



**Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission**

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**Job Titles/License Titles:**

**Can a registered nurse work as a licensed practical nurse or a licensed practical nurse as a Nursing Assistant?**

Restructuring of health care delivery, and shifts in staffing mixes have led to interesting inquiries to the Boards of Nursing, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and employers have frequently consulted with Board staff about a registered nurse “working as an licensed practical nurses” or licensed practical nurses “working as a nursing assistant.” Questions also include other credentialed roles such as health care assistant.

Sometimes licensing titles (registered nurse or licensed practical nurse) are being used interchangeably with work site job description designations. For example, a registered nurse may call and say, “I have been offered a licensed practical nurse shift at the nursing home. Can I work as a licensed practical nurse?” If that registered nurse is not also licensed as a licensed practical nurse, he or she may not call themselves a licensed practical nurse, nor sign documents as a licensed practical nurse. He can certainly assume the job responsibilities of a licensed practical nurse. What salary the nurse and employer agree to for compensation is an employer/employee issue not a licensure or titling issue. The same broad analysis applies to a licensed practical nurse considering working a position involving Nursing Assistant level responsibilities.

Those responsibilities are included in the education, training, and scope of practice of the licensed practical nurse but the title is restricted to those persons registered or certified as nursing assistants.

The registered nurse remains a registered nurse and the licensed practical nurse remains a licensed practical nurse even if working in a position that does not require that level of licensure. The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission regulates registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and some components of nursing assistant regulation. The Commission does not manage the programs regulating health care assistants or any other credentialed professions/occupations.

For assistance with any questions on requirements in those professions, call the Nursing Practice Advisor at 360-236-4725 or email: [Nursing@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Nursing@doh.wa.gov)