

# Practice Pointer: Verbal Orders



**Category:** Taking Verbal Orders



**Who:** Health Care Professionals authorized to interact with patient/client orders

## Practice Standard:

- Verbal orders are only accepted in situations where there are no other reasonable alternatives and in the best interest of the patient to expedite ordering. E.g. provider has no access to the patient record, or performing an operative procedure [Orders Management Policy](#)
- Regulatory body scope of practice standard for acting with client-specific orders
  - E.g. BCCNM RN/RPN/LPN Acting with Client Specific Orders Principles:
    - Accept a verbal or telephone client-specific order only when there is no reasonable alternative, according to organizational/employer policies and processes, and when doing so is in the best interest of the client.
    - Place the order and repeat/read it back to the ordering provider to confirm its accuracy

## What to Know:

- Verbal orders are prone to multiple types of errors (e.g. misheard order details, transcription errors)
- Verbal orders are only accepted for activities that are within your scope of practice to act on
- Verbal orders for chemotherapy are not permitted

## What to Do:

- Review the Island Health Orders Management Policy and your discipline specific standards for receiving verbal orders for:
  - When it is appropriate to take a verbal order
  - How to appropriately receive and document verbal orders in the patient record
  - Verification process to follow (read-back) to confirm correctness
- Remain in communication with the ordering provider for the duration of verbal order documentation to ensure accuracy and completeness
- Understand and if required, record the indication for the order (i.e. PRN medication orders require an indication as part of a complete order)
- Avoid abbreviations and error-prone dose, route or frequency abbreviations (Ensure documentation of verbal orders aligns with the standard: [Dangerous Abbreviations – Do Not Use Error Prone Abbreviations, Symbols and Dose Designations.](#))