

The Licensed Practical Nurse with an Orthopedic Specialty

The Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) in Saskatchewan is authorized by the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN) to practice as an LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty. The LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty is specially trained individual bearing specialized knowledge in orthopedic care, performs specialized skills in orthopedic care, and provides care to patients with orthopedic needs. The LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty is prepared with advanced orthopedic assessment skills for adults and children with multiple trauma, orthopedic pathology and complications. The LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty holds specialized knowledge and skills to care for clients with casts, splints, braces, traction, external fixation, and amputations.

The LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty works under the direction of a physician and collaborates with other members of the health care team, primarily in Orthopedic Departments, Emergency Departments, and occasionally other areas requiring or offering orthopedic services.

The LPN educated and qualified to practice with this specialty will be recorded in the SALPN LPN Specialty Database. The LPN with an orthopedic specialty is accountable and responsible to ensure practice meets the SALPN Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. The Code of Ethics sets forth ideals of conduct and is the accepted foundation of ethical practice. It establishes the ethical values of the profession and 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 behaviors against which the actual practitioner behavior is measured.

Professional 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)

Sections 20 and 21 of the SALPN Regulatory Bylaws provide as follows:

20. All members shall ensure that they work within their educational preparation, level of competence and scope of practice and comply with the standards of practice set out in the *Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses* approved and adopted by Canadian regulatory agencies as of April 1, 2013.

21. All members shall conduct themselves in an honorable and ethical manner, upholding the values of truth, honesty, and trustworthiness, and shall observe the standards of conduct set out in the *Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada* approved and adopted by Canadian Regulatory Agencies as of April 1, 2013.

An LPN who engages in or performs any additional or specialty competencies without having completed the appropriate education or training program or without adhering to the required standards of practice and ethics would be in breach of the bylaws and therefore guilty of professional misconduct as it is defined in section 24 of *The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000*.

Professional Scope of Practice refers to the outer range of activities that the LPN is educated to provide. Therefore the LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty must practice according to the knowledge, skills, abilities, critical thinking and judgments supported by the approved education.

The LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty, like all LPNs, requires an order from a Physician or other authorized prescriber, RN (NP), in order to implement the medical treatments entailed within this specialty. The LPN is not educated to formulate a medical diagnosis and prescribe treatment.

An appendix with competencies associated with this specialty will be provided to assist the employer with the development of role descriptions or scope of employment.

Foundational Knowledge / Education Requirements

The LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty must complete the required education as approved by SALPN:

“Advanced Education in Orthopedics for LPNs” Norquest College – Edmonton, Alberta.

- 20 Week Pre-requisite Advanced Anatomy and Physiology for Orthopedics: Review of anatomical planes and direction, osteology, skeletal system, joints and movement, skeletal muscles, nervous and cardiovascular systems. Provides understanding of the specifics of the systems and how they relate to each other.
- 32 Week Core Program: Theory based comprehensive study of orthopedic terminology, musculoskeletal pathology, orthopedic assessment, immobility, and ambulation, trauma, upper/lower extremity injuries, pediatrics, diagnostic procedures, radiology, use of orthopedic devices such as casting and traction. Included is a mandatory five day lab session.
- 300 Hour preceptor lead graded practicum.

Please contact the SALPN if you have previously completed training as an “Orthopedic Technologist”.

References

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta. (2005) *Orthopedic Specialty*. Retrieved from <http://www.clpna.com/Portals/0/Files/AB%20LPN%20Competency%20Profile%20-%20Y-Orthopedic%20Specialty.pdf>

Norquest College. (2012) *Advanced Education in Orthopedics for LPN's*. Retrieved from: <http://www.norquest.ca/cal/current/program/advanced-education-in-orthopaedics-for-lpns/index.aspx>

Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses. (2012) *Employer guideline: Creating Policy and the LPN*. Regina.

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

Appendix: LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty: Competencies

The LPN is accountable to ensure practice is within the SALPN Code of Ethics and SALPN Standards of Practice. In addition the LPN with an Orthopedic Specialty is accountable for the following competencies.

a. Knowledge and Application of Orthopedic Specialty

Demonstrate knowledge of human anatomy and physiology of:

- body systems
- body planes and directions
- related terminology

Demonstrate knowledge of orthopedic medical conditions and treatment:

- trauma:
 - dislocations
 - multiple fractures
 - compartment syndrome
 - fat embolism
- fractures:
 - spinal
 - extremities
 - pelvis
 - ribs
- arthritis:
 - ankylosing spondylitis
 - rheumatoid
 - degenerative
 - juvenile
- infection:
 - osteomyelitis
 - bursitis
 - general
- tears:
 - ligaments
 - tendons
 - meniscus
- soft tissue injury

- other:
 - muscle injuries
 - osteoporosis
 - congenital disorders
 - kyphosis / scoliosis
 - contractures /deformities
 - growths / tumours

Demonstrate ability to perform comprehensive assessment of the orthopedic client.

Demonstrate the ability to recognize a variety of x-ray views such as:

- anterior / posterior
- axilla
- lateral
- mandibular
- panorex
- posterior / anterior
- oblique
- transverse
- tunnel

Demonstrate ability to teach the use of orthopedic equipment such as:

- cane
- cast removal equipment
- CPM machine (continuous passive motion)
- crutches
- walker

Demonstrate ability to measure angles of joints using a goniometer.

Demonstrate ability to receive verbal and written physician orders pertaining to orthopedics:

- accept , transcribe and initiate orders.

Demonstrate knowledge and ability to assist the physician with a variety of treatments and interventions such as:

- setting a fracture of a bone
- inserting or removing orthopedic devices.

b. Application of Orthopedic Devices:

Demonstrate ability to teach the application of orthopedic devices:

- acromioclavicular harness
- airsplints
- ankle brace
- ankle foot orthosis
- back braces
- clavicle strap
- elastic support stockings
- finger splint
- fracture brace
- Gibney boot
- Hare's traction
- hinged knee brace
- humeral fracture brace
- Iso-ulnar brace
- Jones bandage
- Pavlik harness
- Sager splint
- shoulder immobilizer / sling and swath/ velpeau
- soft/ hard cervical collar/ triple ruff
- stump wrapping
- tibial / femoral braces
- tensors / tubigrip
- Zimmer splint / knee immobilizer

c. Cast and Splint Care

Demonstrate knowledge of construction, application, removal, and teaching of cast and splint care such as:

- above elbow
- above knee – walking and non-walking
- back slabs
- below elbow
- below knee- walking and non-walking
- body casts
- cylinder casts
- gutter splints
- hip spica

- patella tendon bearing
- plaster vs. Fibreglass
- sugar tong
- spica casts
- uni-valve, bi-valve, windowing, trimming
- volar labs
- wedging

d. Application and Monitoring of Traction

Demonstrate ability to set-up, apply, assist in application, and monitor manual, skin, and skeletal traction:

- balanced suspension
- Balkan frame
- Bryant or Gallows
- Bucks
- Gardner Wells
- pelvic
- Russells or Split Russells
- skeletal
- skin
- skull
- Steinmen Pin insertion

Demonstrate knowledge and application of casts for treatments of fractures, dislocations, and skeletal disorders:

- closed reductions under conscious sedation or use of bier blocks (ATS tourniquet)

Demonstrate ability to assist with application of traction, insertion and removal of pin devices:

- Crutchfield tongs
- External Fixators
- Gardner Wells tongs
- Halo devices
- Kirschner wires
- Steinmen pen

Demonstrate ability to teach client and family regarding orthopedic treatment and care:

- orthopedic condition
- equipment and devices
- orthopedic procedures
- physician orders and treatment plan.