



Position Statement

Client Abandonment

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Abandonment: Position Statement

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The SALPN would like to acknowledge the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives for permission to adapt content from their webpage on Defining Client Abandonment.

Introduction

LPNs have a professional and legal obligation to provide their clients¹ with safe, competent, and ethical care. LPNs do not allow their judgments about a client or their lifestyle to compromise the client's care by withdrawing or refusing to provide care. An LPN may withdraw from care provision or refuse to provide care if they believe that providing care would place them or their clients at an unacceptable level of risk. LPNs must consider relevant factors, including:

- the specific circumstances of the situation
- their legal and professional obligations; and
- their contractual obligations.

What is Client Abandonment?

Abandonment occurs when the LPN has engaged with the client or has accepted an assignment and then discontinues care without:

- negotiating a mutually acceptable withdrawal of service with the client; or
- arranging for suitable alternative or replacement services; or
- allowing the employer a reasonable opportunity to provide for alternative or replacement services.

Other examples of client abandonment include:

- leaving abruptly without giving the employer adequate notice for replacing the LPN
- leaving without reporting to the oncoming shift
- being unavailable to other providers or not providing care yourself because you are distracted by personal activities.

¹ The term client includes client, patient, and resident.

What is not Client Abandonment?

Situations that are not likely to be considered abandonment include:

- refusing to work extra hours or shifts beyond the posted work schedule when you've given proper notice
- refusing to accept an assignment when you've given reasonable notice to the appropriate person that you are not competent to carry out the assignment
- resigning from employment without giving notice
- refusing to float to an unfamiliar practice area without preparation or orientation and an appropriately modified assignment.

Additional resources

The references below provide greater detail on abandonment and what the LPN is expected to do when faced with these situations.

References

[Abandonment of Care.](#) (2019). Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses

[Defining client abandonment.](#) (2020). British Columbia College of Nurses & Midwives

[Position Statement.](#) (2021). College of Massage Therapists of Ontario

[Refusing Assignments and Discontinuing Nursing Services.](#) (2021). College of Nurses of Ontario

[Standards & Guidelines.](#) (2017). College of Nurses of Ontario