



What You Need to Know: Federal/Military Nurses and Spouses

Federal, Veterans Administration, Military and Indian Health Services Nurses

The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) allows a nurse (registered nurses [RNs] and licensed practical/vocational nurses [LPN/VNs]) to have one multistate license in the primary state of residence (the home state) and to practice in other compact states (remote states), while subject to each state's practice laws. Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are not included in the NLC.

Based on federal supremacy, nurses in this category are exempt from licensure in the state of practice when they hold an active nurse license in any state. This exemption does not apply when a nurse is practicing in a civilian facility in a non-federal role. In this case, the nurse will need to hold appropriate licensure in the state of practice.

Although federal supremacy exempts a nurse from holding a license in the state of practice when they hold an active nurse license in any state, this pertains to a single state license. If a nurse in this category wishes to hold a multistate license, the nurse must have legal residency in an NLC state. Such nurses may utilize military form 2058 as proof of legal residency. This residency requirement only pertains to the multistate license and not to the single state license.

A nurse working in a remote NLC state in federal/military facility may practice on single state license issued by the remote NLC state and is not required to obtain a multistate license from the home NLC state.

A nurse employed by the federal government holding a multistate license in the primary state of residence shall not hold an additional single state license in any remote NLC state. This is because the multistate license provides the authority for the nurse to practice in all NLC states.

Military Spouses who are Nurses

Maintaining or changing a primary state of legal residency is at the discretion of the nurse. Should a nurse maintain legal residency in a NLC state and hold a multistate license and the military family is stationed in other NLC states, the nurse may practice under the home state multistate license in the other NLC states without obtaining additional licensure in those states.

Example Scenario

Mary Smith is a military spouse with primary state of legal residency in Florida (an NLC state). Mary holds a Florida multistate license. The Smith family is a military family and has been stationed in Virginia (an NLC state) for 2 years. Mary is able to practice in Virginia under the Florida multistate license as long as she maintains legal residency in Florida during her time in Virginia. Therefore, Mary does not need to apply for a Virginia license. After living in Virginia, Mary's family is ordered to a base in Texas (an NLC state) for several years. Similarly, Mary is able to practice in Texas under the Florida multistate license while maintaining Florida as her state of legal residency. If Mary's family were to be stationed in a non-compact state, then she would need to hold a license issued by that state or apply for license by endorsement with that state. This assumes that, as a spouse, Mary is not working in a federal capacity. Nevertheless, while her family is temporarily stationed in this non-compact state, she may choose to continue to maintain Florida as her legal state of residency.

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