PRACTICE GUIDELINES

CLPNS
COLLEGE OF LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES OF SASKATCHEWAN

LPN Practice in Saskatchewan 2026

First issued: March 2019
Current version: December 2025
Previous versions: March 2019
Next review: 2027
Approved by: CLPNS Council
Responsible for review: Professional Practice Standards and Ethics

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PREAMBLE

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Saskatchewan (CLPNS) has a legislated mandate to regulate the practice of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in Saskatchewan. The purpose of regulation is to protect the public from risk and reduce harm by ensuring that LPNs provide safe, competent, and ethical care. LPN services can pose risks if delivered incompetently, unethically, or by unqualified individuals.

LPNs are members of a self-regulated profession in Saskatchewan. Their professional practice is defined by *The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000* (LPN Act) and the Bylaws established under its authority. Through this legislation, the Government of Saskatchewan has granted the CLPNS the legal authority to regulate the practical nurse profession.

Through regulation, the CLPNS sets clear expectations, which include education, licensure, professional conduct, and ongoing competence. It ensures only qualified individuals are licensed to practice and holds LPNs accountable through oversight, guidance, and, when necessary, disciplinary action.

The CLPNS develops practice guidance documents to support LPNs in navigating risks, evolving roles, or emerging practices. These documents are based on relevant legislation, regulations, the Standards of Practice, the Code of Ethics, and CLPNS Bylaws and are intended to provide guidance to LPNs to make sound, professional decisions and exercise appropriate nursing judgment.

Practice Guidance documents do not contain all the information necessary to support every decision within LPN professional practice. Each practice situation is unique and LPNs are expected to seek additional information and resources as needed to ensure safe, competent, and ethical care.

The CLPNS respectfully acknowledges the treaty lands of Saskatchewan and the homeland of the Métis. We honour the Indigenous people who have cared for these lands before us and today. The CLPNS is committed to partnership, ongoing learning, and meaningful action as we journey toward authentic allyship and Truth and Reconciliation.

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GLOSSARY

Authorized Prescriber: A regulated professional, such as a physician, nurse practitioner, podiatrist, or pharmacist, with the authority to prescribe, diagnose medical treatments, and order an intervention.

Authorizing Mechanism: A client-specific order or directive provided by an authorized prescriber.

Autonomous: The ability to act according to one's knowledge, skill, and judgment, providing nursing care within the scope of practice as defined by existing professional, regulatory, and organizational rules *(Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Examination (CPNRE). Examination Blueprint – 2022-2026)*.

Context of Practice: Determines how and under what circumstances LPNs apply their skills, considering the client's needs, the LPN's competence, and the environmental resources. The context of practice guides individual decision-making in specific practice settings or situations.

Employment role: How an employer utilizes an LPN within their authorized professional practice. It is developed based on the specific needs of the practice area and the client population served. Employers address and manage risks within the practice areas by clearly defining employment roles, with the responsibilities, functions, and activities an LPN may perform. This is also supported by employer requirements like policies and procedures.

Physician Delegation: An authorization to perform medical procedures (Botox, Laser Light Therapy) that fall within the scope of practice of medicine. The CLPNS authorizes these specific procedures only under certain conditions, as part of LPN professional practice.

Regulatory Practice Framework: A comprehensive overview outlining the rules, standards, and expectations that guide and advise safe and ethical decisions in LPN professional practice.

UNDERSTANDING LPN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

This document serves as a foundational resource to assist LPNs, managers, employers, educators, and the public in identifying whether an activity falls within LPN Professional Practice.

