

An LPN's Reference Guide

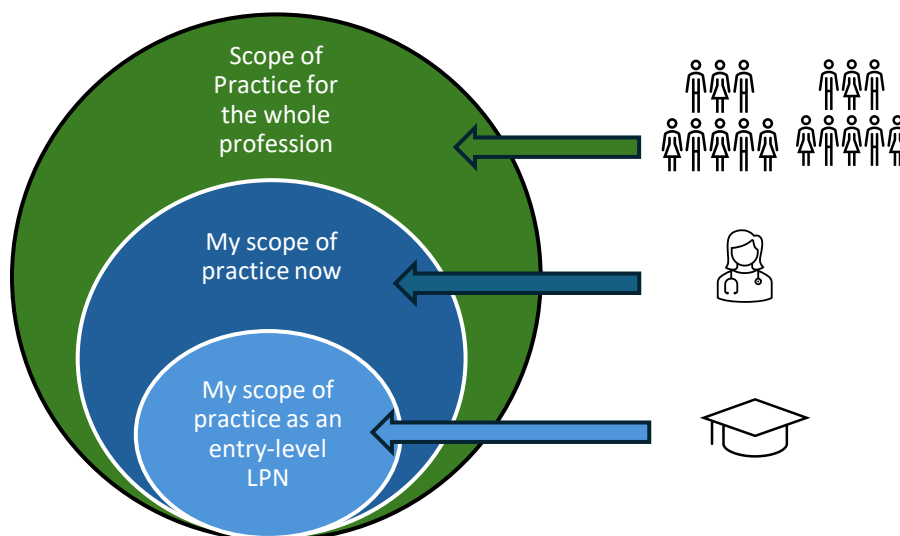
Applying the LPN scope of practice framework to identify your scope of practice

This tool will assist a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) to utilize the College's¹ decision-making framework to determine their individual scope of practice. It is intended to be used with the following College documents:

- [Scope of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses Framework](#) which provides a description of the scope of practice for the profession of practical nursing in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- [Considerations for Determining Assignment of Care](#) which provides criteria for determining the most appropriate care provider.

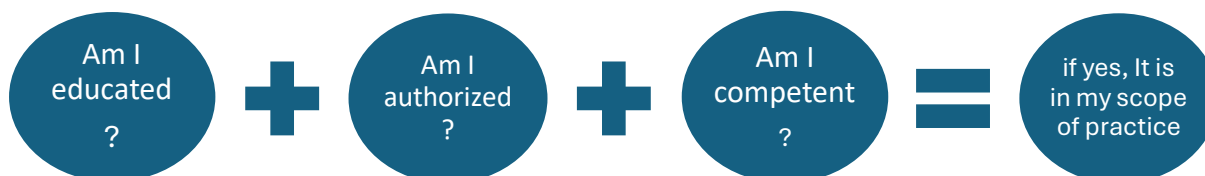
You are accountable for understanding the full description of your scope of practice, as outlined in the *LPN Scope of Practice Framework Document*.

The scope of practice for any one LPN must always be within the boundaries of the scope of practice for the profession of practical nursing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

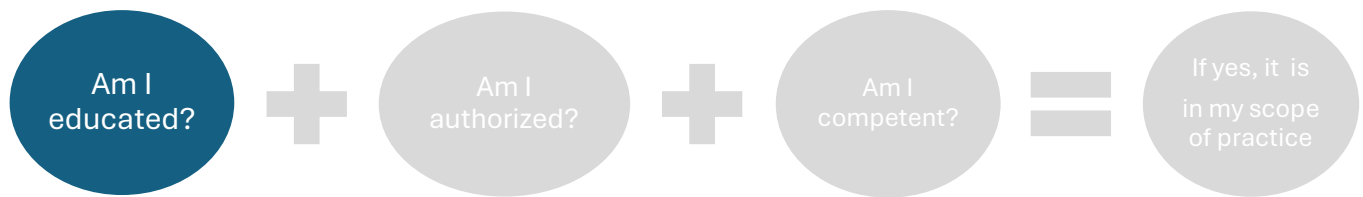


The outer boundaries of the profession for practical nursing are ever evolving, and so is the boundary of your individual scope of practice (my scope of practice now). Over time you will learn new competencies and your boundary will expand. You will also move away from competencies that you no longer practice, and in those areas your boundary will narrow.

Scope of practice is defined as *the range of roles, functions, responsibilities, and activities for which an LPN is **educated, authorized, and competent** to perform*. A competency is the integrated knowledge, skills, judgment, and attributes required to practice nursing safely and effectively. Competencies live within your scope of practice. To know which competencies are within your scope of practice, ask yourself:



¹ College refers to the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador, unless otherwise stated.



