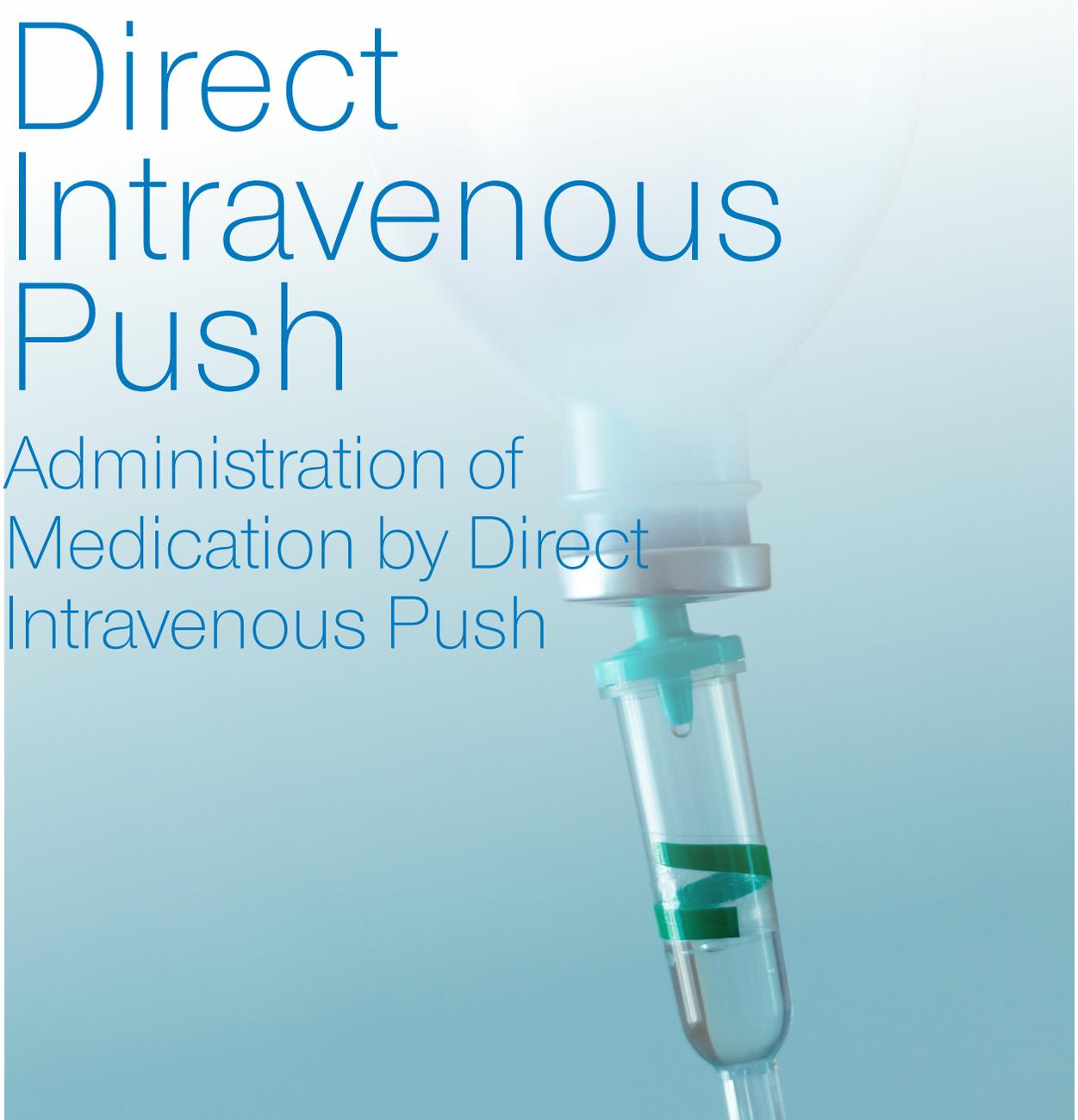




Practice  
Guideline

# Direct Intravenous Push

Administration of  
Medication by Direct  
Intravenous Push



# Practice Guidance

The Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) profession in Saskatchewan is regulated by the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN). The purpose of professional regulation is to protect the public from risk and reduce harm to those a profession serves. LPNs are regulated because the service LPNs provide can pose a risk to the public if performed incompetently, unethically, or by unqualified individuals.

