

EMALB Position Statement on Operational vs. Legal Scope of Practice

In British Columbia, the scope of practice for all Emergency Medical Assistants (EMAs) is prescribed by provincial regulation. For each licence level, the regulation specifies an exclusive list of services that an EMA can legally perform. This is known as the *legal scope of practice* (LSP). The regulation provides the widest set of parameters for EMA practice at any given licence level.

Each employer/organization that has EMAs in its employ or under its supervision can restrict those parameters into an *operational scope of practice* (OSP). The OSP can be a subset or comprise the entire LSP for a given licence level.

It is possible that an employer/organization can make the OSP of an EMA the equivalent of the LSP of a licence level lower than what the EMA possesses. For example, an EMA holding an ACP licence may be restricted by the employer/organization to operate at a PCP level.

The Board's position on (OSP) and (LSP) is that it is not all about being able to legally do a procedure. It is about "should" a procedure be done in a particular setting and if so, does the employer/organization have the appropriate support for the EMA in order to provide the procedure safely.

Such support will also include the ability to address any complications stemming from the provision of any given service. How an employer/organization establishes an OSP relates to several factors that is specific to that particular employer/organization and the particular work setting that the EMAs are expected to operate in.

An EMA should understand why his/her OSP may be a subset of the LSP for the licence level held. The EMALB acknowledges the responsibilities of the employer/organization in establishing the OSP and the EMA in adhering to it. For individual EMAs, being respectful of the employer's or organization's OSP parameters is part of complying with sections (b) and (g) of the [Code of Ethics](#).

Consequently, exceeding an OSP without the employer's or organization's knowledge and consent may represent a Code of Ethics violation. If EMAs disagree with their OSP, the Board encourages open and honest dialogue with the employer/organization to address any issues.