

OVERVIEW OF CONTINUING COMPETENCE

The West Virginia Legislature passed Senate Bill 1, on March 14, 1992, authorizing the West Virginia State Board of Examiners for Licensed Practical Nurses to implement continuing competence requirements for renewal of a practical nurse license. Specifically the continuing competence requirements include mandatory continuing education (CE) and a minimum number of hours of practice (work) as a licensed practical nurse. The continuing competence requirements provide added assurances to the public that LPN's who hold a valid license possess current knowledge and skills to perform their nursing responsibilities safely and competently.

BIENNIAL REQUIREMENTS

You are required to complete a total of 24 contact hours of CE and be employed as a practical nurse for 400 clock hours during each two (2) year reporting period to be eligible to renew your LPN license. The current reporting period is July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2020. Subsequent reporting will be required in the years ending with an even number such as 2022, 2024, etc.

In 2004, the West Virginia Legislature changed a previous law regarding the requirement for two (2) contact hours in end of life care including pain management. Effective July 1, 2005, this is a one-time requirement. Therefore, those who reported end of life CE for renewal in 2004 will not be required to complete it again. Those new licensees, individuals reinstating licenses, etc., will be required to report it with their CE during their first renewal in which CE reporting is required or at the time of reinstatement.

In 2012, the West Virginia Legislature added the requirement for CE in the subject of substance abuse.

Therefore, effective with the reporting period ending in 2014 each licensee must have completed at least three (3) contact hours in the topic of substance abuse or drug diversion to renew the LPN license. This must be completed during each subsequent reporting period. In 2014

The West Virginia Legislature added the requirement for CE in the subject of mental health conditions common to veterans and family members of veterans. Therefore, effective with the reporting period ending in 2018 each licensee must have

completed at least two (2) contact hours in the topic of mental health common to veterans or mental health conditions for veterans and family members of veterans. To renew the LPN license. This must be completed during each subsequent reporting period.

HOW OFTEN DO I HAVE TO RENEW MY LICENSE?

You renew your license annually. However, you only report CE and identify an employer to verify your practical nursing work experience every other year ON THE EVEN YEAR at the time you renew your license.

DO I HAVE TO WORK TO KEEP MY LICENSE ACTIVE?

Yes. You must work in a position that requires that you be an LPN to renew your license. The number of hours of you must work as an LPN is 400 clock hours, throughout the 2 years.

WHAT IF MY WORK DOES NOT INCLUDE PATIENT CARE?

Your job will qualify as practical nursing practice providing LPN licensure is specified in your job description. In other words, if an individual who is not licensed as an LPN could do the same job you cannot count this as employment hours.

WHAT IS A CONTACT HOUR?

A contact hour is equivalent to 50 consecutive minutes of instruction. The unit of measure for CE in West Virginia is the contact hour. The law requires 24 contact hours during each two (2) year reporting period.

WHERE CAN I FIND APPROVED CE ACTIVITIES?

By searching online for continuing education for nurses.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF A CE ACTIVITY IS APPROVED?
CE approved by any state or national nursing organization, other health related national organizations, other state boards of nursing or health related licensing boards is acceptable if the identified target audience includes nurses. Activities approved by the West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses and West Virginia Nurses Association are accepted.

WHEN SHOULD I GET MY CONTACT HOURS?

Start early. Waiting until the last minute can cause delays in renewing your license, increase fees and cause you unnecessary distress that can be avoided by acting early.

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM STANDARD

1. The activity is at least 50 minutes/1 contact hour in length.
2. The target audience is identified and includes nursing, except as otherwise provided.
3. Acceptable subject areas are:

a. nursing practice areas and professional development;

b. nursing theories and sciences;

c. legal, social, economic or ethical aspects of health

care; and

4. Written objectives are available to participants.

5. Content relates to nursing/health care.

6. Instructor qualifications are provided.

7. A written schedule is provided to participants which indicates content and time frames.

8. Program announcements specifically indicate that it is approved for CE credit for nurses.

9. A written method is established to determine that the

participant has achieved stated objectives of the activity.

