

Vermont State Board of Nursing
APRN/RN/LPN Scope of Practice
Position Statement and Decision Tree

Question:

How does an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN), Registered Nurse (RN) or Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) in Vermont determine whether a specified activity is within their scope of practice?

Definitions:

Scope of practice: A nurse's scope of practice includes all the nursing activities that the nurse may perform while practicing as an APRN, RN or LPN.

Nursing activities: Nursing activities include tasks, procedures, and processes.

The following definitions are set forth in 26 V.S.A. §1572:

"Registered nursing" means the practice of nursing which includes but is not limited to:

- (A) Assessing the health status of individuals and groups.
- (B) Establishing a nursing diagnosis.
- (C) Establishing goals to meet identified health care needs.
- (D) Planning a strategy of medical or health care.
- (E) Prescribing nursing interventions to implement the strategy of care.
- (F) Implementing the strategy of care.
- (G) Delegating nursing interventions that may be performed by others and that do not conflict with this subchapter.
- (H) Maintaining safe and effective nursing care rendered directly or indirectly.
- (I) Evaluating responses to interventions.
- (J) Teaching the theory and practice of nursing.
- (K) Managing and supervising the practice of nursing.
- (L) Collaborating with other health professionals in the management of health care.
- (M) Addressing patient pain.
- (N) Performance of such additional acts requiring education and training and which are recognized jointly by the medical and nursing professions as proper to be performed by registered nurses.

"Licensed practical nursing" means a directed scope of nursing practice that includes:

- (A) contributing to the assessment of the health status of individuals and groups;
- (B) participating in the development and modification of the strategy of care;
- (C) implementing the appropriate aspects of the strategy of care as defined by the Board;
- (D) maintaining safe and effective nursing care rendered directly or indirectly;
- (E) participating in the evaluation of responses to interventions;
- (F) delegating nursing interventions that may be performed by others and that do not conflict with this chapter; and
- (G) functioning at the direction of a registered nurse, advanced practice registered nurse, licensed physician or licensed dentist in the performance of activities delegated by that health care professional.

"Advanced practice registered nurse" or "APRN" means a licensed registered nurse authorized to practice in this State who, because of specialized education and experience, is licensed and authorized to perform acts of medical diagnosis and to prescribe medical, therapeutic or corrective

measures under administrative rules adopted by the Board.

Background:

The legal basis for the scope of nursing in Vermont is the Vermont Nurse Practice Act (Title 26, Chapter 28 of the Vermont Statutes). An activity must be consistent with the Nurse Practice Act in order to be within the scope of practice of an APRN, RN or LPN.

Nursing practice evolves continuously in response to developments in technology, scientific knowledge, nursing education and training, and patient care needs. Activities within the scope of practice for APRNs, RNs and LPNs are described and differentiated by license type in the professional literature of nursing. For example, specific nursing practice activities are outlined in standards of practice, standards of care, and practice guidelines that may be found in journal articles, research reports, textbooks, and other resources.

Within the parameters outlined by the Vermont Nurse Practice Act, the individual scope of practice for each APRN, RN and LPN is determined by the individual's education, training, experience, and certification. The individual licensee's scope of practice is supported by documented evidence of education and competence in performing nursing activities. Other factors determining scope of practice include practice setting and population served; the availability of appropriate equipment, supervision and support; and policies, procedures, guidelines, or other resources for performing an activity.

Position Statement which Reflects Nurse's Roles and Responsibilities:

Every APRN, RN, and LPN is accountable, both professionally and legally, for determining and practicing within his or her individual scope of practice within the broader scope of practice of the licensure level of the nurse.

A nurse may not perform activities which exceed the scope defined by the individual level of licensure. This means that a nurse may not perform, even if directed to do so, an activity not recognized by the profession as appropriate for that level of licensure or otherwise prohibited by law.

The purpose of the Scope of Practice Decision Tree is to assist nurses, employers, and the public to determine whether an activity is within the scope of practice of an APRN, RN or LPN. The Comparison of RN and LPN Scopes of Practice is intended to clarify the distinctions between the RN and LPN roles with respect to various components of practice. The decision tree and comparison chart are meant to be used as a guides or self help tools and do not constitute legal opinions. Other resources to assist in determining scope of practice include the Vermont Nurse Practice Act, Vermont Board of Nursing Position Statements (available on the Board of Nursing website), and consultation with the Executive Director of the Vermont Board of Nursing.

Each APRN, RN and LPN has a responsibility to practice in a manner that protects and promotes the health, safety and rights of the patient. Each nursing activity must be consistent with reasonable and prudent practice. The nurse must be prepared to accept and manage the consequences of nursing activities. Each individual is accountable for his or her own practice.

References/Citations:

American Nurses Association (2015). Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements.

American Nurses Association (2015). Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, Third Edition.

