

NLC

NURSE LICENSURE COMPACT
What Nurse Employers Need to Know

Our Mission

The Nurse Licensure Compact advances public protection and access to care through the mutual recognition of one state-based license that is enforced locally and recognized nationally.

Background

- The NLC allows a nurse (registered nurses [RNs] and licensed practical/vocational nurses [LPN/VNs]) to have one multistate license in the primary state of residence (the home state) and practice in other compact states (remote states), while subject to each state's practice laws and discipline.
- Lawful practice requires that a nurse be licensed or have the privilege to practice in the state where the patient is located at the time care is directed or service is provided. This pertains to practice by physical or telephonic/electronic means.
- Nurses holding a multistate license are allowed to practice across state lines in other NLC states, except when practice is limited to the home state due to a restriction on the license or some level of disciplinary action.
- Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are not included in this compact. APRNs must apply for licensure in each state in which they practice, unless exempted when employed in a federal facility.

Employer Confirmation of a Nurse's Licensure Status

- Employers can confirm a nurse's license and receive a Licensure QuickConfirm report at www.nursys.com at no cost. The report will contain the nurse's name, jurisdiction, license type, license number, compact status, license status, expiration date, discipline against license and discipline against privilege to practice.
- All NLC states provide licensure and discipline data to Nursys® directly from the board of nursing's (BON's) licensure systems. Nursys is primary source equivalent.
- To confirm APRNs and temporary licenses, visit the issuing BON website.



www.ncsbn.org/nlc

Licensure and Privileges

- A nurse licensed in a compact state must meet the licensure requirements in the primary state of residence (home state). When practicing on a privilege in a remote state, the nurse is accountable for complying with the nurse practice act of that state.
- A single state license may be issued to an applicant residing in a noncompact state. A license issued by a noncompact state is valid only in that state.
- A nurse with an active multistate license in a compact state has the privilege to practice in any compact state unless the privilege has been disciplined or otherwise restricted.
- The NLC permits a nurse to hold only one active compact license in the primary state of residence.
- When a nurse is hired in a remote state for a temporary position or commutes to the remote state from the primary state of residence (usually an adjacent state), employers cannot require the nurse to apply for licensure in the remote state when the nurse has lawfully declared another state as the primary state of residence. This is based on where the nurse pays federal income tax, votes or holds a driver's license. The BON cannot issue a license to a nurse who has declared another compact state as the primary state of residence. (A legal memo on this topic is available online at www.ncsbn.org/nlc.)

Discipline

- It's the responsibility of the nurse to notify the employer of any action taken by the BON against his or her license.
- Under most circumstances, when a license is disciplined, multistate privileges are removed. The nurse is not able to practice in a remote state.

Definitions

- **Compact:** An interstate agreement between two or more states established for the purpose of remedying a particular problem of multistate concern. (*Black's Law Dictionary*)
- **Compact State:** Any state that has adopted the NLC.
- **Home State:** The compact state that serves as the nurse's primary state of residence.
- **Remote State:** A compact state other than the home state where the patient is located at the time nursing care is provided or, in the case of the practice of nursing not involving a patient, a compact state where the recipient of nursing practice is located.
- **Primary State of Residence:** The state (also known as the home state) in which a nurse declares a primary residence for legal purposes. Sources used to verify a nurse's primary residence may include driver's license, federal income tax return or voter registration.

Requirements When A Nurse Moves

- When a nurse declares a new compact state as the primary state of residence, he or she must apply for licensure by endorsement in the new state of residence.
- When permanently relocating to another compact state, a nurse must apply for licensure by endorsement and complete the Declaration of Primary State of Residence form for the new home state. The nurse should notify the former compact state BON that he or she is no longer a resident. The nurse can practice on the former license for up to 90 days, which starts when the new state determines that the nurse is a resident of the new state. It's recommended that the nurse starts the application process prior to the move.
 - Note: States are in the process of implementing an amended rule; a state may either permit a nurse to practice on his or her former license for 30 or 90 days depending on the current rule status (visit www.ncsbn.org/nlc to view the implementation table). The number of days is based on the rule in effect in the new state.
- Nurses are required to promptly declare a new state of residency when they obtain a new driver's license, change where federal taxes are paid or register to vote and may not wait for the license to expire in the prior home state.

Scenario

I am a director of Nursing at a hospital in Colorado (a compact state) and have hired a Texas (a compact state) nurse for a temporary assignment. Our Human Resources department is telling me that I must require the nurse to get a Colorado license in order for her to practice here.

- The NLC permits a nurse to hold one active multistate license in the primary state of residence. A licensee holding a compact multistate license in good standing has the privilege to practice in any compact state. Employers cannot require the nurse to apply for licensure in a remote state when the nurse has lawfully declared a primary state of residence.
- The BON cannot issue a license to a nurse who has declared another compact state as the primary state of residence.

- **Nursys®:** This database (www.nursys.com) provides licensure and disciplinary information of all RNs and LPN/VNs, as contributed by compact states. The public can access Nursys for free to look up a nurse's license and discipline status.
- **Privilege to Practice:** Current, official authority from a remote state permitting the practice of nursing as either an RN or an LPN/VN in such party state. All party states have the authority, in accordance with existing state due process law, to take actions against the nurse's privilege, such as: revocation, suspension, probation or any other action which affects a nurse's authorization to practice.

For more information about the NLC, visit www.ncsbn.org/nlc or email nursecompact@ncsbn.org.