

ASRT Professional Practice Resources



Practice Standards

The practice standards define the practice and establish general and specific criteria to determine compliance.

Practice standards are authoritative statements established by the profession for judging the quality of practice, service and education. Professional practice constantly changes as a result of a number of factors including technological advances, market and economic forces, and statutory and regulatory mandates.

For all medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals, aspects of professional practice can vary throughout the United States. Community custom, state statute or regulation may dictate local practice parameters. *Wherever there is a conflict between these standards and state or local statutes and regulations, the state or local statutes and regulations supersede these standards.* Recognizing this, the profession has adopted standards that are purposely broad in nature.

Practice standards and scopes of practice can be the document that states, institutions and legal advisors use to assess the appropriateness of practice.



Scopes of Practice

Scopes of practice delineate the parameters of practice, identify the boundaries for practice and typically are formatted as lists of tasks that are appropriate to include as part of the work of an individual who is educationally prepared and clinically competent for that profession.

Each scope of practice is limited to that which the law allows for specific education, experience and demonstrated competency. Many states have laws, licensing bodies and regulations that describe requirements for education and training and define scopes of practice for professions.

It is important to note that even though scopes of practice are often lists of tasks, they should be worded broadly. A scope of practice may include the statement: Starting and maintaining intravenous (IV) access. This is a broad statement and does not say how to do the task or which devices to use. Those specifics may be determined by the institutional policy and may vary from facility to facility.

If the ASRT House of Delegates decides there is a need for further clarification about a specific type of IV access, then an advisory opinion statement can be developed.



Advisory Opinion Statements

Advisory opinion statements are interpretations of the practice standards. They are intended for clarification and guidance for specific practice issues.

These statements allow the organization to address *practice specific* issues that are not addressed in practice standards or scopes of practice. An example of an issue that ASRT considered issuing an advisory opinion statement for was the administration of medications by medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals.

Even though the practice standards indicate that administering medications was within the scope of practice for individuals who are educationally prepared and clinically competent, when the task is performed, it was often questioned. The decision was made to provide an opinion statement with evidentiary documentation that supports the performance of this task.



Position Statements

Position statements reflect the beliefs or standing of the American Society of Radiologic Technologists. In reviewing the position statements, one must take into account existing state statutes and institutional policy.

Position statements address issues **outside of practice**. Typically, they are not considered as strong as practice standards and scopes of practice.

When a practice issue is addressed in multiple documents — such as a position statement **and** a practice standard or a scope of practice — the organization runs the risk of inconsistency in defining practice for the profession. **Practice-specific issues** are best addressed in scope of practice, practice standards or by issuing an advisory opinion statement.

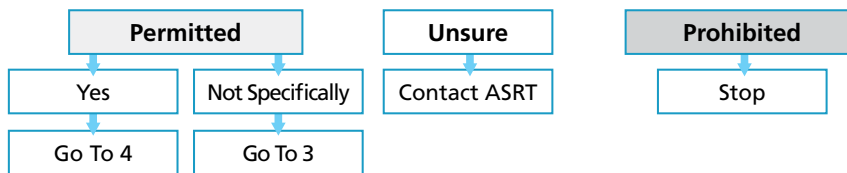
Decision Tree for Determining Scope of Practice

Decision trees are flowchart graphs or diagrams that help explore decision alternatives and their possible outcomes.

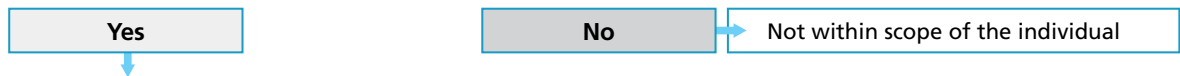
- This tool allows someone to describe a medical imaging or radiation therapy procedure, walk it through some steps and determine if it is within scope of practice.
- This tool is oftentimes included with responses to practice questions.

This information should not be considered legal advice nor should it be accepted as a substitute for advice by a licensed attorney in your state.

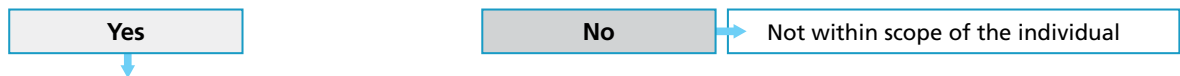
1. Describe the medical imaging or radiation therapy procedure, hereinafter "act," being performed.
2. Is the act expressly permitted or prohibited by the federal or state laws for the license you hold? Is the act expressly permitted or prohibited by the certification you hold? Is the act expressly permitted or prohibited by the policies and procedures of the institution by which you are employed?



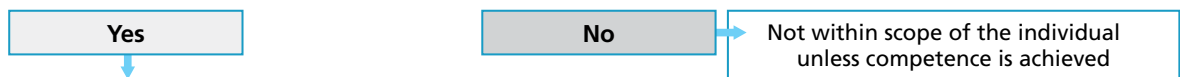
3. Is the act consistent with the scope of practice based upon at least one of the following factors?
 - a. National professional organization's standards of practice.
 - b. Professional literature and research supporting evidence-based practices.
 - c. Appropriately established policies and procedures of employing facility.



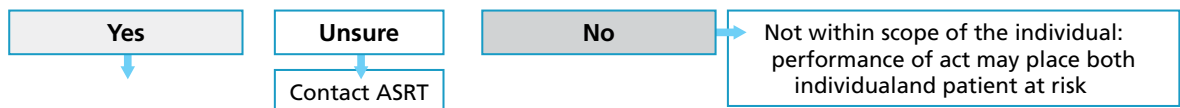
4. Do you personally possess the depth and breadth of knowledge to perform the act safely and effectively as demonstrated by knowledge acquired in a primary educational program, postprimary program or continuing education program?



5. Do you personally possess current clinical competence to perform the act safely?



6. Is the performance of the act within the accepted "standard of care" that would be provided in similar circumstances by reasonable and prudent practitioners who have similar training and experience?



7. Are you prepared to accept the consequences of your actions?

