



## **Understanding Licensed Practical Nurse Practice and Restricted Activity Authorizations**

In the Health Professions Act (HPA) there are activities that are considered high risk to the public that are restricted to those regulated health professionals authorized to perform such activities.

For the purposes of clarifying what the requirements are to provide restricted activities the CLPNA has identified three levels of authorization in reference to LPNs performing restricted activities. These authorizations address the complexity of LPN practice, while ensuring that any skills beyond those acquired in the basic education program are identified and authorized in an appropriate way.

### **CLPNA Levels of Authorization:**

Basic-restricted activities taught in the basic practical nurse program;  
Additional-restricted activities acquired through experience, on the job education or post basic education;  
Specialized-restricted activities requiring advanced education recognized by the CLPNA.

### **Supervision, Direction, Delegation**

For the first time in the history of the LPN profession in Alberta, these words are no longer in the LPN Regulation with the exception of some specific restricted activities where it is not appropriate for LPNs to practice the specific competency completely independently.



## **Restricted Activities authorized for LPNs in 2003 Regulations:**

### **1) LPNs may administer anything by invasive procedure on body tissue below the dermis:**

- subcutaneous injections-basic authorization
- intramuscular injections -basic authorization since spring 2001  
-additional authorization for all other LPNs
- intradermal injections -basic authorization since 2005  
-additional authorization for all other LPNs
- inserting an apparatus to supply medication or fluids  
-additional authorization.

*These authorizations are very broad and allow LPNs to administer any medication via these routes. Employers may then set in policy any medications that may not be appropriate for the LPN to administer from one practice environment to another. (Vaccines are authorized under the Immunization Specialty).*

### **2) LPNs may insert or remove instruments, devices, fingers or hands (basic authorization):**

- beyond the pharynx
- beyond the opening of the urethra
- beyond the labia majora
- beyond the anal verge
- into an artificial opening of the body
- beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow.

*Some examples of the competencies: suctioning, catheterization, vaginal creams, anal suppositories and enemas, tube feeds and suctioning a tracheotomy, insertion of nasal gastric tubes.*

### **3) LPNs may insert liquid under pressure into ear canal (additional authorization):**

- for the purposes of removing wax from ears



- when another authorized professional is available to provide assistance if necessary.

*Example: an LPN working in a physician's clinics or outpatient-emergency units may be trained on site to syringe ears.*

**4) LPNs may administer diagnostic imaging contrast agents (additional authorization):**

- with written or verbal direction from an authorized professional who is on site and available to assist.

*Example: LPNs working in a diagnostic imaging clinic with other health professionals or on a medical unit prior to a diagnostic procedure.*

**5) LPNs may administer nitrous oxide (additional authorization): for the purposes of anesthesia or sedation:**

- if an authorized professional is on site and immediately available to assist.

*Example: LPNs working closely with a physician who is resetting a fracture.*

**6) LPNs may provide psychosocial intervention (basic authorization):**

- as a member of a multi-disciplinary team
- under the direction of an authorized practitioner.

*Example: LPNs working for community mental health or AADAC in addictions counseling providing treatment as part of a team.*

**7) Dialysis Specialty (specialized authorization)**

**Inserting or removing instruments, devices, fingers or hands into an artificial opening into the body:**

- for the purposes of performing Dialysis



*Example: LPNs are hired through the Northern or Southern Alberta Renal Program and are specifically trained to provide the full range of treatment in Dialysis.*

## **8) Orthopedic Specialty (specialized authorization)**

### **Setting or resetting a fracture of a bone:**

- for the purposes of inserting and removing orthopaedic devices and applying casts
- with verbal or written direction from authorized practitioner who is available to assist.

*Example: LPNs who have completed approved CLPNA education in Advanced Orthopedics and apply casts in outpatient, emergency or cast clinics.*

## **9) Advanced Foot Care (additional authorization) & Operating Room Specialty (specialized authorization)**

### **Cutting a body tissue, administering anything by invasive procedure on body tissue or performing surgical or other invasive procedures on body tissue below the dermis:**

- for the purposes of removing a corn or callus as part of the provision of foot care

*Example: LPNs who have completed an advanced education course in foot care may practice independently.*

- for the purposes of performing activities under the direction of an authorized practitioner who is performing surgery.

*Example: LPNs who have completed CLPNA approved education in the Operating Room may practice within any surgical setting.*

## **10) Immunizations (specialized authorization)**



**Administering vaccines for the purpose of providing immunizations under the following conditions:**

- the recipient of the immunization is 5 years of age or older
- the employer has protocols respecting immunizations
- an authorized practitioner is available for consultation.

*Example: LPNs who have completed the Immunization Certification Course may work within any setting administering vaccines.*

**HPA RESTRICTION**

Despite any of the authorizations to provide restricted activities, LPNs must only perform the restricted activities they are competent to perform, are appropriate to their area of practice and the procedures being performed.

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Although it appears there are many changes to scope of practice for LPNs there are only 3 new competencies added to the HPA LPN Regulation.

- Intramuscular Injections
- Intradermal Injections
- Administering a vaccine: to any person 5 years of age or older.

Under past Regulation LPNs performed a number of activities that are considered restricted in the new regulations therefore these areas have been specified in this regulation (i.e., nitrous oxide, ear syringing).

There are also new provisions in place for Supervision of Unregulated workers, Students and Temporary permit holders; this information is available on the CLPNA website [www.clpna.com](http://www.clpna.com).

The Competency Profile for LPNs has also been updated to address changes in LPN practice, terminology, and Regulation. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Competency Profile is now available. Call or email the CLPNA office to order.

Several Practice Statements have also been created to further clarify LPN practice. The Practice Statements are posted on the CLPNA website.

Any LPN or employer with questions regarding restricted activities or any area of LPN practice is encouraged to contact the CLPNA.