

BCCNP

British Columbia
College of Nursing
Professionals



IMPORTANT

As of Sept. 4, 2018, the following nursing colleges merged together to become the British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals (BCCNP):

- College of Licensed Practical Nurses of British Columbia (CLPNBC)
- College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC)
- College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of British Columbia (CRPNBC)

Although the information in the document you are about to access reflects our most current information about this topic, you'll notice the content refers to the previous nursing college that published this document prior to Sept. 4, 2018.

We appreciate your patience while we work towards updating all of our documents to reflect our new name and brand.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Practice standards set out requirements for specific aspects of LPN practice. They link with other BCCNP standards, policies and bylaws and all legislation relevant to LPN practice.

What is Privacy & Confidentiality?

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) have an ethical and legal responsibility to protect the privacy¹ and confidentiality² of clients' personal health information obtained while providing care.

Employers provide the organizational supports and systems necessary for LPNs to meet BCCNP LPN Standards of Practice.

Principles

1. LPNs collect and access clients' personal health information only for purposes that are consistent with their professional responsibilities.
2. LPNs ensure that clients are aware of their rights and have consented to the collection, use and disclosure of their personal health information.
3. LPNs safeguard information learned in the context of the nurse-client relationship and disclose this information outside of the health care team only with client consent or when there is an ethical or legal obligation to do so.
4. When disclosure of confidential information is required, LPNs restrict the amount of information disclosed and the number of people informed.
5. LPNs take action if others inappropriately access or disclose a client's personal health information.
6. LPNs comply with any legal obligation to disclose confidential information that is imposed by legislation or required under a warrant, court order or subpoena.
7. LPNs disclose a client's personal health information to the appropriate authority if there is a substantial risk of significant harm to the health or safety of the client or others.
8. LPNs respect clients' rights to access their own health records and to request a correction of information.

¹ **Privacy** is the right of individuals to determine how, when, to whom and for what purposes any personal information will be divulged.

² **Confidentiality** is a type of informational privacy in which one individual or organization agrees to safeguard information about another individual or organization.

Applying the Principles to Practice

To manage privacy and confidentiality in your nursing practice, consider the following:

- Review your organization's policies related to:
 - confidentiality
 - collection, use and disclosure of personal information and relevant consent
 - access to client records
 - storage, retention and disposal of client records
 - how to contact the privacy officer
- Inform clients, preferably at the outset of care, about the limits of confidentiality. For example, explain who on the health care team will have access to information and when you would be required to disclose a client's personal health information.
- Know what client information you can share with health care providers outside your organization to enable continuity of care.
- Clarify with clients what, if any, personal health information they want their family to know.
- Understand that confidentiality is not restricted to clients' personal health information, but any information obtained within the nurse-client relationship.
- Do not speak, comment or speculate on information about a client, even if this information is publicly available.
- Recognize that confidentiality does not cease once the client is discharged, but carries on indefinitely.
- Access information for your assigned clients only.
- Discuss client information with health care team members only in places where confidentiality can be maintained.
- Recognize that the same privacy and confidentiality principles apply whether the information is written or electronic.
- Collect only information that is necessary and appropriate for your client.
- If you are concerned that a client poses a risk of harm to himself/herself or others, report it immediately to an appropriate person.
- If you are self-employed, identify and comply with the legislation and BCCNP bylaws that apply to your practice.
- If you are required by legislation to disclose a client's personal health information, first seek guidance about your obligation from your employer or BCCNP.

More Information

Email BCCNP Nursing Practice Advisors or call 1 877 373 2201.

[BCCNP Bylaws](#)

[BCCNP LPN Practice Standards](#)

[BCCNP LPN Professional Standards](#)

[BCCNP LPN Scope of Practice Standards](#)

Other Resources

[*Access to Information Act*](#)

[*e-Health Act*](#)

[*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*](#)

[*Limitation Act*](#)

[*Personal Information Protection Act*](#)

[*Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*](#)

[*Privacy Act*](#)

Effective May 2014/Editorial changes June 2016
© British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals
900 – 200 Granville St.
Vancouver, BC V6C 1S4
www.bccnp.ca