

Washington State Nursing Practice Act

WAC 246-840-700

Standards of nursing conduct or practice.

(1) The purpose of defining standards of nursing conduct or practice through WAC 246-840-700 and [246-840-710 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) is to identify responsibilities of the professional registered nurse and the licensed practical nurse in health care settings and as provided in the Nursing Practice Act, chapter [18.79 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) RCW. Violation of these standards may be grounds for disciplinary action under chapter [18.130 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) RCW. Each individual, upon entering the practice of nursing, assumes a measure of responsibility and public trust and the corresponding obligation to adhere to the professional and ethical standards of nursing practice. The nurse shall be responsible and accountable for the quality of nursing care given to clients. This responsibility cannot be avoided by accepting the orders or directions of another person. The standards of nursing conduct or practice include, but are not limited to the following;

(2) The nursing process is defined as a systematic problem solving approach to nursing care which has the goal of facilitating an optimal level of functioning and health for the client, recognizing diversity. It consists of a series of phases: Assessment and planning, intervention and evaluation with each phase building upon the preceding phases.

Minimum standards for registered nurses include the following:

- **Standard I Initiating the Nursing Process:**
- **Assessment and Analysis:** The registered nurse initiates data collection and analysis that includes pertinent objective and subjective data regarding the health status of the clients. The registered nurse is responsible for ongoing client assessment, including assimilation of data gathered from licensed practical nurses and other members of the health care team;
- **Nursing Diagnosis/Problem Identification:** The registered nurse uses client data and nursing scientific principles to develop nursing diagnosis and to identify client problems in order to deliver effective nursing care;
- **Planning:** The registered nurse shall plan nursing care which will assist clients and families with maintaining or restoring health and wellness or supporting a dignified death;
- **Implementation:** The registered nurse implements the plan of care by initiating nursing interventions through giving direct care and supervising other members of the care team; and
- **Evaluation:** The registered nurse evaluates the responses of individuals to nursing interventions and is responsible for the analysis and modification of the nursing care plan consistent with intended outcomes;
- **Standard II Delegation and Supervision:** The registered nurse is accountable for the safety of clients receiving nursing service by:

- Delegating selected nursing functions to others in accordance with their education, credentials, and demonstrated competence as defined in WAC [246-840-010 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)(10);
- Supervising others to whom he/she has delegated nursing functions as defined in WAC [246-840-010 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)(10);
- Evaluating the outcomes of care provided by licensed and other paraprofessional staff;
- The registered nurse may delegate certain additional acts to certain individuals in community-based long-term care and in-home settings as provided by WAC [246-840-910 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) through [246-840-970 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and WAC [246-841-405 \(Links to an external site.\)](#); and
- In a home health or hospice agency regulated under chapter [127 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) RCW, a registered nurse may delegate the application, instillation, or insertion of medications to a registered or certified nursing assistant under a plan of care pursuant to chapter [246-335 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) WAC;
- **Standard III Health Teaching.** The registered nurse assesses learning needs including learning readiness for patients and families, develops plans to meet those learning needs, implements the teaching plan and evaluates the outcome.
- **The following standards apply to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses:**

(a) The registered nurse and licensed practical nurse shall communicate significant changes in the client's status to appropriate members of the health care team. This communication shall take place in a time period consistent with the client's need for care. Communication is defined as a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of speech, symbols, signs, and written communication or behaviors that serves as both a means of gathering information and of influencing the behavior, actions, attitudes, and feelings of others; and

(b) The registered nurse and licensed practical nurse shall document, on essential client records, the nursing care given and the client's response to that care; and

(c) The registered nurse and licensed practical nurse act as client advocates in health maintenance and clinical care.

Other responsibilities:

(a) The registered nurse and the licensed practical nurse shall have knowledge and understanding of the laws and rules regulating nursing and shall function within the legal scope of nursing practice;

(b) The registered nurse and the licensed practical nurse shall be responsible and accountable for his or her practice based upon and limited to the scope of his/her education, demonstrated competence, and nursing experience consistent with the scope of practice set forth in this document; and

(c) The registered nurse and the licensed practical nurse shall obtain instruction, supervision, and consultation as necessary before implementing new or unfamiliar techniques or procedures which are in his/her scope of practice.

(d) The registered nurse and the licensed practical nurse shall be responsible for maintaining current knowledge in his/her field of practice; and

(e) The registered nurse and the licensed practical nurse shall respect the client's right to privacy by protecting confidential information and shall not use confidential health care information for other than legitimate patient care purposes or as otherwise provided in the Health Care Information Act, chapter [70.02 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) RCW.

[Statutory Authority: RCW [18.79.110 \(Links to an external site.\)](#), [18.79.260 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (3)(f), [18.88A.210 \(Links to an external site.\)](#), 2003 c 140. WSR 04-14-065, § 246-840-700, filed 7/2/04, effective 7/2/04. Statutory Authority: RCW [18.79.110 \(Links to an external site.\)](#). WSR 02-06-117, § 246-840-700, filed 3/6/02, effective 4/6/02. Statutory Authority: Chapter [18.79 \(Links to an external site.\)](#) RCW. WSR 97-13-100, § 246-840-700, filed 6/18/97, effective 7/19/97.]