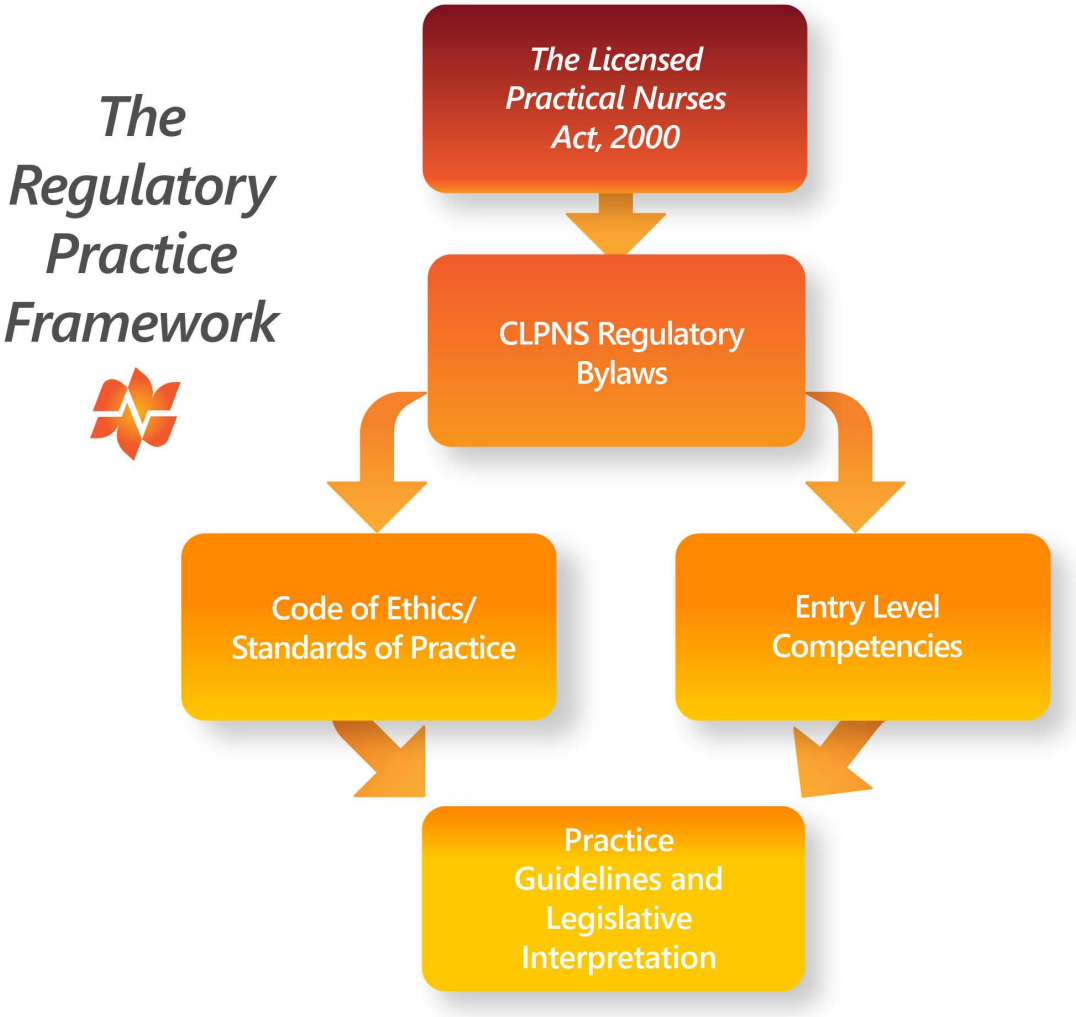
In Saskatchewan, the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Saskatchewan (CLPNS – or the College) outlines the professional practice of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). This authority comes from *The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000*.

The CLPNS sets standards for education, licensing, professional behaviour, and continuing competence, and manages issues of unprofessional conduct. This ensures the public is protected, and only qualified people can practice and use the title of an LPN.

Resource: *The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000* | CLPNS Bylaws

REGULATORY PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

The Regulatory Practice Framework for LPNs provides a practice framework including Legislation/Regulation, CLPNS Bylaws, Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Entry-Level Competencies, Practice Guidelines, and Legislative Interpretations. These resources give LPNs advice and direction to make safe and ethical decisions.



LPNs require knowledge of these important documents to understand their practice. This section provides a quick summary of the content of each document, how they are used, and links to where they can be reviewed in detail.

The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000

The LPN Act serves as the legal framework that defines what it means to practice as an LPN:

> *"…practise 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 CLPNS is responsible for interpreting the LPN Act. The definition is not a simple checklist of skills or activities. Instead, it represents a broad range of services and professional activities stemming from the education and training required for licensure, as well as the standards, competence, and ethics of the profession.
The interpretation is designed to be flexible and evolve with the changing needs of the healthcare system, supporting LPNs in providing safe, competent, and ethical care.

In addition, the LPN Act outlines the College's responsibilities for regulating the profession, setting Standards of Practice, providing a Code of Ethics, making Bylaws, and managing issues of professional misconduct and incompetence.

Why this is important to LPNs: It defines what it means to be an LPN, sets the requirements of registration and licensure, and outlines the College's authority.

Why this is important to the Public: It provides assurance that LPNs are regulated according to the law, protecting clients from unqualified or unsafe practitioners.