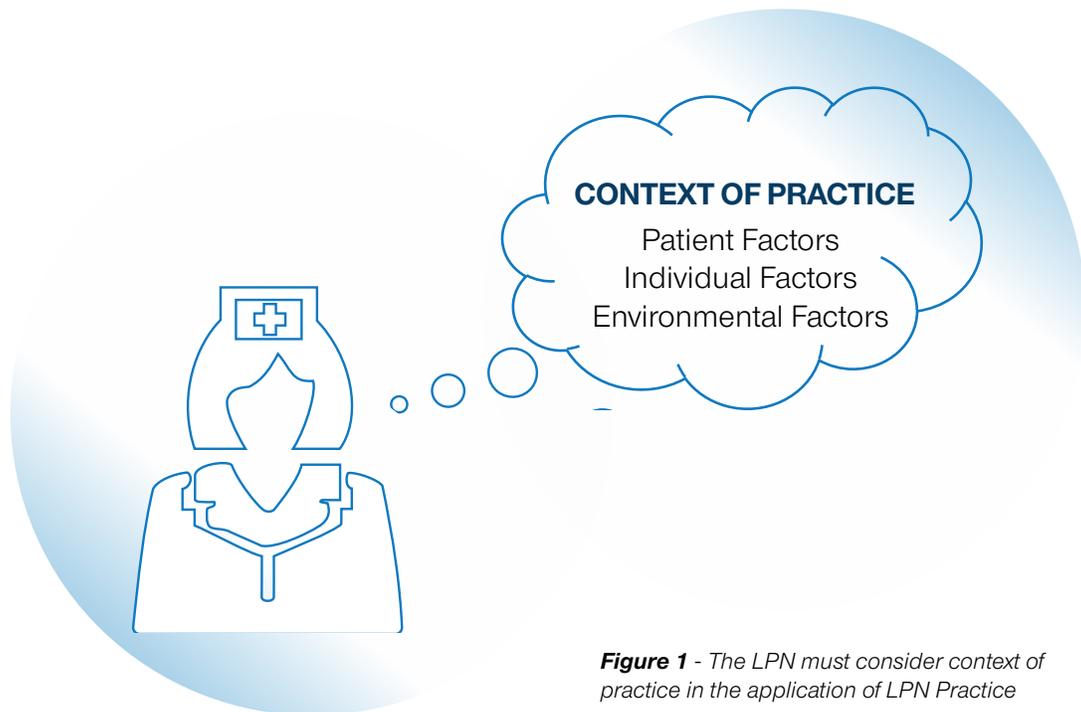
SALPN Practice Guidance documents are intended to address additional risks associated with aspects of practice, practice roles, or provide information about new or emerging practices. SALPN Practice Guidance documents provide information that enable LPNs to make informed decisions based on the best available evidence. These documents support nursing judgment and help LPNs meet expectations of professional behaviour and requirements for practice as set out in legislation, regulation, Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and Practice Policies.

SALPN Practice Guidance documents are not intended to provide all the information that may be required to inform decision making within practice. Each situation is unique, and information must be sought accordingly.

LPN practice is guided by professional scope of practice (legislation and regulation), individual competence and employment role (employer policy).

The **context of practice** determines the appropriate application of LPN practice with the collective consideration of conditions or factors affecting the status and needs of the patient, the abilities and attributes of the individual LPN, and the characteristics and resources of the environment.

The **context of practice** guides individual LPN decision-making within the professional scope of practice.



**Figure 1** - The LPN must consider context of practice in the application of LPN Practice

## Professional Scope of Practice: Authorization

Administration of medication by direct intravenous push (IV Push) is the delivery of medication into the vein through an injection port of an existing intravenous line or through a previously placed intravenous catheter with a saline/heparin lock. The medication is “pushed” into the existing IV system via a syringe controlled by the nurse (or authorized professional) at a rate as determined by pharmacological guidelines.

Administration of medication by IV Push is authorized by the SALPN as an additional competency for Licensed Practical Nurses.

Additional Competencies are the observable knowledge, skill, and abilities authorized by the SALPN as appropriate in LPN practice and are developed through education, training, and practice experience after completion of the Practical Nursing program and can be viewed [here](#).

