



The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs), registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by its registrants. The term nurse in this document refers to LPNs, RNs, RPNs and NPs unless otherwise stated.

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[Volunteering](#) is an important part of our culture with benefits to both the recipients of services and the volunteers themselves by building trust, solidarity, and a sense of community among those involved.

This document is a resource for nurses who may volunteer, including camp nurses, to assist in their understanding of:

- Licensure requirements for volunteering
- Accountabilities when volunteering as a nurse
- Liability coverage
- Management of serious illness or emergency as a volunteer
- Documentation requirements
- [Camp nursing](#)
- Volunteering abroad

Like all regulatory documents, use of this document should be in conjunction with the standards of practice and code of ethics for nurses.

Licensure Requirements

If you are planning to provide services as a nurse in your volunteer role in Nova Scotia, you must be registered and hold a current licence with NSCN.

If you are a nurse from another Canadian jurisdiction and want to volunteer your [nursing services](#) in Nova Scotia, you are required to obtain conditional registration and licensure with NSCN. This will give you authorization to temporarily provide nursing services in Nova Scotia for a specific time- limited event, such as volunteering as a camp nurse or supporting an emergency (e.g. disaster, pandemic etc.) This licence will expire after four months and cannot be re-issued within the same licensure year. Additionally, you must maintain your current licence to practise in your home jurisdiction.

Volunteer hours that you provide as a nurse cannot be counted towards your nursing practice hours. [Click here](#) for further information.

If you are not volunteering in the role of a nurse, there is no licensure requirement. However, you cannot hold yourself out as a nurse nor are you authorized to provide nursing services.

This document only provides information for individuals who are volunteering as a nurse. If you are not volunteering as a nurse, we recommend that you review the [Volunteer Services Act](#) and [Volunteer Protection Act](#), specifically section 3.

Accountabilities

Nurses are accountable to practise in accordance with their [standards of practice](#) and code of ethics when working as a nurse volunteer. You must also be aware of:

- Relevant provincial legislation and regulations that relate to your volunteer role, including:
 - *Volunteer Services Act*
 - *Volunteer Protection Act*
- Your legislated scope of practice and standards of practice here in Nova Scotia
- Your individual scope of practice based on your knowledge, skills and judgement
- Liability protection provided by the organization you are volunteering with
- Policies and procedures established by the organization relating to your role as a volunteer nurse
- Your volunteer job description and expectations.

Liability coverage

Liability protection or liability insurance will vary depending on the organization with which you plan to volunteer. This should be outlined in the organization's policies. Review the organization's policies before volunteering as a nurse.

All registrants with NSCN have liability coverage as part of their licensure. For LPNs, it is provided through [Lloyd Sudd Insurance Brokers Ltd.](#) For RNs, RPNs and NPs, it is provided through the [Canadian Nurses Protective Society](#). To ensure your liability coverage is adequate in your volunteer role, it is recommended that you contact the appropriate liability provider for further discussion.

Urgent or Emergency Illnesses or injuries

Ensure the organization that you are volunteering with has policies or protocols in place to manage urgent or [emergency situations](#). Know what emergency services are available to you and how to activate them. As a volunteer nurse, you are expected to provide emergency or urgent care according to your individual and [legislated scope of practice](#), scope of employment, standards of practice, including the sexual misconduct standard for all nurses, organizational policies, and care context.

Documentation

You are accountable for documenting all nursing services provided. Refer to the organization's policies related to [documentation](#) as well as our Documentation Guidelines.

Camp Nursing

Generally, volunteering in a camp setting means that you work autonomously outside of a health care facility and often without other health care providers. The responsibilities of camp nurses vary from camp to camp, but the role primarily consists of helping campers meet their health needs, preventing injury and providing care in emergencies. You are accountable to have the required competencies to work in this context of practice.

If you are volunteering as a camp nurse, there are some additional aspects to consider:

- Understanding the use of care directives established for the health needs of specific campers;
- Collaborating with other volunteer interprofessional team members (if available);
- Accessing a nurse practitioner or physician if required;
- Camp policies related to the collection, storage, distribution, and administration of medications, including over-the-counter medications and controlled substances.

Volunteering Both Nationally and Internationally

Volunteer requirements differ by country and organization. Nurses who use their nursing skills to volunteer are accountable to have the required competencies and meet the registration and licensure requirements of the jurisdictions they are volunteering in. It is important to find out what the specific requirements are for the volunteer organization, the nursing regulatory body and the jurisdiction before you apply to volunteer.

Key Points

- Volunteering as a nurse in Nova Scotia requires you to be registered and licensed with NSCN.
- If you are licensed in another Canadian province, you must apply for conditional registration and licensure with NSCN.
- As a volunteer, you are held accountable to the same standards of practice, code of ethics and practice guidelines as other nurses licensed with NSCN, including documentation and medication administration.
- You should consider if your current liability protection is adequate.

- You should ensure there is a plan in place to manage urgent or emergent health issues.
- Volunteer camp nurses need to give special consideration to how they will meet their standards working in such an autonomous environment.
- If you are volunteering outside of Nova Scotia, you need to inquire what the specific competencies and licensure requirements are for the volunteer organization, the nursing regulatory body and the jurisdiction.
- If you are not volunteering in the role of a nurse, there is no licensure requirement. However, you cannot uphold yourself as a nurse nor are you authorized to provide nursing services.

Suggested Reading

- [*Volunteer Services Act*](#) and [*Volunteer Protection Act*](#)
- [Documentation Guidelines](#)
- [Medication Guidelines](#)
- [Nurses Recommending and Administering Over The Counter Medications or Devices](#)
- [Care Directive Guidelines](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Standard of Practice for Nurses](#)
- [Standards of Practice](#)
- [Nursing Scope of Practice Guideline](#)
- [Currency of Practice](#)
- [Nursing Practice Hours Assessment Tool](#)

For further information on anything contained within this practice guideline, please contact a NSCN Practice Consultant at practice@nscn.ca.