

Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework for the RN and the LPN

Statement of Purpose

Recognizing that nursing practice is continually evolving, this interpretive statement serves to provide a standardized, decision-making framework for all licensed nurses in all settings with respect to their education, role, function, and accountability within the scope of nursing practice.

Background/Significance

Many nurses contact the Oregon State Board of Nursing asking whether a specific activity, intervention or role is within their scope of practice. Board staff cannot answer such questions. Oregon's Nurse Practice Act (NPA) does not contain lists of activities, interventions or roles expressly approved or prohibited for every individual nurse based on licensure level.

Board Statement

Chapter 851 Division 045 of the NPA sets forth the responsibility of the nurse to accept only those assignments that are within one's *individual scope of practice*. The Board defines individual scope of practice as a nurse's demonstrated competency that has developed and maintained through practice experience and through engagement in independent and formal learning experiences.

Clear knowledge of one's individual scope of practice allows the nurse to self-regulate their actions by accepting and engaging in only those nursing practice activities, interventions or roles for which they possess the knowledge, technical skill, ability, ethical principle, and clinical reasoning necessary to perform with safety.

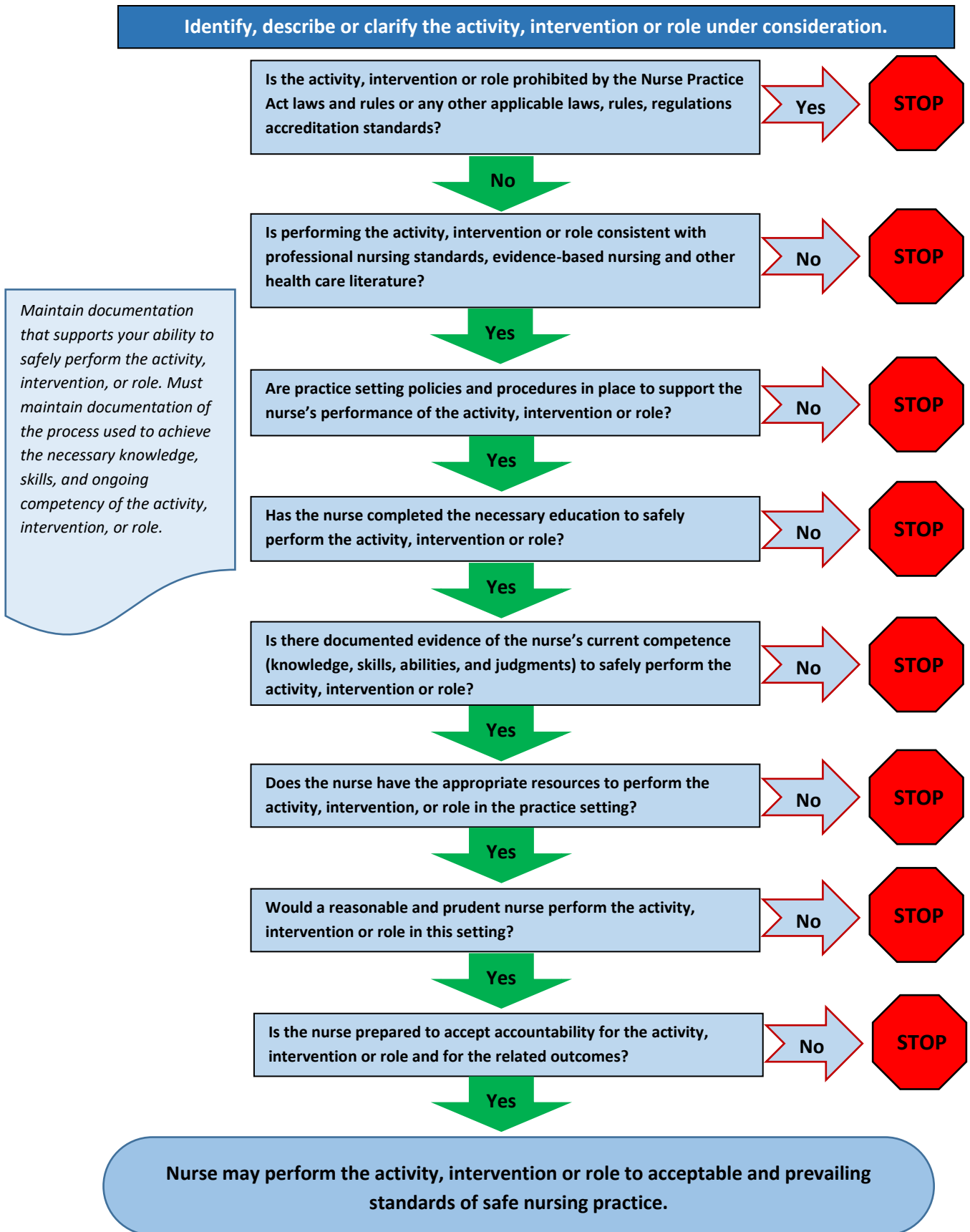
To use the decision-making framework, the nurse must identify the specific activity, intervention or role in question. Once identified, the nurse must respond to the first question of the decision-making framework with a *yes* or *no* answer. Based on the nurse's response to the first question, the nurse will be directed to either STOP or will be directed to continue on to the next question. At any time the nurse's response to a question results in a STOP, the activity is not within the nurse's individual scope of practice.

It is only when the nurse's response to each question allows progression through all questions, and the nurse has an affirmative response to the final question, that the nurse may engage in the self-identified activity, intervention or role to acceptable and prevailing standards of safe nursing practice.

Application of the Board's decision-making framework assists the licensee to determine whether a specific practice activity, intervention or role is within the scope of practice for the licensee's level of licensure, appropriate to occur in the care environment, and commensurate with the licensee's individual scope of practice.

There is no authority for any health professional, a prescriber's order, employer, policy, position description, or an organization to expand a licensee's practice beyond the legal boundaries of the NPA.

Scope of Nursing Practice Decision-Making Framework



Oregon State Board of Nursing: Interpretive Statement

References

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The Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) is authorized by Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 678 to exercise general supervision over the practice of nursing in Oregon to include regulation of nursing licensure, education, and practice in order to assure that the citizens of Oregon receive safe and effective nursing services. The OSBN further interprets statute and rule and issues opinions in the form of policies and interpretive statements, which are advisory in nature and issued as guidelines for safe nursing practice.