

Virginia Board of Nursing

Decision-Making Model for Determining RN/LPN Scope of Practice

The mission of the Virginia Board of Nursing is to assure safe and competent practice to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

In the practice of nursing, professional issues and practice questions arise that require the nurse to apply education, experience and professional judgment and to be legally responsible and accountable for the outcome(s).

The role of the licensing board is to establish minimum standards for education, licensure and practice and to provide information to practicing nurses. However, the licensing board cannot and should not make decisions for its licensees. The law (Code of Virginia) and Board regulations require the licensee to provide nursing care services within parameters consistent with education, skills, experience, and current competence.

Therefore, in an effort to ensure safe, competent nursing services to the public, as well as to educate and provide direction to nurses to facilitate clinical decision-making in determining legal scope of practice, the Board of Nursing adopted a Decision-Making Model for Determining RN/LPN Scope of Practice on September 24, 1996 and re-adopted it on September 11, 2012. The following model may be utilized in conjunction with applicable Virginia nursing laws and regulations in a given practice situation.

Adopted: September 24, 1996
Reviewed: November 18, 2003
Revised: September 11, 2012

**VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING
A DECISION-MAKING MODEL FOR DETERMINING
RN/LPN SCOPE OF PRACTICE**

Describe the activity/task to be performed.

Is the activity/task expressly permitted or prohibited by the Virginia Nurse Practice Act for the type of license you hold?

UNSURE

PERMITTED

PROHIBITED - STOP!

Is the activity/task consistent with the scope of practice based upon at least TWO of the following standards?
 * *Standards of practice of a national nursing organization.*
 * *Established policy and protocol of employing agency.*
 * *Nursing literature and research*
 * *Reasonable, prudent nurse in similar circumstance.*

NO - NOT WITHIN YOUR SCOPE OF PRACTICE!

YES

Do you personally possess the depth and breadth of knowledge to perform the activity/task safely and effectively, as acquired in a pre-licensure program, post-basic program, continuing education program, or structured self-study program?

NO - STOP UNTIL ADDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE GAINED!

YES

Do you personally possess current clinical skills to perform the activity/task in a competent, safe manner?

YES

NO - STOP UNTIL CLINICAL SKILLS OBTAINED!

Is the performance of the activity/task within the accepted "standard of care" that would be provided in similar circumstances by reasonable, prudent nurses with similar education, skills, and experience, consistent with appropriately established agency policies and procedures?

NO - STOP! PERFORMANCE OF ACTIVITY/TASK MAY PLACE BOTH PATIENT AND NURSE AT RISK!

YES

Are you prepared to assume professional accountability for safe, effective nursing practice (*by accepting the consequences of your actions*) ?

NO - NOTIFY APPROPRIATE PERSON(S)!

YES

YOU MAY PERFORM THE ACTIVITY/TASK ACCORDING TO ACCEPTABLE AND PREVAILING STANDARDS OF SAFE NURSING CARE (WITH VALID ORDER AS REQUIRED AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES).