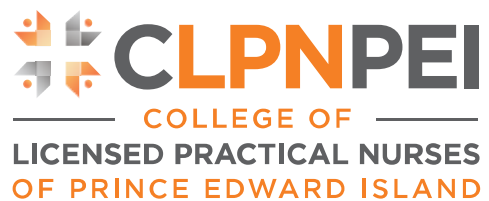




**The College of  
Licensed Practical  
Nurses of  
Prince Edward Island**

**Practice Directive**  
Foot Care



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The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Prince Edward Island (CLPNPEI) has a mandate to govern its members in a manner that serves the public interest. Good governance supports Licensed Practical Nurses to provide safe, competent, ethical, and compassionate nursing care. The CLPNPEI sets, monitors and enforces standards for entry into the profession, practical nurse education, registration and professional conduct. The College creates Standards of Practice, establishes a Code of Ethics, develops and implements a Continuing Competence Program, and publishes policies and practice directives to support the practice of licensed practical nurses in Prince Edward Island.

## Using this Document

Practice directives are documents which outline the LPN's accountability in specific practice contexts. These directives reflect relevant legislation and are designed to help practical nurses understand their responsibilities and legal obligations, so they make safe, competent, and ethical nursing decisions. This document can be used with CLPNPEI Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and applicable practice documents found on the College website at [www.clpnpei.ca](http://www.clpnpei.ca)

## Professional Practice

The College supports the optimization of LPN practice within the clinical parameters defined by employers. Each LPN is accountable for conducting a self-assessment of their individual capacity and working with their employer to take the necessary steps to address knowledge gaps so they are continually prepared to provide safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing care.

## Introduction

Licensed Practical Nurses provide **entry level** and **beyond entry level** foot care for clients in variety practice settings, including the self-employed context<sup>1</sup>. In addition, LPNs in Prince Edward Island, may apply to the CLPNPEI for special authorization to perform **advanced** foot care. Advanced foot care is defined in the [Licensed Practical Nurse Regulations](#) as the reserved activity of performing a procedure on tissue below the dermis for the purpose of removing a corn or callous as part of the provision of foot care. LPNs are accountable to assess the health status of clients and provide foot care in the overall context of the client's needs. They are expected to seek out and practice using best practice guidelines. They are also responsible to assess their own continuing competence needs as they relate to foot care, and develop, implement and reflectively evaluate their learning plans to meet their educational needs.

<sup>1</sup> Self-employed LPNs are accountable to track their practice hours and develop a process to validate their hours (e.g., provide redacted client receipts) if selected for an annual practice hours' audit



## Entry Level and Beyond Entry Level Foot Care

**Entry level foot care** is an entry to practice competency for LPNs in Prince Edward Island. The knowledge required to provide entry level foot care is included in the core practical nursing education program. All LPNs are authorized to provide entry level foot care to clients as part of their care.

**Beyond entry level foot care** is a beyond entry level competency because the additional nursing knowledge, skill and judgment required to provide beyond entry level foot care is not included in the core PN education program. Advanced knowledge is required because clients with diseases or pathology (e.g., peripheral vascular disease or diabetes) require beyond entry level foot care since they have a higher risk of experiencing alterations in their lower leg and foot health.

### Beyond Entry Level Foot Care

LPNs practicing primarily in foot care nursing, may be required to provide nursing services to clients on the entire foot health continuum. To ensure they have the necessary knowledge, skill and judgment to provide safe and competent foot care to every client, LPNs are required to attain competence in beyond entry level foot care *before* they can engage in the practice.

Competence in beyond entry level foot care can be achieved by successfully completing a post-graduate program in beyond entry level foot care<sup>2</sup>. Practicing beyond entry level foot care without completing a beyond entry level foot care program may be considered professional misconduct and subject the LPN to discipline or liability. The responsibility of verifying the LPN's competence as it relates to beyond entry level foot care rests with the employer and the nurse<sup>3</sup>.

### Differences of knowledge, skill and abilities between entry level and beyond entry level foot care.

Entry Level Foot Care	Beyond Entry Level Foot Care
<b>Knowledge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anatomy and physiology of the feet and lower extremities.</li><li>• Common microorganisms of the feet.</li><li>• Asepsis and infection control.</li><li>• Complications of diabetes and its effect on the feet.</li></ul>	<b>Knowledge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Entry level foot care knowledge <i>and</i>;</li><li>• Pathophysiology as it relates to chronic disease and the feet (e.g. diabetes and peripheral vascular disease);</li><li>• Changes in the feet due to chronic disease(s);</li></ul>

<sup>2</sup> Post-graduate programs can be community college, private trainer, facility or employer based. LPNs must be in possession of documentation (certificate of completion, employer letter on employer letterhead) to validate program completion.

<sup>3</sup> The College does not review or approve Beyond Entry Level Foot Care Programs. Any LPN in possession of documentation of successful completion of a beyond entry level foot care program may engage in its practice and is accountable to remain current and competent. The LPN is expected to perform their own due diligence when researching beyond entry level foot care programs.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complications of circulatory impairment.</li> <li>• Education of client and caregiver.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and application of best practices in infection control related to cleaning and sterilizing instruments;</li> <li>• Footwear and basic pedorthic management.</li> <li>• Education of other healthcare providers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Skill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment and inspection of the foot.</li> <li>• Performance of non-invasive foot-care procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cleansing, moisturizing</li> <li>• application of creams, lotions, simple dressings</li> <li>• toe nail care (includes cutting)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Education of client and caregiver.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Skill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry level foot care skills, <b>and</b>;</li> <li>• Assessment and inspection of the foot;</li> <li>• Adherence to the principles, applications and contraindications of padding,</li> <li>• Operation of a rotary file.</li> <li>• Perform non-invasive foot care procedures such as removal of tissue (corn, callus) at the level of the epidermis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Judgment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes practice decisions based on the assessment of the client without disease or pathology affecting the lower leg or foot.</li> <li>• Takes appropriate action when assessment findings are not as anticipated.</li> <li>• Documents and reports appropriately.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Judgment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry level foot care judgment <b>and</b>;</li> <li>• Makes practice decisions based on the assessment of the client with or at high risk for disease or pathology affecting the lower leg or foot.</li> <li>• Takes appropriate action when client needs exceed their individual and professional capacity, such a referring a to an appropriate health care provider.</li> </ul>

Toe nail cutting is a component of basic foot care for all clients. However, even if the client is not experiencing any lower leg or foot issues, the mere presence of certain diseases increases the risk associated with cutting toe nails. LPNs are expected to use their professional judgment as they prepare to cut the toe nails of a client with such medical issues. The more the client’s lower leg and foot are impacted by disease, the more likely the LPN **should** possess beyond entry level foot care knowledge to prevent, anticipate or manage any complications which may be associated with cutting toe nails. LPNs should engage in learning opportunities to ensure their continued competence.

Employers, as part of ensuring the delivery of safe and competent care, may provide nurses (with and without beyond entry level foot care knowledge) learning opportunities related to nail care and care of the client with disease or pathology affecting the lower leg and foot. Employers should have processes in place to support consultation with appropriate care providers when clients present with, or develop care issues which exceed the individual or professional capacity of the LPN.



## Advanced Foot Care

Advanced Foot Care is defined as the *reserved activity of performing a procedure on tissue below the dermis for the purpose of removing a corn or callous as part of the provision of foot care.*

Section 19 and Section 20 of the RHPA Licensed Practical Nurse Regulations;

- Defines advanced foot care
- Outlines how an LPN may apply for special authorization to perform advanced foot care
- Describes the conditions that exist for those LPNs who hold a special authorization to perform advanced foot care
- Requires LPNs to provide notice to Primary Health Care provider if advanced foot care has been performed and the reason for performing it
- Outlines requirements for the maintenance of records for documenting the performance of advanced footcare with respect to a client.

## Special Authorization

A licensed practical nurse may apply to the Council of the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Prince Edward Island for special authorization to perform Advanced foot care. Applicants must meet the competencies for advanced foot care as established by the Council. If the Council is satisfied the applicant is eligible, they will grant the LPN special authorization to perform advanced foot care and note this special authorization on their certificate of registration.

## Conditions

Despite having special authorization to perform advanced foot care, an LPN may perform that reserved activity with respect to a client **only** if;

- a) They are competent to perform the procedure
- b) Is of the professional opinion that it is in the best interests of the person to perform the procedure in accordance with
  - Applicable Standards of Practice
  - Code of Ethics
  - Any applicable practice directives established by the Council
- c) Provides the person or persons representative with sufficient information for the person or representative to make an informed and voluntary decision regarding the procedure; and
- d) Obtains the informed consent of the person or the person's representative.

## Notice to Primary Health Care Provider

If a Licensed Practical Nurse determines in their professional opinion that they will perform advanced foot care with respect to a person than they shall promptly notify the person's primary health care provider, orally or in writing, or as directed by the person's health care provider, that the procedure has been performed and the reason for performing it.



## Documentation

All Self-employed licensed practical nurses who are practicing foot care are expected to document care according to generally accepted professional practice and business standards, and in compliance with any local, provincial or federal legislation. Accurate and complete health records must be created as part of the services provided.

A Licensed Practical Nurse with special authorization to perform **advanced foot care**, is required to document the performance of the reserved activity. The Licensed Practical Nurse shall create and maintain for a period of not less than ten years a record of the following:

- a) The person's name, address, and date of birth,
- b) The procedure performed and the reason for performing it,
- c) The date the procedure was performed,
- d) Any complicating factors associated with the procedure,
- e) A copy of the notification to the Primary Health Care Provider

If the LPN performs this procedure in a health care facility, the information identified above, must be entered into the person's health record maintained at the facility.

## Self Employment

Self-employed LPNs are accountable for complying with their professional practice standards, local, provincial and/or federal legislation, as well as best practice guidelines relating to nursing, foot care and business practices.

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Prince Edward Island acknowledges the support of the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia for granting permission to adapt their Practice Guideline on Foot Care for use in Prince Edward Island.



## Resources

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia. (2017). *Practice Guideline Foot Care*. Retrieved from <http://clpnns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Foot-Care-Guidelines-2017.pdf>

Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators (CCPNR). (2013). *Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.ccpnr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/IJLPN-CEFinal.pdf>.

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