



State of Idaho
Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses
Physical Therapy Board

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Guidance Document on Supervision

Direction and supervision are essential for safe physical therapy practice. In the Idaho Rules and Regulations, there are no set restrictions on the number of individuals a physical therapist may supervise at any given time. However, the degree of direction and supervision necessary for ensuring safe physical therapy depends on many factors, including but not limited to the education, training, experience, and responsibilities of the parties involved; the organizational structure in which the physical therapy is provided; and the patient's status.

Supervision should be readily available to the individual being supervised. Responsibilities should be commensurate with qualifications—including education, training, experience, and skill level—of the individuals to whom the responsibilities are assigned. When the physical therapist of record directs and supervises supportive personnel, the physical therapist remains ultimately responsible for the care of the patient or client.

Supportive personnel (all personnel except physical therapist assistants) require direct personal supervision when working with patients. The physical therapist must be on premises and *immediately* available to provide support. This level of supervision is often also considered *line of sight* supervision. It is prudent to consider the increased risk of inadequate supervision with each supportive personnel added to the supervisory load. Physical therapists must be directly managing the patient.

Physical therapist assistants require general supervision, and the physical therapist must be available at a minimum by telecommunications. Using an algorithm which considers, at a minimum: patient stability and criticality, predictability of response to interventions, practice setting requirements, and education, training, experience, and skills of the physical therapist assistant, will guide the judgment of the physical therapist on the selection of patients and the realistic number of physical therapist assistants a physical therapist can safely and realistically supervise at any given time.