

Immunization

Additional Competency

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Practice Guideline: Immunization Additional Competency

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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

Administering immunizations is 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](#).

In September 2022, The SALPN removed the restriction of immunizations to clients under the age of five, based on the context of practice (Client, Nurse, and Environment). It is within the Professional Scope of Practice of an LPN with additional education in immunizations to administer immunizations to all clients, including infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

LPNs may provide immunizations in various settings, including hospitals, long-term care centers, community agencies, public health, clinics, and clients' homes.

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.

Education requirements

Before an LPN can consider administering an immunization, they need to be aware of their responsibilities regarding immunizations as well as how to manage adverse events and determine appropriate practice context.

Licensed Practical Nurses who administer immunizations must first participate in education that contains all of the following:

1. Concept of immunity and principles of communicable disease prevention and control.
2. Anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology of communicable diseases.
3. Action, purpose, uses and nature of common immunizing/biological agents.
4. Factors which affect the action of immunizing/biological agents.
5. Side effects, adverse effects, and contraindications of common immunizing/biological agents and how to report appropriately.
6. Legal responsibilities, policy, procedure, and scope of practice in the preparation and administration of immunizing/biological agents.
7. How to maintain the cold chain in the transportation and storage of immunizing/biological agents.
8. How to review pertinent health information of client prior to immunization.
9. How to document assessment and nursing actions related to risk factors.
10. How to perform critical elements to ensure safety in preparation and administration of immunizing/biological agent.
11. Documentation for immunizing/biological agent administration and client's response.
12. Client, family or guardian informed consent.

Application of Competencies:

LPNs administering vaccinations are responsible to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and ability to provide immunizations in accordance with professional legislation, regulation, standards and guidelines.
- Ensure that physician orders / medical directives, appropriate employer/workplace policies and procedures and informed consents are in place.
- Assess the health status of clients before, during, and after the administration of immunizations and predict and manage any adverse effects. Based upon your assessment; at risk individuals should not be immunized in a facility/general immunization clinic but should be referred to a supporting agency, such as public health.
- Ensure they have received appropriate education as outlined in this document and perform ongoing assessment of their own continuing learning needs and competence.

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

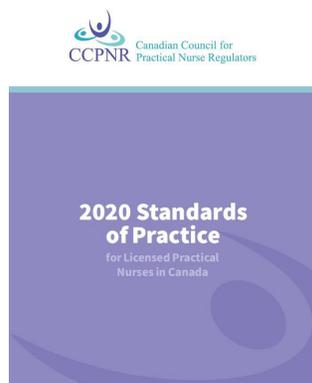


Figure 2 - Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada

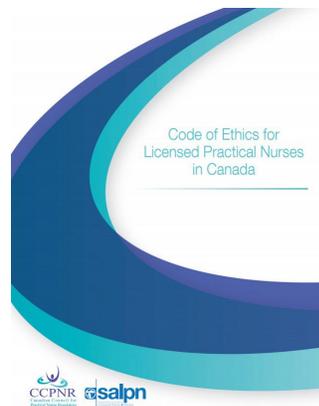


Figure 3 - Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada

Adverse Client Response

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening event that requires vigilance on the part of the healthcare practitioner who needs to recognize the condition quickly and initiate early treatment. As part of the immunization process, LPNs **must** demonstrate knowledge and ability to recognize and participate in the management of anaphylaxis in accordance with agency policy. In the event of an adverse client response, LPNs implement emergency protocols and complete forms according to employer/agency policies and procedures.

Determining Appropriate Practice Context

LPNs must ensure that adequate references, resources and practice supports are readily available prior to the administration of an immunization. These may include (but are not limited to) access to pharmacological information and access to additional medical personnel to assist in the management of an adverse event. LPNs are expected to use professional judgment as they prepare to immunize a client. LPNs meet their standards of practice and code of ethics by declining to perform immunizations when safe and ethical client care is not supported (for example: LPNs should decline providing immunizations to family or friends outside of the process as described within this practice guideline or when no consent has been given).

LPNs are expected to consider the immunization within the client's broader health care needs and ongoing health challenges. They should recognize when the presence of other health issues or client circumstances (for example: clients who have a history of immunization reactions or clients living in areas where access to emergency health services is more difficult), increases the risk for a negative health outcome. The more risk associated with the immunization, the more likely the LPN should consult, collaborate, or refer the client to an appropriate care provider before administering the immunization.



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