Resource: *The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000*

Regulatory Bylaws

The Regulatory Bylaws define expectations for LPNs to ensure that they" *…work within their educational preparation, level of competence, and professional scope of practice".*

They also include expectations for LPN compliance with:

- Standards of Practice
- Code of Ethics
- Specialized Areas of LPN Practice
- Physician Delegation
- Continuing Education Portfolio (CEP) requirements

These expectations connect to related documents that serve as practical tools to support safe, competent, and professional practice. The College can only create Bylaws when authorized in the Act to do so.

Resource: CLPNS Bylaws

Standards of Practice

The Standards of Practice provides a framework defining the legal and professional expectations for LPN professional practice across all practice environments and in all circumstances.

They guide LPNs with professional accountability, self-regulation for public protection, and ethical practice. LPNs use the Standards to exercise professional judgment, maintain competence, uphold client safety, and ensure ongoing learning and ethical decision-making in their daily practice.

Standard 1: Professional Accountability and Responsibility

- LPNs are accountable and responsible for their practice and conduct to meet the standards of the profession and legislative requirements.

Standard 2: Evidence-Informed Practice

- LPNs apply evidence-informed knowledge in practice.

Standard 3: Public Protection through Self-Regulation

- LPNs collaborate with clients and other members of the healthcare team to provide safe care and improve health outcomes

Standard 4: Professional and Ethical Practice

- LPNs adhere to the ethical values and responsibilities described in the Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators (CCPNR) Code of Ethics.

Why this is important to LPNs: It defines professional accountability and guides daily practice decisions.

Why this is important to the Public: It assures clients that LPNs are held to rigorous standards, promoting safety and quality in care.

Resource: Standards of Practice

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics outlines the ethical values, responsibilities, and accountability of LPNs and guides their decision-making across all areas of practice. It sets out six fundamental principles that shape LPN professional identity and inform the public, employers, and colleagues about what to expect from LPN practice.

Principle 1: Promote optimal health and well-being
Principle 2: Provide care that is physically, psychologically, and culturally safe
Principle 3: Provide and advocate for client dignity, autonomy, and self-determination
Principle 4: Develop therapeutic relationships while maintaining professional boundaries
Principle 5: Maintain personal well-being
Principle 6: Contribute to a healthy practice environment

LPNs use the Code of Ethics alongside Standards of Practice, competencies, policies, and Regulatory Bylaws to guide safe, ethical, and professional behaviour. Each principle includes indicators that describe expected conduct, helping LPNs reflect on their decisions and uphold their commitment to client safety, public protection, and the profession.

Why this is important to LPNs: It guides ethical decision-making and professional behaviour in all situations.

Why this is important to the Public: It provides assurance that LPNs act with integrity, respect, and compassion.

Resource: Code of Ethics

Entry-Level Competencies

In Saskatchewan, LPNs graduate from a CLPNS approved practical nurse program. The Entry-Level Competencies (ELCs) provide the foundational knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment expected of LPNs upon completing a recognized practical nurse program. These competencies are foundational to entry-to-practice licensure requirements and outline what new LPNs need to provide safe, ethical, and competent care.

The ELCs guide nursing programs, inform the national licensing exam, and set foundational expectations for beginner LPNs.

Resources: Entry-Level Competencies for LPNs

Practice Guidelines and Legislative Interpretation Documents

Practice Guidelines and Legislative Interpretation documents support and clarify LPN professional practice. They provide interpretation or detailed explanation of professional services or activities and are informed by the LPN Act, to assist LPNs in meeting practice requirements.

These documents assist LPNs in understanding how to comply with legislative and bylaw requirements, apply entry-level and ongoing competencies, and meet the Standards of Practice. They are developed in response to trends or frequent inquiries, highlighting areas where LPNs may need additional guidance in their practice, and serve as practical tools to support safe, competent, and ethical care across all practice settings.

Resources: Practice Guidelines | Legislative Interpretations

Authorizing Mechanism

Within LPN professional practice, there are three mechanisms that authorize LPNs to provide certain types of care: **client-specific orders**, **directives, and physician delegation.**

LPNs require an order or directive to perform activities that are not autonomously authorized within LPN professional practice, most often medical interventions or medical treatments.

- **Client-specific orders** are written or verbal instructions from an authorized prescriber that apply to an individual client.
- **Directives** are written authorizations that apply to a defined group of clients when specific conditions are met.

Physician delegation is a specific authorization to enable LPNs to perform a medical intervention in certain circumstances.

