Registered nurses (RNs) can provide nursing services at camps for children or adults in a variety of settings as either a
volunteer or paid employee. While these experiences can be fun and rewarding, they can also pose unique challenges
for RNs. This document is intended for RNs who need further information about licensure requirements and safe
nursing practice in a camp setting.

Camp nurses are accountable to practise in accordance with their Standards for Practice for Registered Nurses (CRNNS, 2017) and Code of Ethics (CNA, 2017).

They must also be aware of:

• their legislated scopes of practice
• their individual scope of practice based on their knowledge, skills and abilities to provide the nursing care for
  the particular camper population with whom they plan to work
• provincial legislation and regulations that relate to their role as a camp nurse (e.g., Children and Family Services
  Act, Protection of Persons in Care Act, etc.)
• liability insurance requirements
• any policies and procedures established by the camp
• care directives established for specific campers’ health needs (e.g. asthma, diabetes, oncology, etc.).
• job description and expectations
• other interprofessional team members who will also be at the camp

Common Questions about Camp Nursing

Do I need a temporary license with CRNNS to work as a camp nurse in Nova Scotia?

If you hold an active-practising licence with the CRNNS, there are no additional licensure requirements. If you are
licensed in another Canadian jurisdiction, you will need to apply for a licence called a “temporary license – special
event” with CRNNS.

Are there any conditions or restrictions imposed on a “temporary license – special event” to work as a camp nurse in
Nova Scotia?

Yes. There are two conditions and restrictions:

• you can only engage in the practice of nursing for the purpose of providing nursing services for the specific
  camp where you will be working, and
• you must maintain your active-practising (RN) licence in another Canadian jurisdictions.

How long will I be able to practice as a camp nurse with the temporary license – special event?

The temporary license – special event expires after four months and cannot be re-issued within the same licensure
year.
How do I handle urgent or emergency illnesses or injuries that are potentially life threatening?

In this type of situation, you must complete an assessment, call 911 and provide life sustaining care within their scope of practice until Emergency Health Services arrives. You are expected to provide care in accordance with your individual and legislated scope of practice, standards of practice and camp policies to ensure that the camper receives safe, competent care until s/he is transferred to another health care professional or facility.

If there is no physician on site, how do I make decisions about the care I can provide as a RN?

If you are the only health care professional on-site, you should know how to access a physician if necessary and what, if any, support will be available from other health care professionals. Care directives must also be available to guide the provision of nursing services for common health problems and/or interventions (e.g., heat stroke, anaphylaxis, minor injuries, and poison ivy exposure). You should ensure that the camp’s policies related to the provision of nursing care are up-to-date. For more information on care directives, please click here.

Can I count the hours I work in Nova Scotia as a camp nurse toward my annual license renewal in the province where I am currently licensed?

Please check with the regulatory body in the province where you are currently licensed to confirm their policies on counting hours worked in another jurisdiction.

Will I have liability coverage as a camp nurse?

Liability protection/insurance will vary from camp to camp but it should be outlined in camp policies. You should explore the camp’s policies on liability protection/insurance before accepting a camp nurse position. Licence holders with CRNNS receive liability protection from the Canadian Nurses Protective Society (CNPS), which is available whether you are practising as a volunteer or paid camp employee. To determine if this liability protection is adequate, please contact an advisor at the CNPS.

What type of documentation or record keeping is generally expected of camp nurses?

Camp nurses are expected to document all nursing care provided. You should refer to the camp policies related to documentation as well as to the CRNNS Documentation Guidelines.

What responsibilities do camp nurses have in terms of medication administration?

Camp nurses are expected to possess current knowledge of all medications and treatments being administered and to be aware of all camp policies related to the collection, storage, distribution, and administration of medications. You should refer to the camp policies related to medication administration, including over-the-counter medications and controlled substances, as well as the CRNNS Medication Guidelines for Registered Nurses and the CRNNS RNs Recommending and Administering Over the Counter Medications Practice Guidelines.

For more information on camp nursing, please contact a CRNNS Practice Consultants at practice@crnns.ca. or 902.491.9744 (Toll Free 1.800.565.9744).