**Top 10 CNA Delegation Mistakes Nurses Make—And How to Avoid Them**
*Protect Your License and Your Relationships*

**🧠 Introduction: Delegation Isn’t Just About Getting Help—It’s About Leading Well**

In long-term care, your CNAs are your eyes, ears, and hands. A good nurse-CNA team can handle anything from a full moon psych storm to a triple-code shift. But when delegation breaks down? So does safety, teamwork, and your peace of mind.

**Delegation is a skill, not a suggestion.** And when it’s done wrong, it doesn’t just tick off your CNAs—it can land your license in hot water. Here are the top 10 delegation mistakes nurses make and how to avoid them like a seasoned, respected leader (not a walking write-up).

**❌ 1. Delegating Without Clear Instructions**

“Can you just take care of Room 204?”

Take care *how*, exactly?

**Fix it:**
Say what, how, and when.
✅ “Please check Mr. D’s blood sugar before lunch and let me know if it’s under 80.”
Ambiguity kills efficiency. Clarity builds trust.

**❌ 2. Assuming “They Should Know”**

No, they’re not mind readers—and neither are you. “Common sense” isn’t always common, especially for newer CNAs or float staff.

**Fix it:**
Be specific about expectations. Repeat key instructions if needed. When in doubt, check back in.

**❌ 3. Delegating Outside Their Scope**

If you’re asking a CNA to suction, administer meds, or assess skin integrity… congrats, you’re unofficially supervising a lawsuit.

**Fix it:**
Know what tasks CNAs *can* legally do in your state/facility—and **don’t cross the line.**

**❌ 4. Ignoring Red Flags or Refusals**

If a CNA hesitates or says, “I don’t feel comfortable doing that,” *listen up.* That’s your cue to reassess.

**Fix it:**
Ask what’s going on.
✅ “Tell me what part feels unclear—I’ll walk you through it or do it myself if needed.”

This shows leadership, not weakness.

**❌ 5. Failing to Follow Up**

Delegation is not *dump and run.* If you never check whether the task was completed, that’s on you.

**Fix it:**
Circle back. Ask:
✅ “Were you able to reposition Mrs. L?”
✅ “Any concerns when you changed the brief in 112?”

Following up protects your license—and your residents.

**❌ 6. Delegating Emotional Labor You Should Handle**

Don’t ask a CNA to explain code status or why Mr. J is on hospice. That’s your job, not theirs.

**Fix it:**
Own the hard conversations. CNAs can support emotionally, but **nurses lead** on care decisions and education.

**❌ 7. Lacking Consistency with Your Team**

If you play favorites—giving light tasks to some and dumping heavy care on others—your team will resent you fast.

**Fix it:**
Be fair, balanced, and transparent with your assignments. Rotate responsibilities if needed. Respect goes both ways.

**❌ 8. Using Delegation as Punishment**

Never assign a difficult task just to “teach someone a lesson” or get petty payback.

**Fix it:**
Delegation is about **workflow and safety**, not ego. If there’s a performance issue, address it professionally—not passive-aggressively.

**❌ 9. Failing to Acknowledge a Job Well Done**

Nothing tanks morale faster than being treated like a pair of hands instead of a human being.

**Fix it:**
Say thanks. Point out what they did right.
✅ “Great job catching that skin tear—thanks for letting me know so quickly.”
Small praise = big loyalty.

**❌ 10. Not Knowing Your CNA’s Strengths and Limits**

Every CNA has a different skill level, personality, and area of comfort. If you treat them all the same, you’ll either overwhelm or underutilize them.

**Fix it:**
Take 5 minutes to learn about your team. Who’s great with memory care? Who’s new? Who struggles with time management? Use that intel to delegate *smartly.*

**🕊️ Final Takeaway: Delegation Is a Leadership Skill, not a Shortcut**

When you delegate with respect, clarity, and follow-through, you create a team that backs each other up, gets more done, and keeps everyone safe including you. When you don’t? You’re running the floor on a prayer and a clipboard.

**Protect your license. Build strong CNA relationships. Lead like the professional you are.**