents that support LPNs in meeting the expectations of behavior set in legislation, legislative documents, and policy. These may include Practice Guidelines, Interpretive Documents, Fact Sheets, Discussion Papers, Position Statements, Research and Resources, and Publications of the SALPN.

## Creating Policy

A **POLICY** is a predetermined course of action or behavior established as a guide to meet organizational goals or objectives.

A **PROCEDURE** is a method by which a policy can be consistently accomplished; it provides the instructions and parameters necessary to carry out an action.

Policies and procedures are necessary for both employees and the employer. They ensure that employees know what is expected of them in any given circumstance, while at the same time protecting the organization from inconsistencies in service, malpractice, undesirable outcomes, etc.

The SALPN has provided documents and practice consultant services in order to assist the employer with the creation of policy. Well developed policy and procedure will assist all care providers in the provision of safe and quality care. The SALPN cannot foresee or accommodate each practice setting or facility and therefore cannot provide policy and procedure that will suit each practice setting. SALPN documents do not serve as policies and procedures in specific settings.

The LPN is accountable to ensure competence, abide by the code of ethics, and meet standards of practice when delivering care. The employer can support the process with policy and procedure.

- a. Policy and procedure must be appropriate for the provider. (LPN)
  - Does the depth and breadth of the LPN education and depth and breadth of knowledge support the policy or procedure?
  - Is education for an additional competency required or is basic education sufficient?
  - Does policy support legislated responsibility of the LPN and or other providers?
  - Is the LPN working independently in the practice setting or collaboratively and with access to or support of other professionals?
- b. Policy and procedure must be appropriate for the patient.
  - Does the policy set guidelines regarding the type and number of patients accepted, admitted, or cared for?
  - Does policy and procedure provide guideline and direction for administering the care typically required in the setting?
  - Does policy advocate for the safest care possible and evidence based practice methods?
- c. Policy and procedure must be appropriate for the environment.
  - Is this a safe setting with appropriate resources (human and otherwise) to provide the desired service?
  - Is the setting able or appropriate to manage adverse reaction or event?
  - Does policy support the safety of both patients and practitioners?
- d. Policy and procedure must provide the basic or specialized steps that must be followed. This includes, but not limited to:
  - Pre-requisite skills, education, or certification required
  - Necessary and approved equipment or technology to be used
  - Assignment requirements
  - Required order or approval process
  - Patient preparation and assessment
  - Steps to accomplish the task
  - Patient follow-up
  - Basic or specialized documentation
  - Adverse event process
  - Error or unusual occurrence handling / reporting
  - Clean – up or sanitization measures

## Additional Information to Consider

- a. **Medication Administration Policy:** The SALPN does not provide a list of medications the LPN can or cannot give.
- b. **Skills Administration Policy:** The SALPN does not provide a list of skills or tasks the LPN can or cannot perform. The Additional Competency Practice Guideline supports the employer in creating policy specified for particular areas of practice requiring knowledge, skills, abilities, critical thinking, attitudes, and judgments beyond the basic education of the LPN. This supports the employer in the ability to educate and prepare all practitioners employed to serve the patient and meet the needs as required.

## References

*Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators. (2013) Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada*

*Perry, M. & Potter, J. (2009) Foundations of Nursing Practice. Canadian Fundamentals of Nursing. (90-93) Toronto.*

*Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses. ( 2000) Regulatory Bylaws. Regina*

*The Statutes of Saskatchewan. (2000) The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000. Regina.*