

Scope of Practice

Introduction:

The Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN) is responsible to ensure the safety of the public with the regulation of the LPN profession in Saskatchewan. The authority to regulate the profession is derived from legislation, specifically the Licensed Practical Nurses Act 2000. The act delegates the privilege to regulate to the SALPN elected council. The council consists of seven LPN members and three public representatives, therefore creating a self regulating profession.

The SALPN council has been entrusted to regulate the LPN profession according to the act and manage the affairs of the association while abiding with both regulatory and administrative bylaws. Legislation empowers the SALPN to:

- a) Determine requirements of licensure / re-licensure;
- b) Approve practical nursing education;
- c) Set, monitor and enforce a professional code of ethics and standards of practice;
- d) Intervene with a peer-led disciplinary process in cases when standards are not met and the safety of the public is compromised.

Self-Regulation:

Self-regulation is a privilege and responsibility granted to the profession by the Government of Saskatchewan. The LPN membership contributes to self-regulation by either becoming elected to the SALPN Council or voting for members in the electoral race for a council position. The elected member represents the LPN membership at the council level. Decisions made regarding the profession are made at the council level. Members can further contribute by attending the annual general meeting. LPN members can propose resolutions and or participate in the voting process.

Core and Supporting Documents:

The Licensed Practical Nurse Act 2000: statute or proclamation of the government declaring the SALPN as the regulatory body of the profession and provides a definition of practice.

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 and the Ministry of Health.

SALPN Regulatory Bylaws outline:

- a) Requirements of licensure/renewal of licensure
- b) Categories of Licensure
- c) Fees of Licensure
- d) Disciplinary Process

SALPN Administrative Bylaws: Rules adopted by the SALPN and approved by the membership in which the SALPN must follow to effectively operate the organization.

SALPN Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice: The code of ethics sets forth ideals of conduct and are the accepted foundation of ethical practice. It establishes the ethical values of the profession that must be adhered to and applied at all levels of decision-making and domains of practice by each LPN practitioner.

Standards of Practice are the minimum expected levels of practitioner behavior and practice, against which actual practitioner behavior and practice is measured.

SALPN Practice Guidelines: Written document with information to assist the LPN in decision-making regarding specific areas of practice or specific situations. Practice guidelines can also assist the employer in developing policy and procedure for the practice setting.

Scope of Practice:

“Practice as a 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.”
(The Licensed Practical Nurses Act 2000)

The above definition defines the **professional** scope of practice of the LPN in Saskatchewan. Professional scope of practice refers to the outer range of activities that the LPN is educated and additional competencies recognized by the SALPN to provide. The SALPN has provided the LPN membership with a Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, Practice Competencies, and Practice Guidelines to assist the LPN with decision making to ensure practice occurs within scope of practice.

The LPN is not educated to formulate a medical diagnosis and prescribe medical treatment. An LPN in Saskatchewan requires an order from an authorized prescriber: Physician, RN (NP), and in some settings a dentist or optometrist in order to implement medical treatments during nursing care.

Additional competencies obtained by the LPN must be supported by foundational practical nursing knowledge and applied for the purposes of providing care, promoting health and preventing illness. Additional competencies reflecting the practice of or general services of medicine and surgery are not and will not be recognized by the SALPN.

The individual scope of practice of each LPN is unique and is influenced by nursing experience, continuing education, professional development, attitudes, and utilization in employment. The individual scope of practice can not exceed the professional scope of practice as determined by legislation.

LPNs can develop expertise in an area of practice; however continuing education and additional competencies enhance competence within the professional designation only.

Scope of employment refers to practice that is supported by both policy and procedure in the LPN's place of employment. The scope of employment cannot exceed the **professional** scope of practice. In instances when the scope of employment exceeds the **individual** scope of practice the practitioner, along with the employer, must address deficiencies or knowledge gaps with education and training to gain and maintain competence.

The foundation of today's health care education and the health care system has developed in such a way that most professional disciplines will share few, some, or many competencies with other professionals. Professionals must collaboratively work together and support all other professionals to utilize scope of practice in its entirety. The goal of all health care providers is to provide safe, competent, and ethical care.