



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

**South Carolina Board of Nursing**

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**POSITION STATEMENT: Recommended Clinical Hours Required for Competency**

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**REVISED:**

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The South Carolina Nurse Practice Act includes competence in the definitions for the practice of nursing. "Competence" means the ability of a licensed nurse to perform safely, skillfully, and proficiently the functions within the role of the licensee. The role encompasses the possession and interrelation of essential knowledge, judgment, attitudes, values, skills, and abilities, which are varied and range in complexity. Competence is a dynamic concept, changing as the licensed nurse achieves a higher stage of development, responsibility, and accountability within the role (SC Code of 40-33-20. (21)). It adds "Nursing practice requires the use of nursing judgment. Nursing judgment is the logical and systematic cognitive process of identifying pertinent information and evaluating data in the clinical context in order to produce informed decisions, which guide nursing actions. Nursing practice is provided by advanced practice registered nurses, registered nurses, and licensed practical nurses. The scope of nursing practice varies and is commensurate with the educational preparation and demonstrated competencies of the person who is accountable to the public for the quality of nursing care." (SC Code of 40-33-20. (46)).

The statute further states in SECTION 40-33-40: Demonstration of competency for initial and renewal of licenses.

(A) Demonstration of competency for initial licensure requires documented evidence of the following:

- (1) graduation from an approved nursing education program; and
- (2) successful completion of the NCLEX appropriate to the area of licensure and appropriate credentials for advanced practice registered nursing licensure, if applicable.

(B) Demonstration of competency for:

- (1) renewal of an active license biennially requires documented evidence of at least one of the following requirements during the licensure period:
  - (a) completion of thirty contact hours from a continuing education provider recognized by the board;
  - (b) maintenance of certification or recertification by a national certifying body recognized by the board;
  - (c) completion of an academic program of study in nursing or a related field recognized by the board; or
  - (d) *verification of competency and the number of hours practiced, as evidenced by employer certification on a form approved by the board;*

It is the position of the Board that as it relates to employee verification of competency for renewal of licenses, that it is the employer's responsibility to verify the nurse's level of competency. The Board does not see the need to stipulate a "specific number of hours needed" or any other regulatory methods. By signing the "Employer Certification" form, the employer is choosing to verify that the nurse seeking license renewal can safely, skillfully, and proficiently perform the assigned nursing skills and recommends license renewal.