- **Physician Delegation** allow a physician to determine that an LPN can safely perform Botox injections or Laser Light Therapy that fall within the practice of medicine. The physician retains overall responsibility and accountability for the task and the LPN accepting the delegation is responsible for performing the intervention competently.

In all of these Authorizing Mechanisms, before providing care, LPNs must confirm that the authorization is clear, appropriate for their level of competence, and consistent with employer requirements, policies, and the Standards of Practice.

CONTEXT OF PRACTICE

The Context of Practice guides how an LPN adapts their approach based on three key factors: the client, the individual LPN, and the practice environment. LPNs adjust their practice to meet the changing needs of clients and the healthcare setting. They prioritize and manage the demands of their role while anticipating and responding to client care needs. Each LPN is responsible for applying the Regulatory Practice Framework to the Context of Practice when making practice decisions.

There are three factors involved in determining the Context of Practice:

The Client

LPNs provide autonomous care throughout a client's lifespan. When engaging in practice, they consider:

- Expected and unexpected care needs
- Level of care needed to achieve the best outcomes
- Anticipated response to interventions provided.

Clients can become more complex at any point, regardless of initial diagnosis or condition. As complexity increases, consultation and collaboration with other health professionals become essential. This does not mean LPNs cannot care for complex clients—it highlights the importance of ongoing assessment, clinical judgment, and timely collaboration.

The LPN

LPNs must consider their own individual competencies when determining how to apply their practice appropriately:

- Level of knowledge, skill, abilities, and judgment
- Overall experience and specific competence in the practice area
- Ability to assess and manage risk.

LPNs in management, administration, education, research or non-traditional roles must also assess the Context of Practice in relation to their environment. In this scenario, their 'client' may be staff, students, or the public, and their role is to oversee a program and support the team. This means taking a different approach when assessing the Context of Practice.

The Environment

The LPN must assess whether they can safely manage care and expected or possible adverse outcomes within the practice environment. This assessment may include the following:

- Employment role and requirements (i.e., policies and procedures)
- Risks related to the practice area
- Access to consultation and resources
- Availability of support.

When the needs of a practice environment exceed an LPN's competence, the LPN and employer share the responsibility to address the issue, which may involve providing education and training.

The Context of Practice is not fixed. It must be reassessed regularly to ensure decisions are in the client's best interest and within LPN professional practice. If any of the three factors — Client, LPN, or Environment—are not adequately met, the LPN must consult with another healthcare professional or their employer. This may involve

seeking additional support, such as assistance from other staff, equipment, diagnostic or surveillance tools, or, in some cases, transfer to a specialized care unit.

Professional Practice Checklist

Before performing an activity, ask yourself:

- ☑ **Client** – Is the client population suitable for me to provide this care?
- ☑ **Competence** – Do I have the knowledge, skills, and ability to perform this activity safely?
- ☑ **Knowledge & Judgment** – Do I understand when and how to perform this activity appropriately?
- ☑ **Risk Awareness** – Have I considered and assessed potential risks to the client and the practice area?
- ☑ **Resources & Support** – Do I have the right equipment, policies and procedures, and access to other care providers if an adverse event occurs?
  – Does my environment support me in this practice?

LPN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The professional practice of an LPN encompasses the provision of professional services or activities as defined by the LPN Act, which is further defined in the Regulatory Practice Framework and Context of Practice. These elements outline the expectations of LPN professional practice, providing the foundation for making safe, competent, and ethical decisions. Knowledge of these concepts clarifies how LPN education, training, and experience align with the broader responsibilities within LPN professional practice.

LPN professional practice is based on their education and training, evolving throughout an LPN's career as they gain experience. LPN professional practice is always guided by the goal of providing care, promoting health, and preventing illness.

Employer job descriptions typically outline the roles, responsibilities, and functions LPNs are authorized to perform in a specific practice environment. The following diagram illustrates how an LPN's competencies develop over time, while remaining within LPN professional practice. Not all LPNs will engage in Specialized Areas of Practice.

LPN competency development

Entry-level Practice

LPNs are educated to apply a client-centred approach in their practice: assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

ELCs provide the foundation to LPN professional practice, serving as a baseline for all new LPNs entering the profession. They represent the knowledge, skill, abilities, and judgment LPNs are expected to possess upon completing a recognized practical nurse program.

The ELCs are used to guide practical nurse program curriculum, help create the national licensing exam, and clarify what is expected of novice LPNs. As LPNs gain experience, the LPN role in the practice environment and the parameters in the Regulatory Practice Framework serve as a reference point for ongoing professional development and growth within their practice.