Vermont Nurse Practice Act (26 V.S.A. Chapter 28)

Vermont Board of Nursing Administrative Rules

Date of Initial acceptance: November 2009 – Approved by Board

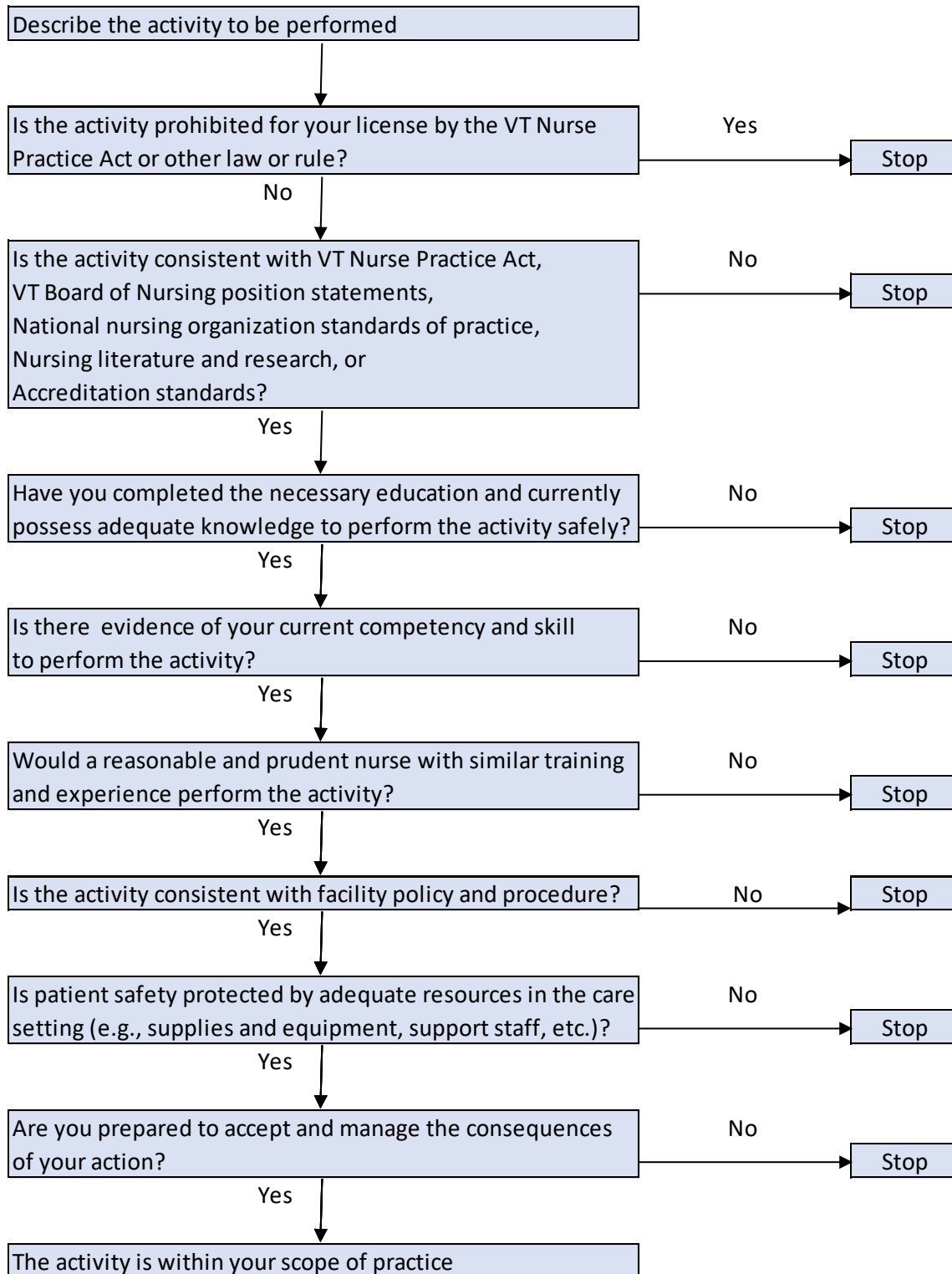
Revised (Date): September 14, 2015

Revised (Date): July 9, 2018

Revised (Date):

Reviewed (Date):

**Vermont Board of Nursing
Decision Tree – Scope of Practice**



**Vermont Board of Nursing
Comparison of RN and LPN Scopes of Practice**

Component of Practice	RN Scope of Practice	LPN Scope of Practice
Accepting an Assignment	Based on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual scope of practice and • Ability to perform the care safely 	Based on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to RN/APRN/physician/dentist who must provide guidance and direction • Individual scope of practice and • Ability to perform the care safely
Assessment and triage	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collects data using a protocol, procedure, form, or guideline • Determines need for immediate intervention • Contributes to the assessment*
Establishing nursing diagnosis	Yes	May contribute*
Establishing nursing goals	Yes	May contribute*
Planning nursing care	Yes	May participate*
Prescribing nursing interventions to implement the care plan	Yes	May participate*
Implementing the plan of care	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, as directed by RN/APRN/physician/dentist • May implement the plan of care, authorized provider orders, and facility protocols*
Maintaining safe and effective nursing care provided by self or others	Yes	Yes, as directed by RN/APRN/physician/dentist
Evaluation of care	Yes	May participate
Delegation	Yes	Yes
Teaching nursing theory and practice	Yes	Yes, for nursing assistant education program
Managing and supervising nursing practice	Yes	Yes, as directed by RN/APRN/physician/dentist
Collaborating with other professionals in the management of health care	Yes	Yes, as directed by RN/APRN/physician/dentist
Independent practice without supervision by a health care professional	Yes	No, must function with the direction and delegation of an RN/APRN/physician/dentist

***LPN role in assessment, planning, and implementation of a strategy of care:**

- LPNs may not independently assess the health status of an individual or group and may not independently develop or modify the plan of care. LPNs may contribute to the assessment and nursing care planning processes; however, patient assessment and care plan development or revision remain the responsibility of the RN/APRN/physician/dentist.
- LPNs may not modify a patient care protocol. If the situation and/or data collected by the LPN are not clearly consistent with a protocol, the LPN must consult with the supervising professional or authorized provider before taking action or making a recommendation to a patient.