

Autonomous Practice or Client-Specific Order



A guide to support decision making for LPNs, RNs, and RPNs

i This tool provides a high-level framework to support decisions about whether to act autonomously or under a client-specific order. Use it alongside BCCNM's *Acting Within Autonomous scope and Acting Under a Client-specific Order* practice standards, which set out the detailed requirements, expectations, limits, and conditions, together with employer policies and your professional judgment.

How to use this tool

Work through Steps 1–7 in order. Review each statement and confirm that it applies to your situation before checking the box. If a statement does not apply or you cannot answer YES, stop and seek additional information, guidance, or support before proceeding.

1. Identify the client need and intended activity

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| ☐ I assess the client and make a nursing diagnosis of the condition (as applicable) | ☐ I determine the activity |
| ☐ I follow a clinical decision-making process | ☐ I develop a plan to carry out the activity and evaluate outcomes |

2. Scope of practice and controls on practice

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| ☐ The activity or ordered activity is within my designation's nursing scope of practice, as set out in regulation.* | ☐ I can meet employer policies and use approved decision support tools, if applicable |
| ☐ I can meet relevant BCCNM standards, limits, and conditions | ☐ I have the competence to perform the activity |

3. Order check (Complete this step if you are acting under a client-specific order. If you are acting autonomously and no order is required for this activity, go to Step 4)

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| ☐ The order is client-specific, clear, legible, and complete | ☐ The ordering professional has the authority to write the order |
| ☐ The order is evidence-based and reflects client wishes | ☐ I take action if the order is incomplete or appears inappropriate |
| ☐ The order is documented, dated, and signed | ☐ If I am acting under an order, I follow the <i>Acting Under Client-specific Orders</i> practice standard when changing or cancelling an order |

* Refers to the [Nurses and Midwives Regulation](#) and the [Regulated Health Practitioners Regulation](#).

4. Decision-making, accountability, and safeguards

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| ☐ I carry out appropriate assessments needed for this activity | ☐ I can provide a rationale for my decisions and actions |
| ☐ I am competent to carry out the activity safely | ☐ I develop a plan to carry out the activity, manage intended and unintended consequences, and evaluate outcomes |
| ☐ I assume accountability and responsibility | |

5. Client consent

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| ☐ I follow legal and ethical obligations for obtaining informed consent | ☐ The client's consent is current and applies to the activity being performed |
| ☐ I follow a clinical decision-making process | evaluate outcomes |

6. Perform the activity

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| ☐ I perform the activity in accordance with BCCNM standards, limits, and conditions, and employer requirements | ☐ I take action if the client's condition changes or if an unintended outcome occurs |
| ☐ I monitor the client's response during and after the activity, as appropriate | ☐ I seek guidance or support if concerns arise before, during, or after the activity |

7. Document and communicate

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| ☐ I document the care provided, including relevant assessments, decisions, actions, outcomes, and follow-up | ☐ I report concerns, changes in the client's condition, or follow-up needs according to employer policy and professional expectations |
| ☐ I communicate relevant information to the health-care team | |

If you checked all the boxes, proceed with the activity. If any box is not checked, stop and resolve the issue before proceeding.

Disclaimer: This learning resource is for educational purposes only and is intended to support learning and reflection. It is not intended to direct or determine clinical practice and must not be relied on as a substitute for professional judgment, regulatory requirements, or organizational policies. Scenarios and examples are fictional and are used solely to illustrate learning concepts. Practice decisions must be based on the specific clinical context, applicable legislation, standards, and individual competence.