Resources: Entry-Level Competencies for LPNs

Beyond Entry-Level Practice

Building on ELCs, LPNs develop advanced knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment through additional education, training, and practical experience.

Continuous professional development and practice experience allow LPNs to develop their practice over time, adapting to the healthcare needs in their environment and providing higher levels of care as their practice progresses.

Beyond entry-level competencies:

- Must align with how LPN practice is defined in the LPN Act.
- Are often required for specific employment roles.
- Must be permitted through employer requirements, policies or procedures.
- Are applied to meet the needs of a specific client population or practice setting.
- Address risks that may exist within the client population or practice setting.

Resource: Additional Competencies

Independent Practice

Special attention is required for those LPNs providing LPN services as a self-employed person or as an employee of a business they substantially control. A business framework that includes policies and procedures must be developed. More information is available in the Independent Practice resource.

Resource: Independent Practice

Specialized Areas of Practice

Specialized areas of practice involve knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment required for specific roles within the nursing profession. These areas require post-basic education and training as outlined in the CLPNS Regulatory Bylaws. Specialized practice areas defined in the Bylaws include Advanced Orthopedics, Perioperative Care, and Hemodialysis.

Resource: Specialized Areas of Practice

Individual Competence

As LPNs gain experience, their practice evolves to meet the changing needs of the clients and the practice environment. Competence is grounded in the ELCs, which provide the foundational knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment required for licensure and entry to practice. LPNs must continually assess their own competence when determining how to apply their knowledge and judgment to practice.

Competence is demonstrated through:

- Applying knowledge and skills appropriately
- Using evidence-informed decision making
- Engaging in critical thinking and critical inquiry to apply professional judgment
- Demonstrating leadership skills within their role.

Individual competence evolves over the course of an LPN's career and is unique to each LPN. Competence is shaped by experience, ongoing and continuing education, professional judgment, and personal attributes, including attitudes, values, and beliefs. As LPNs gain experience and additional competencies, their ability to perform within the employment role may expand, but it must always remain within LPN professional practice.

When transitioning to a new area of practice, LPNs may need to refresh their knowledge and skills or acquire new competencies. Education and training requirements to develop, achieve, and maintain competence vary depending on the complexity of the activity and the risk level of the client population. Additionally, just because a competency is within LPN practice does not mean it will be performed in every practice area. Employment roles vary based on the Context of Practice, as mentioned earlier.

Resource: Risk Communication | LPN Practice Decision-Making Tool

Maintaining Competence

Maintaining competence is a professional responsibility for every LPN and requires ongoing self-reflection and assessment. Competence gaps are a normal part of professional growth, but if left unaddressed, they may present a risk of harm to the public. Continuous learning and self-assessment are essential to ensure safe, ethical, and competent care.

Each LPN is responsible for:

- Regularly evaluating their own knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment to identify areas for improvement
- Reflecting on their competence in relation to the profession's standards and the requirements of their employment role
- Identifying and addressing any gaps that arise due to changes in practice setting, role, technology, or the evolving nature of nursing practice.

Through this process of self-reflection, LPNs are expected to reflect on their practice and pursue learning activities throughout the year that enhance or maintain their knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment. Throughout this process, LPNs can identify opportunities to increase their knowledge and adapt to evolving healthcare needs.

The Continuing Education Portfolio (CEP) program provides LPNs with information on how to maintain competence, including the minimum annual requirement of CEP activity hours. These activities should align with the LPN's current practice and provide opportunities to gain new knowledge.

Resources: Continuing Education Portfolio | Self-Reflection Module

APPLYING THESE CONCEPTS IN PRACTICE

LPNs work in all healthcare settings and provide direct client care in various practice environments. They also practice in research, education, and leadership.

As professionals, LPNs are accountable to practice within the LPN Regulatory Practice Framework, while assessing the Context of Practice. To help LPNs effectively apply these concepts, the LPN Practice Decision-Making Tool has been revised. This tool includes key questions to determine if a role or activity is appropriate for LPN professional practice.

LPNs are encouraged to work through the Tool, using real practice scenarios that challenge their clinical judgment and professional boundaries. It is also a useful practice to engage in reflective exercises, case studies, or role-playing with colleagues to deepen individual and team understanding. Consider discussing experiences during team meetings to share insights and enhance collective decision-making skills, and guide safe, client-centered care.

