Washington: the rules for aesthetic practice

What Washington's laws and boards say about who may do aesthetic treatments, who must supervise them, and who can own the practice.

Nurse practitioners: Full Practice Authority

Nurse practitioners

Full (AANP). ARNPs practice and prescribe (Schedules II-V) without a collaborative agreement or physician supervision, under the Board of Nursing alone (RCW 18.79.050, 18.79.250, 18.79.110). Renewal: 30 CE hours every 2 years plus 15 pharmacotherapeutics hours for prescriptive authority.

Nurses

Under the Board of Nursing's advisory opinion (effective Sept 12, 2025; guidance, not binding), RNs perform medical, aesthetic and cosmetic procedures under the direction of an authorized practitioner (ARNP, physician or PA); LPNs only under a practitioner's or RN's direction and supervision in routine cases; RNs and LPNs don't diagnose or prescribe. Nursing assistants may not be delegated anything that punctures or severs the skin or any medication, and RNs may delegate to medical assistants only within the MA's own scope.

Physician delegation

When a physician delegates, the Medical Commission's rules apply. Injectables and other nonsurgical cosmetic procedures go only to a trained PA, RN or LPN, after the physician's exam, under a written protocol, with a signed consent naming the delegate and a name tag; the physician stays on site if the product isn't FDA-approved for that use and is otherwise reachable within 30 minutes (WAC 246-919-606). Lasers, light, radiofrequency and plasma devices go only to a trained licensed professional whose scope allows the device, with the physician on the premises for the first treatment and a back-up physician available within 60 minutes after that (WAC 246-919-605).

Who can own the practice

The Attorney General says Washington follows the corporate practice of medicine doctrine: a business may not employ licensed health professionals to practice unless a law allows it (AGO 2020 No. 5). The Professional Service Corporation Act is such a law: licensees in 22 health professions, including physicians, PAs and nurses, may own one professional service corporation together, which doesn't widen anyone's scope (RCW 18.100.050(5)). SB 5387, a stricter ownership bill, stalled in the Senate in February 2026 and did not pass. Confirm the entity type with a Washington healthcare attorney.

The biggest risk in Washington. Unlicensed staff doing injections or skin-puncturing work, or laser treatments by staff whose license doesn't cover the device.

Check it with your boards: Washington State Board of Nursing - nursing.wa.gov/practicing-nurses/arnp-guidance and Washington Medical Commission - wmc.wa.gov. Checked November 3, 2026. Rules change, so read the current rule on the board's own site before you act.

Ask S.A.G.E. next. S.A.G.E., our AI practice advisor, answers from this same Washington reference, free in your TMAA account, which you can set up at go.medicalaestheticsassociation.com/start-here. Try:

1. I'm an RN in Washington. What has to be in place before I offer injectables?
2. What must my medical director agreement cover in Washington?
3. What can an esthetician do in Washington, and what needs an order?

S.A.G.E. is not legal advice. For a binding answer, talk to a healthcare attorney in your state.