



The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) 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, NPs, and RNs unless otherwise stated.

Contents

Licensure Requirements	2
Accountabilities	2
Liability coverage	2
Urgent or Emergency Illnesses or injuries	3
Documentation.....	3
Camp Nursing	3
Key Points	3
Suggested Reading	3

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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](#)

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

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 three months for LPNs and four months for RNs or NPs and cannot be re-issued within the same licensure year. Additionally, you must maintain your current licence to practice in your home jurisdiction.

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
- 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 RNs and NPs, it is provided through the [Canadian Nurses Protective Society](#) and for LPNs, it is provided through [Lloyd Sudd Insurance Brokers Ltd.](#) To ensure your liability coverage is adequate in your volunteer role, it is recommended that you contact the appropriate organization for further discussion.

Urgent or Emergency Illnesses or injuries

Ensure the organization 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 with any situation, as a volunteer nurse you are expected to provide emergency or urgent care according to your individual and [legislated scope of practice](#), standards of practice, organizational policies and care context.

Documentation

You are expected to document 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 emergency. You are expected 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 physician or nurse practitioner if required;
- Camp policies related to the collection, storage, distribution, and administration of medications, including over-the-counter medications and controlled substances.

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 guideline as other nurses licensed with NSCN, including documentation and medication administration.
- You should consider if your current liability protection is enough to cover you as a nurse volunteer.
- 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.

Suggested Reading

- [Volunteer Services Act](#) and [Volunteer Protection Act](#)
- [Documentation Guidelines](#)
- [Medication Guidelines](#)
- [Nurses Recommending and Administering Over The Counter Medications or Devices](#)

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