



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

**South Carolina Board of Nursing**

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**ADVISORY OPINION # 2**

**FORMULATED:** July 31, 1987

**REVISED:** March 2011, May 2001, November 1991, July 1991

**REVIEWED:** July 2017, July 2007, May 2006, July 2005, June 2003, July 1998, January 1997, March 1993

**QUESTION:** Is it within the role and scope of responsibilities of the registered nurse (RN) to remove pleural and mediastinal chest tubes as ordered by the physician?

The State Board of Nursing for South Carolina acknowledges that it is within the role and scope of responsibilities of the RN to remove pleural and mediastinal chest tubes as ordered by the physician.

The Board recognizes this responsibility as an expanded role for the RN and requires the following stipulations:

1. The agency nursing, medical, and administrative departments establish policies, procedures, and/or standing orders that address:
  - a. proximity of the physician when tubes are removed by the nurse;
  - b. type of supervision/oversight provided by the physician;
  - c. physician evaluation of patient condition indicative of need for the tube to be removed;
  - d. guidelines for patient monitoring prior to and after tube is removed; and,
  - e. guidelines for dealing with potential complications or emergency situations
2. The agency documents the RN's completion of special education and training to include supervised clinical instruction and skill competency verification. Recognizing these responsibilities are an additional act for the RN.

*This statement is an advisory opinion of the Board of Nursing as to what constitutes competent and safe nursing practice.*