

# Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act

## OKLAHOMA NURSING PRACTICE ACT



Effective as of November 1, 2013

Unofficial Oklahoma Statutes, Title 59, Chapter 12, Section 567.1, *et seq.*  
Official copies of the laws may be obtained from the Statute book

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Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act is a critical piece of legislation that governs the practice of nursing within the state of Oklahoma. It establishes the legal framework for nursing practice, ensuring that nurses are qualified, competent, and held to high standards of professional conduct. Understanding the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act is essential for both current and aspiring nurses, as it outlines the scope of practice, licensure requirements, and disciplinary actions for violations. This article will delve into the various components of the Act, its significance, and its implications for nursing practice in Oklahoma.

# Overview of the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act

The Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act (NPA) was enacted to protect the public by ensuring that only qualified individuals practice nursing. It is administered by the Oklahoma Board of Nursing (OBN), which is responsible for the regulation of nursing practice, education, and licensure in the state. The Act provides a framework for defining the roles and responsibilities of nurses, establishing standards for nursing education, and implementing disciplinary measures for misconduct.

## Purpose of the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act

The primary objectives of the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act include:

1. **Protection of the Public:** The Act aims to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public by ensuring that only qualified individuals can provide nursing care.
2. **Establishment of Standards:** It sets forth the standards for nursing education, practice, and licensure to maintain the integrity of the nursing profession.
3. **Regulation of Nursing Practice:** The NPA outlines the scope of practice for different types of nursing roles, such as Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs).
4. **Disciplinary Actions:** It provides a framework for investigating and disciplining nurses who violate the standards of practice or engage in unethical behavior.

## Key Components of the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act

The Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act encompasses several key components that are essential for understanding nursing practice in the state.

### Licensure and Certification

To practice nursing in Oklahoma, individuals must obtain a valid nursing license. The licensure process includes:

1. **Educational Requirements:** Candidates must complete an approved nursing program, either an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree in nursing, depending on the level of licensure sought.
2. **Examination:** After completing their education, candidates must pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN for RNs or NCLEX-PN for

LPNs).

3. Background Checks: Applicants must undergo a criminal background check as part of the licensure process.

4. Continuing Education: Nurses are required to complete continuing education courses to maintain their licenses and stay updated on best practices in nursing.

## Scope of Practice

The Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act clearly defines the scope of practice for RNs and LPNs. Understanding these distinctions is vital for nurses to operate within their legal boundaries.

- Registered Nurses (RNs): RNs are authorized to perform a wide range of tasks, including:

- Developing and managing nursing care plans.
- Administering medications and treatments.
- Performing assessments and evaluations.
- Educating patients about health management and disease prevention.

- Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs): LPNs have a more limited scope of practice, which includes:

- Assisting RNs in patient care.
- Providing basic nursing care, such as monitoring vital signs and dressing wounds.
- Administering medications under the supervision of an RN or physician.

## Delegation and Supervision

The Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act includes provisions regarding the delegation of tasks. Nurses are responsible for determining which tasks can be delegated to unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) while ensuring that patient safety and quality of care are maintained. Key points include:

- Assessment and Judgment: RNs must assess the competency of the UAP before delegating tasks.
- Accountability: Even when tasks are delegated, RNs remain accountable for the overall care provided to the patient.
- Supervision Requirements: The level of supervision required depends on the complexity of the task being delegated and the experience of the UAP.

## Disciplinary Actions and Violations

The Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act outlines specific grounds for disciplinary action against nurses. Understanding these violations can help nurses avoid

potential pitfalls in their practice.

## **Common Violations**

1. **Substance Abuse:** Nurses found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on duty may face severe consequences, including license suspension or revocation.
2. **Fraud or Deceit:** Misrepresentation of qualifications, falsifying patient records, or practicing without a valid license is strictly prohibited.
3. **Negligence or Malpractice:** Failing to provide the standard of care expected in nursing practice can result in disciplinary actions.
4. **Unprofessional Conduct:** Engaging in behavior that is considered unethical or unprofessional, such as harassment or theft, can lead to disciplinary measures.

## **Disciplinary Process**

If a complaint is filed against a nurse, the Oklahoma Board of Nursing follows a specific process to investigate and determine appropriate actions:

1. **Complaint Investigation:** The OBN conducts an investigation into the allegations.
2. **Possible Outcomes:** After the investigation, the Board may:
  - Dismiss the complaint if there is no evidence of wrongdoing.
  - Issue a reprimand or warning.
  - Impose fines, probation, or suspension of the nursing license.
  - Revoke the nursing license in severe cases.

## **Importance of the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act**

The Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act is not just a set of regulations; it is a vital framework that supports the nursing profession and enhances patient care. Its importance can be summarized as follows:

- **Quality Assurance:** By regulating the nursing profession, the Act ensures that nurses meet specific educational and professional standards, enhancing the quality of care provided to patients.
- **Public Trust:** The Act fosters public confidence in the nursing profession, assuring patients that they will receive safe and competent care.
- **Professional Development:** The requirements for continuing education and licensure renewal encourage nurses to engage in lifelong learning and stay informed about advances in the field.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act serves as a foundational element in the regulation of nursing practice in Oklahoma. By establishing clear guidelines for licensure, scope of practice, and professional conduct, the Act protects the public and upholds the integrity of the nursing profession. Nurses in Oklahoma must familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Nurse Practice Act to ensure compliance and provide the highest standard of care to their patients. As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, staying informed about changes to the Act and participating in ongoing education will be crucial for all nursing professionals in the state.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the main purpose of the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act?**

The main purpose of the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act is to regulate the practice of nursing in Oklahoma, ensuring that nurses provide safe and competent care to the public.

### **What are the key responsibilities of the Oklahoma Board of Nursing under the Nurse Practice Act?**

The key responsibilities of the Oklahoma Board of Nursing include licensing nurses, setting educational standards, enforcing nursing regulations, and investigating complaints against nurses.

### **How does the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act define the scope of practice for registered nurses?**

The Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act defines the scope of practice for registered nurses as the responsibilities and activities that a nurse is legally permitted to perform, which includes assessing patient needs, implementing care plans, and evaluating patient outcomes.

### **What are the requirements for obtaining a nursing license in Oklahoma?**

To obtain a nursing license in Oklahoma, applicants must complete an approved nursing education program, pass the NCLEX-RN or NCLEX-PN exam, and submit a background check and application to the Oklahoma Board of Nursing.

## Are there continuing education requirements for nurses in Oklahoma?

Yes, the Oklahoma Nurse Practice Act requires nurses to complete continuing education as a condition for license renewal, ensuring they stay updated on current practices and standards in nursing.

## What actions can the Oklahoma Board of Nursing take against a nurse's license?

The Oklahoma Board of Nursing can take various actions against a nurse's license, including suspension, revocation, or probation, in response to violations of the Nurse Practice Act or unprofessional conduct.

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