10. A certificate of completion is provided to participants.

CONTACT HOURS OR OTHER CREDITS DO NOT CARRY FORWARD TO THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD.

HOW CAN I EARN CE HOURS?

1. attend approved CE activities, workshops, seminars and conferences dealing with issues in nursing.

2. enroll at a college or university in courses relevant to nursing.

3. take home study courses including online courses in nursing or complete the continuing education offerings in professional nursing journals,

4. read professional journals and other available nursing literature (You may identify 5 of the 24 contact hours required as learner designed as long as you get a certificate for it). CPR card counts for 5 hours

IS COLLEGE CREDIT ACCEPTED FOR CE? Yes. Successful completion of courses provided by an accredited college and academic credit is awarded can be used to satisfy the CE requirement, providing they are relevant to nursing. The following formula is used to calculate contact hours from credit hours:

1 Semester hour = 15 contact hours

LPNs are still required to do the W.V. requirements.

HOW LONG DO I KEEP CE AND PRACTICE RECORDS?

All evidence to support information you provided on your report to the board at the time of renewal should be retained for 5 years after the date it is reported to the board.

WHAT IS AN AUDIT?

An audit is an official review by the board of CE records and verification of practice. Each month audits are conducted on CE and practice activities on a random sampling of licensees. An audit requires you to submit information concerning your completed CE activities, along with legible photocopies of certificates, transcripts or other documentation of completed CE activities. The audit also includes completion of a verification of employment form which you take to the employer listed on your renewal form for verification of the number of hours claimed as employment as a practical nurse. This must be within 30 days that the audit is issued.

ARE THERE ANY EXEMPTIONS TO THE REQUIREMENT?

1. Licensees who successfully completed one semester as a full time student in an associate degree, diploma, or baccalaureate degree in nursing have satisfied the CE and employment requirements for that reporting period. If the required CE hours in end of life care including pain management have not previously been reported to the Board, these must be completed in addition to the college credit hours along with the required hours on the topics of substance abuse and mental health conditions common to veterans and their families.
2. Licensees who qualify for a medical exemption due to personal or family illness or disability are permitted to apply for exemption. (This exemption may not exceed a single, 2 year, reporting period and may be prorated based on the length of illness or disability.)
3. Requirements are prorated for individuals licensed for the first time during a reporting period.
4. Requirements are waived for individuals who are on active duty in the military and spouses of those on active duty.

WHAT IF I JUST GOT MY LICENSE?

DO I STILL HAVE TO REPORT CE AND PRACTICE? Individuals licensed for the first time during the FIRST year of this two year reporting period between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023, are required to report 12 contact hours of CE and 200 clock hours of practical nurse employment to renew their LPN for the period ending June 30, 2024. Two of these contact hours must be in end of life care, including pain management, three (3) contact hours in the topic of substance abuse and at least two (2) contact hours in the topic of mental health conditions common to veterans and family members of veterans. Individuals licensed for the first time during the SECOND year of a two year reporting period, between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, are exempt from both the CE and employment requirements to renew the license for the period ending June 30, 2024.

WHAT IF I WANT TO BE INACTIVE OR ALLOW MY LICENSE TO LAPSE?

There are no CE or employment requirements if you place your license on the non-practicing (inactive) list prior to the expiration date of a current license, or if the license expires and becomes lapsed. If you wish to reinstate the license contact the Board office for assistance.

WHAT IF I CANT MEET THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO REINSTATE MY INACTIVE OR LAPSED LICENSE?

You may request a limited license. A limited license is valid for 90 days. During the 90 day period you must work for 200 clock hours in practical nursing under the direct supervision of a qualified supervisor and complete 12 contact hours of CE. An unrestricted license is issued when verification of completion of the above requirements is received by the board. This must be received in the Board office prior to the expiration of the 90 day limited license period or the license again becomes lapsed. A 90 day limited license MAY NOT BE RENEWED.

If the 90 day limited license lapses, the only option at that point is to retake the NCLEX and pass in order to reinstate to a full status



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An Informational Brochure