Delegation Decision-making Tree

The Delegation Decision-making Tree was another tool developed to assist nurses in making delegation decisions. Licensed nurses have ultimate accountability for the management and provision of nursing care, including all delegation decisions.

To use the Delegation Decision-making Tree on the reverse page, start with a specific client, care-giver and nursing activity. Beginning at the top of the tree, ask each question as presented in the box. If you answer “no” to the question, follow the instructions listed to the right of the box and arrow. If you answer “yes,” proceed to the next box. If you answer “yes” for any questions, the task is delegable.

The grid can be used:

- For nurses making delegation decisions.
- For staff education regarding delegation.
- For orientation of new staff, both nurse and UAP.
- For nursing education programs providing basic managerial skills for students.
- For nursing continuing education.
- For Member Boards responding to questions about delegation (Boards may consider including this tool as part of a delegation information packet).
- For orientation of new board members and attorneys.
- For Member Board workshops and presentations regarding delegation issues.
- For evaluation of discipline complaints involving concerns regarding delegation.

PLEASE NOTE: Given that scopes of practice are different from state to state, this tool may need to be altered to be consistent with the regulations in your jurisdiction.

The Delegation Decision-making Tree was adapted from a similar tool previously developed by the Ohio Board of Nursing.
Delegation Decision-making Tree
Adapted from the Delegation Decision Tree developed by the Ohio Board of Nursing

Are there laws and rules in place which support the delegation?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Is the task within the scope of practice of the RN/LPN?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Is the RN/LPN competent to make delegation decisions?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Provide and document education
HAS THERE BEEN ASSESSMENT OF THE CLIENT’S NEEDS?

YES → Is the UAP competent to accept the delegation?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Does the ability of the care-giver match the care needs of the client?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Can the task be performed without requiring nursing judgment?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Are the results of the task reasonably predictable?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Can the task be safely performed according to exact, unchanging directions?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Can the task be safely performed without complex observations or critical decisions?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Can the task be performed without repeated nursing assessments?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Is appropriate supervision available?
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Assess, then proceed with a consideration of delegations
NO → Do not delegate
YES → Provide and document education

Note: Authority to delegate varies, so licensed nurses must check the jurisdiction’s statutes and regulations. RNs may need to delegate to the LPN the authority to delegate to the UAP.