

Clarification of a Physical Therapist's & Occupational Therapist's Scope of Practices within the State of California

The scope of practice of a physical therapist (PT) is defined in Business and Professions Code Section [2620](#). The scope of practice of an occupational therapist (OT) is defined in Business and Professions Code Section [2570.2](#). The Physical Therapy Board regulates physical therapists; the Board of Occupational Therapy regulates occupational therapists.

When determining if a technique or procedure falls within a PT's or OT's scope of practice, please refer to the appropriate section of the Business and Professions Code and any related regulations. The relevant sections of law and regulation can be found on the respective board's web site.

While some patient therapies fall within both scopes of practice, OTs and PTs must adhere to the laws and regulations that pertain to each discipline as the two are not interchangeable. If a PT or OT receives an authorization or referral to treat a patient from a person lawfully authorized to diagnose, each is legally required to perform an evaluation relevant to that discipline. If there is an authorization or referral to both disciplines, then each discipline must evaluate that patient and establish the treatment plan and goals relevant to that discipline as appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the licensed PT and OT, as well as the employer, to adhere to the applicable laws and regulations. Failure to comply with the applicable laws and regulations may result in disciplinary action by the respective licensing board.

Note: This document is not a declaratory opinion of the Physical Therapy Board of California and the California Occupational Therapy Board.

Adopted by the California Occupational Therapy Board on July 26, 2007

Adopted by the Physical Therapy Board of California on August 3, 2007