



Practice directions assist practical nurses in understanding their responsibilities and legal obligations, enabling them to make safe and ethical decisions within their practice. Practical nurses are expected to comply with the information disseminated in practice directions. Failure to do so may result in investigation for misconduct and/or an audit of the nurse's practice.

### Purpose

The purpose of this practice direction is to provide nurses, employers, and the general public with information regarding the practice expectations of a graduate practical nurse (GPN) in Manitoba.

### GPN Defined

*The Licensed Practical Nurses Act (LPN Act), 2001*, defines a GPN as any person whose name is entered on the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba (CLPNM) register of graduate practical nurses. To be eligible to apply for GPN registration, an applicant must meet the criteria set out in sections 6 and 9 of the LPN Regulation, except for passing the Canadian Practical Nurses Registration Examination (CPNRE).

Eligibility criteria include:

- successful completion of a Manitoba practical nursing education program or a nursing program outside of Manitoba that the Board considers to be substantially equivalent to the program offered provincially;
- successful completion of competency assessments and/or education as required;

- a complete application along with any other information requested;
- professional liability protection through the Canadian Nurses Protective Society (CNPS) with a minimum limit of protection of five (5) million dollars; and
- payment of all applicable fees.

### GPN Scope of Practice

A GPN is expected to meet the entry-level competencies of the profession as described by the CLPNM. The GPN is also expected to be familiar with, and practise within, the framework of the LPN Act, LPN Regulation, Standards of Practice and Conduct, Code of Ethics and Practice Directions.

In order to fulfill its mandate of public protection, the CLPNM must ensure that its practising registrants are competent and capable of providing safe nursing care. GPNs are required to work under the supervision of another regulated nurse.<sup>1</sup> This supervision does not always need to be direct, one-on-one supervision for every nursing function in every nursing environment. As the GPN develops his or her competence, the GPN's level of autonomy may increase.

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this document, the term regulated nurse refers to a licensed practical nurse, a registered

nurse, or a registered psychiatric nurse in good standing with their respective regulatory body.

In most practice settings, the supervising nurse must be available, on-site, to provide guidance to the GPN when required. A GPN may practise in the community, where on-site supervision may not be feasible, provided that the supervising nurse is readily available for consultation and able to be physically present, if necessary, within 30 minutes.

It is the GPN's responsibility to be cognizant that:

- some practice areas may not be acceptable for employment, as supervision or support would not be available in the timeframes required by this practice direction;
- some employment settings will have policies in place that restrict GPNs from performing some nursing duties; and
- GPNs must not assume a charge role in their employment setting.

### GPN Practice and Agency Nursing

GPNs have a responsibility to ensure that they do not practise in any circumstances contrary to a condition on their registration. This obligation applies even when working through a nursing agency. GPNs who choose to work for an agency must ensure they have access to the level of supervision required by the condition on their registration, in any practice setting to which they are deployed. (See the GPN Scope of Practice section above for more information on the level of supervision required).

The nursing agency also has a responsibility to communicate a GPN's registration status, and need for supervision, to the service delivery organization. However, if this information were not communicated, and a GPN were to find themselves in an environment where the required level of supervision was not available, it is the GPN's responsibility to immediately advise the management of the facility as well as the nursing agency. The GPN must not practise

contrary to the supervision condition on their registration. Doing so may be deemed unauthorized practice.

Any GPN who chooses to practise through an agency must also remain aware of the higher level of risk associated with this practice context. It is the GPN's responsibility to recognize and appropriately respond to circumstances such as those listed below.

For example, when working for an agency, a GPN might:

- be asked to work in a practice environment where the expected nursing duties are beyond GPN current competence;
- be asked to work with clients with a high level of acuity;
- be asked work in teams who do not know the GPN's current level of competence;
- not be offered information on the protocols for escalation of care concerns;
- not be familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the team members; and,
- be unfamiliar with the equipment, informatics, policies and procedures, and method of documentation used in a particular practice environment.

The owners or managers of a nursing agency might not be nurses or regulated health professionals. This means they might not be familiar with the requirements for safe, competent, and ethical nursing practice or the professional standards GPNs are personally responsible for meeting.