## Achieving and Maintaining Competence

The LPN maintains competence in basic competencies with ongoing education and practice experience. The LPN must complete additional education beyond the basic practical nursing education program to develop individual competence to apply any additional competencies. This competence may be achieved with completion of education, training and practice experience. Individual LPNs may need to develop and achieve competence with a single additional competency or several additional competencies to meet the specific needs of a specific patient, patient population, and practice environment or to address the specific risks within a specific patient, patient population, and practice environment.

Because the purpose of the education and training is to develop individual competence, the method of education delivery and the depth and breadth of the education required will vary. The education and training must address the needs of and the risks associated with the patient population and/or practice environment. Some situations may require a combination of both formalized and informalized preparation.

The current Practical Nursing program provides theory and clinical instruction pertaining to intravenous initiation and therapy. IV Push education must be obtained and completed beyond the basic program to become an individual additional competency for the LPN.

## Education Requirements

Licensed Practical Nurses who are required to administer medication by IV Push must first participate in education that contains all the following:

1. Informative learning session inclusive of a written and demonstrated process testing the skill, medication preparation, supporting knowledge, policy, and required assessments.
2. Review of current agency policy regarding intravenous push medications.
3. Review of procedure in the event of adverse or unexpected reaction.

## Application of Competencies:

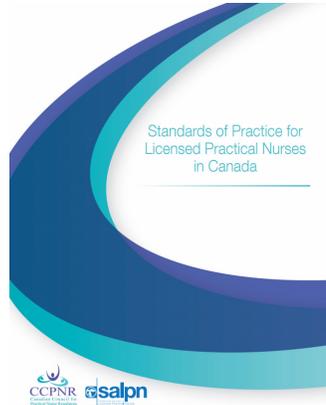
Before an LPN may consider utilizing competencies related to IV Push, they must be aware of the following information:

- Direct intravenous push (IV Push) is the fastest method of delivering medication to the patient's bodily system. Due to the speed of delivery, IV Push poses the highest risk for error or adverse effect, often irreversible.
- IV Push should not be chosen for the purpose of saving time or supplies.
- Administration of medication by IV Push is seen most often in practice areas such as: renal dialysis, areas requiring or benefiting from ACLS certification, Operating Room / surgical areas and areas requiring use of reversal drugs or antidotes.
- It is not at the discretion of the LPN to administer a medication via IV Push. It must be indicated on the medication order by the authorized professional or authorized in unit policy.

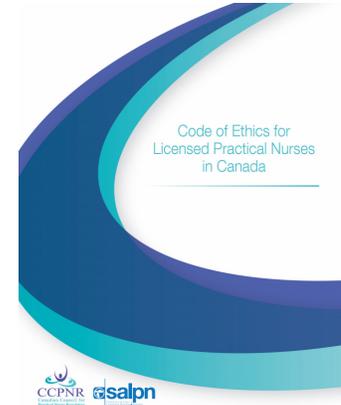
### NOTE:

An LPN is accountable not only for the IV Push, but for the decision making and critical thinking associated with each individual circumstance and the knowledge required of each individual medication.

The LPN must practice according to the [Standards of Practice](#) and the [Code of Ethics](#) of the profession as well as employer/agency policy.



**Figure 2** - Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada



**Figure 3** - Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada

## DETERMINING APPROPRIATE PRACTICE CONTEXT

LPNs must ensure that adequate references, resources and practice supports are readily available prior to the administration of any medication by IV Push. LPNs are expected to use professional judgment and be aware of the standards of practice and code of ethics by declining to administer any medication by IV Push where the requirements contained in this document are not met (for example: there is no medical order to administer the medication by the direct iv route, or the LPN has not achieved the competence to perform this skill).

LPNs are expected to consider the increased risk that is associated with administering medications by IV Push and determine if this risk can be managed with the resources available to the LPN at the time of the medication delivery.

## References:

ISMP (Institute for Safe Medication Practices) - Safe Practice Guidelines for Adult IV Push Medications (2015). <https://www.ismp.org/guidelines/iv-push>

Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses. (2017). 2017 SALPN Competency Profile, 3rd Edition.

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