Though Nurse Practitioners (NPs) have been authorized to order certain imaging procedures for a number of years, many MRTs and ultrasonographers are still confused about which procedures NPs can order and which ones they don’t currently have authority for.

NPs are Registered Nurses in the Extended Class [RN(EC)] who have additional nursing education and experience. Nurse Practitioners may use the designation NP or RN(EC), so either designation on a requisition or electronic order should be accepted.

NPs are authorized to order:
- x-rays of the chest, ribs, arm, shoulder, elbow, wrist, hand, leg, hip, knee, ankle and foot
- mammography, including specific views (e.g. coned)
- diagnostic ultrasound of the abdomen, pelvis and breast, including specific views (e.g. of a specific organ), techniques (e.g. transvaginal), or indications (e.g. pregnancy) within these anatomic regions.

NPs are not currently authorized to order:
- MRI
- CT
- x-rays or ultrasound outside of the specified list
- nuclear medicine

unless there is an institution approved medical directive in place for these studies.

NPs are not authorized to perform or interpret x-rays. They cannot apply diagnostic ultrasound unless they are delegated the act of applying a form of energy. Procedural ultrasound, which isn’t used to make a diagnosis, isn’t a controlled act so NPs may use ultrasound to perform procedures such as placement of a PICC line.

NPs are authorized to order procedures for inpatients as well as outpatients. Some hospitals may choose to put parameters on NP practice, but it’s not accurate to refer to these parameters as medical directives.

Registered Nurses (RNs) do not have authority to order any medical imaging procedures without a medical directive.

References:

College of Nurses of Ontario - [www.cno.org/np](http://www.cno.org/np)

College of Medical Radiation Technologists of Ontario - [www.cmrto.org](http://www.cmrto.org)

Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act
[http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h02_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h02_e.htm)

Nursing Act