All of these activities, including reviewing this practice guideline, contribute to LPN CEP requirements and ensure LPNs perform their role in a safe, competent, and ethical manner.

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LPN PRACTICE DECISION-MAKING TOOL 2026

Adapted from College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta, 2025, "LPN Practice Decision-Making Tool"
Ballard, K. et al., 2016 www.journalofnursingregulation.com Volume 7/Issue 3. "Scope of Nursing Practice Decision-Making Framework" Adapted from the College of Nurses of Ontario "Understanding Your Scope of Practice"

This tool is designed to support decision-making related to the LPN professional practice in Saskatchewan. By working through the tool, LPNs can determine how, when, and under what circumstances they apply their competencies.

Examining LPN practice takes into consideration these main factors:

- LPN Regulatory Framework: legislation, regulations, bylaws, standards of practice, code of ethics, and entry-level and beyond entry-level competencies, and other practice documents.
- Context of Practice: factors related to the client's needs, the LPN's competence and experience. and the environmental resources. The Context of Practice guides individual decision-making in specific practice areas or situations.

More details on these factors are in the LPN Practice in Saskatchewan, 2026 document.

As professionals, LPNs are accountable to practice within the LPN Regulatory Framework while assessing the Context of Practice. For example, each LPN is responsible for understand the legislative requirements that define LPN practice and determining whether they have the authority to perform a given activity, with a specific client, in the practice environment.

The following questions are intended to guide the LPN through the process of determining if it is appropriate to proceed with a specific role or activity in their environment.

HOW TO USE THE TOOL:

YES > **CONTINUE**
If yes, proceed to the next question.

NO > **STOP & REVIEW/CONSULT**
If no, practice may not be appropriate. Review CLPNS practice support documents at www.clpns.com or contact the CLPNS at practice@clpns.com.

1 Is the role or activity consistent with the legislation that outlines practice for LPNs in Saskatchewan?

LPN Regulatory Framework
- *The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000*
  - to provide services, within the education and training of licensed practical nurses, for the purposes of providing care, promoting health and preventing illness.
- Regulatory Bylaws

NO → **STOP & REVIEW/ CONSULT**

YES

2 Does the role or activity fit within the practice principles and ethical values for the profession?

- Standards of Practice
- Code of Ethics

NO → **STOP & REVIEW/ CONSULT**

YES

3 Are the competencies needed to safely perform the role or activity learned in a practical nurse education program?

LPNs are accountable and responsible for their own professional practice. This includes reflecting and considering whether they have the competence to perform the activity safely, including managing any adverse outcomes.
- Entry-Level Competencies for LPNs - Under revision

NO → **STOP & REVIEW/ CONSULT**

YES

4 Did the LPN acquire the competencies needed through practical experience, in beyond entry-level education, training, or certification?

Once an LPN enters practice there are other competencies they can acquire. Many of these competencies can be learned with practical experience. Some require additional education or training, and specific competencies require specialized certifications.

- Additional Competencies - Under revision
- Specialized Areas of Practice

NO → **STOP & REVIEW/ CONSULT**

YES ↓

5 Is the LPN supported to perform the role or activity in the practice environment?

An activity an LPN may perform in one environment may not be appropriate in another environment. Employers and organizations define the LPN role specific to the practice environment. LPN roles and responsibilities vary dependent upon the Context of Practice - client needs, LPN competence and environmental supports.

- LPN Practice in Saskatchewan

NO → **STOP & REVIEW/ CONSULT**

YES ↓

6 Does the role or activity require additional clinical supports to be performed safely? Are those supports readily available?

Clinical supports include consulting with other experienced LPNs or health professionals, access to medical equipment, other factors that would contribute to the clients' health needs.

NO → **STOP & REVIEW/ CONSULT**

YES ↓

7 Would another nurse, using good judgment, perform the role or activity within this practice environment?

In accordance with the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, LPNs must use evidence-based judgment to guide their nursing decisions.

- Standards of Practice
- Code of Ethics

NO → **STOP & REVIEW/ CONSULT**

YES ↓

8 Is the LPN prepared to accept accountability related to potential outcome of the role or activity performed?

YES ↓

NO → **STOP & REVIEW/ CONSULT**

The LPN may perform the activity, intervention or service in accordance with standards of safe nursing care.

This tool promotes self-assessment, reflection, critical thinking, and clinical inquiry skills to determine whether an activity is appropriate. Depending on the results, LPNs may need to seek further guidance from the healthcare team, their supervisor, an educator, or the CLPNS Practice Consultant at practice@clpns.com.

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