



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

South Carolina Board of Nursing

110 Centerview Dr. • Columbia • SC • 29210

P.O. Box 12367 • Columbia • SC 29211-2367

Phone: 803-896-4550 • NURSEBOARD@llr.sc.gov • Fax: 803-896-4515

llr.sc.gov/nurse

ADVISORY OPINION # 38

FORMULATED: January 2002

REVISED: October 2017, March 2011, July 2007

REVIEWED: October 2019, May 2006, July 2005, November 2003

QUESTION: Is it within the role and scope of responsibilities of the registered nurse (RN) to perform needle decompression for tension pneumothorax?

The State Board of Nursing for South Carolina acknowledges that needle decompression is within the role and scope of responsibilities of the RN with special education and training in emergent situations to relieve tension pneumothorax.

The State Board of Nursing recognizes that this responsibility is considered an additional act of the RN and requires special education and training. Appropriate written policies, procedures, and standing orders should be developed which specify qualifications, special education and training to include didactic and clinical competency verification components, and emergent conditions/specific patient situations wherein the RN is authorized to perform needle decompression for tension pneumothorax.

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