

## Six-Step Decision-Making Model for Determining Nursing Scope of Practice

This decision-making flowchart was developed by Board of Nursing (BON) staff to assist nurses in making good professional judgments about the nursing tasks or procedures they choose to undertake. It references parts of the NPA and Rules, and asks the nurse to apply other questions to his/her specific practice situation. These same sections of the nursing laws and targeted questions are tools board staff utilize when nurses call and ask "Is this task/procedure in my scope of practice?"

A nurse always has a duty to his/her clients/patients to assure that they are safe. One of the most important actions a nurse can take toward that goal is making sure that he/she only accepts those assignments for which the nurse has the education, training, and skill competency. Physical and emotional ability can also impact a nurse's ability to maintain client safety when accepting an assignment.

The BON does not maintain that this is the only model a nurse may use for assistance in determining his/her scope of practice in a given situation; however, all nurses practicing in Texas must comply with the Nursing Practice Act and Board Rules as they apply to LVNs, RNs, and/or RNs with advanced practice authorization in a given role and specialty.

**Step One:** Is the act consistent with the Texas Nursing Practice Act (NPA)? Do the Board's rules or position statements address this specific act? (*This may be all the information you need to make your decision. If not, continue to the next step.*)

The following Information available on the BON's web page may be of assistance:

- a. NPA, Ch. 301.002(2), Definition of Professional Nursing & Ch. 301.002(5), Definition of Vocational Nursing.
- b. Standards of Professional Nursing Practice (BON Rule 217.11)
- c. Unprofessional Conduct Rule (BON Rule 217.12)
- d. Delegation Rules for RN Delegation to Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (224 & 225)
- e. Documents listed under "Scope of Practice" in the Nursing Practice Section on the BON web site.
- f. BON Position Statements, Guidelines, & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

If NO, the act is **NOT** within your scope of practice; If YES, continue to the next step.

**Step Two:** Is the activity appropriately authorized by a valid order when necessary, and in accordance with current policies and procedures? Clarification of the order(s) should be sought as needed [Rule 217.11(1)(N)].

If NO, the act is **NOT** within your scope of practice; If YES, continue to the next step.

**Step Three:** Is the act supported by positive and conclusive data from nursing literature, nursing research, and/or research from a health related field (such as evidence-based practice standards)? Has a national nursing organization issued a position statement, guideline, or standard supporting LVNs, RNs, or both engaging in this practice?

If NO, the act is **NOT** within your scope of practice; if YES, continue to the next step.

**Step Four:** Do you personally possess current clinical competence to perform the task safely

from knowledge acquired in a basic nursing education program, post-basic program, or continuing education program? Documentation to validate competency should be maintained in accordance with agency/facility policy and procedure. Each nurse is also encouraged to maintain his/her own copies of competency forms.

If NO, the act is **NOT** within your scope of practice; if YES, continue to the next step.

**Step Five:** Is the performance of the act within the accepted “standard of care” which would be provided in similar circumstances by reasonable and prudent nurses who have similar training and experience? An additional related question to ask is: If an untoward event/reaction occurs as a result of your nursing actions, can the untoward consequences/reaction be resolved through nursing intervention alone?

**RN Rule 217.11(1)(B)** states that the nurse (LVN, RN or RN with advanced practice authorization) shall: “Know and conform to the Texas Nursing Practice Act and the board’s rules and regulations as well as all federal, state, or local laws, rules or regulations affecting the nurse’s current area of nursing practice.”

Review of the applicable rules in their entirety is recommended for the nurse in this step of the six-step model. In addition, human, material, and equipment resources can vary greatly across the spectrum of possible practice settings, and may contribute to the nurse’s decision in a given circumstance.

If NO, the act is **NOT** within your scope of practice; if YES, continue to the next step.

**Step Six:** Are you prepared to accept the consequences of your actions?

If NO, the act is **NOT** within your scope of practice; if YES, then:

Perform the act—based upon valid order when necessary, and in accordance with appropriately established and current policies and procedures; and  
Assume accountability for provision of safe care.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

Kentucky State Board of Nursing  
North Carolina State Board of Nursing  
Ohio Board of Nursing Newsletter, 11/94  
ANA, Professional Standards of Practice  
Paper prepared by Barbara Quick, BS, RN, Masters  
Student, UT Austin, Fall, 1994

Florida State Board of Nursing  
National Council of State Boards of Nursing  
Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing, March 18, 1992  
Nevada State Board of Nursing “Determining Your Scope of  
Practice,” 12/94

1. Is the activity consistent with the Nursing Practice Act (NPA), Board Rules, and Board Position Statements and/or Guidelines?

**Yes → Continue**

**No → STOP**

2. Is the activity appropriately authorized by valid order/protocol and in accordance with established policies and procedures?

**Yes → Continue**

**No → STOP**

3. Is the act supported by either research reported in nursing and health-related literature or in scope of practice statements by national nursing organizations?

**Yes → Continue**

**No → STOP**

4. Do you possess the required knowledge and have you demonstrated the competency required to carry out this activity safely?

**Yes → Continue**

**No → STOP**

5. Would a reasonable and prudent nurse perform this activity in this setting?

**Yes → Continue**

**No → STOP**

6. Are you prepared to assume accountability for the provision of safe care and the outcome of the care rendered?

**Yes → Perform the  
Activity**

**No → STOP**