Education² includes both theory and practical elements. Education can be acquired as part of your initial practical nursing program, or as continuing education. Continuing education may include formal courses, modules, or programs of study, or may be the result of an in-service or employer sponsored training, or self-directed learning. You are responsible to validate that you have received the appropriate education to safely carry out the competency.



Authorization to complete a nursing competency comes from a variety of sources: the **law**, the **College**, your **employer**, and your **client**.

Law: Activities must be in accordance with the Law. You are required to know and apply federal or provincial Laws that govern or direct your practice. A Law may specify which designation of health care provider is authorized to perform an activity.

College: The activity must be within the scope of practice of the practical nursing profession in this province, as identified by the College. The factors that influence the outer limits of LPN practice are outlined in the Scope of Practice Framework document.

Employer: Employer authority is often articulated in a policy. LPNs must validate they have their employer's authority to carry out an activity. Your employer can limit the activities they permit in their employment setting, even if you are educated and competent to perform them. Employers can authorize an activity for some LPNs in one area, while they might limit that same activity for other LPNs in another area. Refer to the *Scope of Practice Framework* document for information related to other forms of employer authorization.

Self-employed LPNs must develop policies to support their practice (see the College's Practice Guideline [Self-employment](#)).

²Where the College has not identified a required education course or program, it is the responsibility of the individual LPN to validate that the education they are obtaining provides the information needed to safely carry out the competency.

Client: Activities must be authorized, via informed consent, by the client.³



Competence is defined as the ability to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, judgement, and personal attributes required to practice safely and ethically in a designated role and practice setting. Personal attributes include, but are not limited to, attitudes, abilities, behaviours, values, and beliefs. Competence includes having current knowledge and skill.

In addition to safely performing a nursing activity you must also be able to safely manage the outcomes (intended or unintended) of performing the activity. As an LPN, you will practice independently, and collaboratively. You will seek input &/or assistance in collaboration with another care provider (e.g., RN) when:

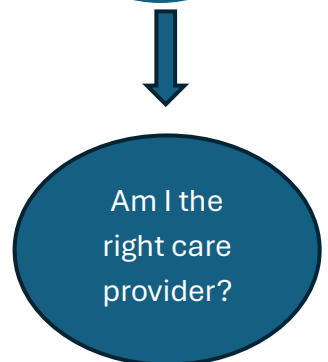
- client care needs change and/or they are not achieving intended outcomes of care;
- when the outcomes of care are not predictable; and,or,
- when the client care needs approach the limits of what you are personally educated, authorised or competent to perform (your scope of practice).

Am I the right care provider for the task?



In addition to identifying whether a competency is within your scope of practice, you must also reflect on whether you are the most appropriate care provider to carry out this competency, for this client, at this time, and in this place.

The decision-making criteria about who is the most appropriate care provider to carry out a role or activity is outlined in the College's document [*Considerations for Determining Assignment of Care*](#). You are accountable to understand how the assignment of care is determined and adjusted as necessary.



³ Client, or client's authorized decision maker.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR REFLECTION

The following questions may guide you in determining safe and authorized practice.

- Were the competencies needed to perform this role or activity learned in my practical nursing program? If not, were they acquired as part of my continuing education?
- Is the role or activity inside the scope of practice for the whole practical nursing profession as outlined by the College?
- Is there specialized or specific education required by my employer, or by the College to enable me to perform this role or activity?
- Is my education current, reflecting best practices?
- Does the College have policies or guidelines related to this role or activity?
- Am I supported by my employer (often outlined in policy) to carry out this role or activity in this setting? If self-employed: do I have policies to support this role or activity?
- Are there legal requirements that influence this practice?
- Are there laws that would prohibit, or limit, my ability to engage in this role or activity?
- Do I have the necessary resources and supports to safely carry out the role or activity?
- Can I safely manage the outcomes (intended or unintended) of performing the role or activity in this setting?
- Would another reasonable prudent nurse, in the same circumstance, carry out this activity?
- Am I the most appropriate care provider for this activity, for this client, at this time, and in this place?

When the role or activity is NOT within your scope of practice

For activities that are not within your scope of practice, reflect on which element of the framework is absent: education, authorization, and/or competence. You may work to address the missing elements by obtaining the required education and competence, and by connecting with the College or working with your employer to determine if authorization can be granted.

For activities that lie outside the professional scope of practice, LPNs and employers can work to advance the professional scope of practice for LPNs as outlined in the [Expansion of Post-Basic Competencies for LPNs in Regional Health Authorities](#) document. Other methods of authorization, such as Delegation may be available. See the College's [Scope of Practice Framework for Licensed Practical Nurses in Newfoundland and Labrador](#) document for more information.

Where the scope of practice is limited in Law, changes to legislation would be required.

Still have questions about your scope of practice? Connect with the College's Practice Consultant, Wanda Squires at wsquires@clpnnl.ca