In addition, when working for an agency, GPNs may not have access to consistent mentorship or structured feedback on their practice from their employer, as the agency may not have

firsthand knowledge about a GPN's practice. Structured feedback is important throughout a nurse's career, as feedback and regular performance appraisals promote self-reflection and growth as a professional by informing the nurse about areas of strength and areas for further development to improve the quality of care.

For the reasons noted above, practising through an agency may not be an appropriate match for the level of competence, experience, and judgment of a beginning practitioner like a GPN.

A GPN who makes the personal choice to practise through an agency takes on additional risk and is accepting responsibility for ensuring that they meet their professional standards in this more challenging practice context.

The GPN's obligation, to practice within the standards of their profession, within their own level of competence, and within the conditions on their registration are not diminished when practising through an agency.

Please read the CLPNM Guidance Document on Agency Nursing and the CLPNM Fact Sheet for Nursing Agencies for more information. Both documents can be found on the CLPNM website. ([www.clpnm.ca](http://www.clpnm.ca)).

### GPN Registration and the CPNRE

Before obtaining registration as a GPN, an applicant must successfully complete the CLPNM's Jurisprudence Learning Module and quiz, which includes paying the applicable jurisprudence fee.

To register as a GPN, an applicant must also first acquire professional liability protection through CNPS and meet all other requirements for GPN registration.

Once deemed eligible for GPN registration, an applicant has 10 business days to apply to the CLPNM for GPN registration. Legislation states that the GPN must write the CPNRE at the first scheduled opportunity and has up to three attempts to successfully write the examination. Any missed writing opportunities are considered unsuccessful attempts. After a first unsuccessful attempt, the GPN's registration becomes conditional. A second unsuccessful attempt results in immediate cancellation of the GPN registration. Further assessment and remediation may be required before the graduate will be eligible to write the CPNRE for the third and final time.

### Duration and Expiration of GPN Registration

GPNs are responsible for ensuring that they have current GPN registration with the CLPNM prior to engaging in practice and using the GPN designation. Failure to do so constitutes professional misconduct.

To remain active on the GPN register, the graduate must renew their registration every four (4) months and must do so on or before the expiry date or their GPN registration will be cancelled.

GPN status and registration can only be renewed for up to a maximum of twenty-four (24) consecutive months from the date of initial eligibility. If, at the end of the twenty-four (24) month period, the applicant has not successfully met all the requirements for active practising registration, the applicant will no longer be active on the GPN register and will need to complete an entire board-approved entry-level practical nursing education program.

Within thirty (30) days of CLPNM receiving notification that the GPN has passed the CPNRE, the GPN must apply for Active Practising LPN registration by submitting all required documents and fees to the CLPNM.

GPN registration is cancelled thirty (30) days after the CLPNM receives notice of successful completion of the CPNRE.

The CLPNM does not issue paper registrations. Current information regarding registration status, expiry dates of the graduate registration, and any registration conditions or restrictions can be found on the Public Register which is accessible through CLPNM's website ([www.clpnm.ca](http://www.clpnm.ca)).

### Conclusion

All nurses entering the profession must understand and uphold the professional and legal obligations of being a practical nurse in Manitoba. The transition period from GPN to LPN allows the graduate practical nurse time to build upon their foundational knowledge and skills and develop their confidence while receiving support from all members of the professional team.

### For More Information

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### About the CLPNM

The CLPNM is the governing body for the licensed practical nursing profession in Manitoba. Mandated to govern its members in a manner that serves and protects the public interest, the CLPNM establishes practice requirements for the provision of safe and effective nursing care.

### References

The following documents were consulted during the development of this practice direction:

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA). (2020). *Policy: Provisional Registration (Formerly Temporary Registration)*.

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba (CLPNM) (2014). *Code of Ethics*.

CLPNM. (2021). *Standards of Practice and Conduct for Manitoba's Practical Nurses*.

CLPNM. (2022). *Entry-Level Competencies for the Licensed Practical Nurse in Manitoba*.

CLPNM. (2022). *Nursing Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses in Manitoba*.

CLPNM. (2023). *Fact Sheet for Nursing Agencies*.

CLPNM. (2023). *Guidance Document on Agency Nursing*.

Government of Manitoba. (2001). *The Licensed Practical Nurses Act of Manitoba*.

Government of Manitoba. (2002). *Licensed Practical Nurses Regulation*.

Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses (SALPN). (2021). *Legislative Interpretation: Graduate Licensed Practical Nurse*.