

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

By Mattie Mendoza and Phil Lockwood

Q | I submitted my Texas EMT renewal application a few days prior to my expiration date. Can I still work after my EMT expiration date if my application hasn't been approved?

DSHS: No. According to TAC §157.34(a) (3), to maintain certification status without a lapse, an applicant shall submit a completed application for recertification and shall meet all requirements for renewal of the current certification prior to the expiration date of the current certificate, but no earlier than one year prior to the expiration date.

Application processing time is approximately four to six weeks. To ensure there is no lapse in certification, applicants need to submit a complete renewal application *at least* four to six weeks prior to the expiration date. As of midnight on your certification expiration date, you are considered expired and are no longer able to work legally in Texas. For a renewal application, go to the EMS Certification website: www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/recertinfo.shtm. For questions or more information, contact the EMS Certification office at (512) 834-6700.

Q | I'm Texas-certified as an EMT-Paramedic and would like to become a certified Instructor. I'm already an Instructor with the Texas Commission on Fire Protection. Do I still need to take the DSHS Instructor course and exam?

DSHS: No. As of August 25, 2009, in accordance with Policy P09-a, "Effective on the signature date of this

policy, until this policy is rescinded, the following training programs are approved by the department for EMS instructor certification: (1) the National Association of EMS Educators (NAEMSE); (2) the Texas Commission on Fire Protection; and (3) the United States Military Instructor Training Course. Effective January 1, 2010, the department will only approve other methods of teaching instructor courses that are based on the Department of Transportation's/National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) current instructor curriculum."

Q | I just completed an EMT course and submitted my Texas initial EMT application. I received a deficiency letter stating that my application could not be approved because the EMS Certification office does not have my National Registry score yet. I haven't taken the National Registry exam yet. Why did I get this letter?

DSHS: The deficiency letter you described was sent to notify you that the EMS Certification office received and processed your initial EMT application, but it was unable to approve the application because you have not yet met the National Registry requirement. Once you take and successfully pass the National Registry exam, your score will be sent to the EMS Certification office automatically, and your application will be approved. Once you have received your National Registry card, check the EMS Certification website. If you are not listed as

certified, you may fax a copy of your National Registry card to the EMS Certification office at (512) 834-6714. You can check your status on the EMS Certification website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm. If you have further questions, please call the EMS Certification office at (512) 834-6700.

Q | I am currently certified as an EMT and am about to complete EMT-Paramedic training. I know as of January 1, 2010, initial applicants must submit fingerprints for an FBI background check. Because I will be submitting an initial paramedic application, do I need to have the FBI background check done too?

DSHS: No. The requirement for an FBI background check is for applicants who do not currently hold EMS certification. Upgrades in certification, such as EMT to EMT-I, EMT-I to EMT-P, or EMT-P to Licensed Paramedic, do **not** have to meet the background check requirement. Also, if you hold a current EMT certification and apply to be a certified Instructor, you are **not** required to meet the background check requirement. If you have further questions concerning fingerprinting and FBI background checks, please contact the EMS Certification unit at (512) 834-6700.

Q | I attended a great lecture at the 2008 Texas EMS conference, but that speaker evidently was not invited back in 2009. Why? When will I know who's presenting this year?

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DSHS: The selection process is “at large” each year, so we don’t limit participation or guarantee any particular presenter from year to year. Each January we put out a “Call for Presentations,” announcing a general invitation for speakers to present at our conference. We post the notice on our website and broadcast emails to previous faculty and any other prospective presenters of whom we are aware. Because we consider any and all submissions, the process can be fairly long and deliberate, so we have to start early to be able to make selections by summer. It could be the speaker did not send in a presentation for us to consider.

Q | **How can I help a specific presenter get chosen from year to year?**

DSHS: One great way is by filling out the speaker evaluation form at the conference and encouraging other attendees to do the same. Also, if you know of excellent speakers, just send us an email with contact information for him or her.

Q | **Why don’t you have more national / international speakers at your conference?**

DSHS: We have our fair share of renowned speakers both from within and outside of Texas, even though we are well known as an “affordable” conference. A few speakers can not come to Texas EMS Conference because we cannot pay their fees and expenses. However, many sought-after speakers will overlook the small honorarium

and come as an altruistic offering of community service and to share valuable information for the sake of good patient care. (Plus, our conference is one of the largest, and extra exposure never hurts.)

Q | **I’m not rich, so I depend almost exclusively for my continuing education accrual each year. Is there a way you can squeeze a few more classes into the forum?**

DSHS: We do the best we can. However, we also strive to provide a blend of conference activities, so lectures and workshops are pretty much topped out at 15 hours. The blend I’m referring to includes vendor exhibits, an awards luncheon, in-depth preconference classes, Governor’s EMS/Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) meetings and a variety of other meeting and networking opportunities.

Q | **In recent years, I’ve noticed that the conference offerings are called different things. For example some are lectures, some are workshops, and some are classes. I think I know which is which, but would you mind clarifying, just in case?**

DSHS: We’ve categorized the various presentations as follows: 1) a *lecture* is a one-hour presentation, usually offered only once during the conference, in which one or two faculty speak to a large audience and there is minimal interaction; 2) a *workshop* is a two-hour presentation

that often combines classroom teaching with hands-on interaction and is limited to 25 attendees; and 3) a preconference *class* is an in-depth session lasting from four to 16 hours, presented the weekend prior to the conference; extra fees may apply to preconference classes.

Q | **A few times I’ve noticed you offer more than one category of CE in a particular lecture or workshop. When I’m documenting my CE hour accruals, how do I divide it out?**

DSHS: We seldom split between CE content areas, but if we do, it’s not to be divided in increments less than one credit hour, as defined in 25 TAC, §157.2. That means one-hour lectures with more than one CE content area may be used as one hour in any one of the content areas listed. Two-hour workshops with more than one CE content area may be divided evenly or both hours counted in either content area.

Q | **When do you accept applications for the EMS coordinator course that’s traditionally held at the Texas EMS Conference?**

DSHS: In the past, we didn’t accept them until after the preconference course announcement was published in the May/June issue of Texas EMS Magazine. This year we’ve decided to accept them earlier, so it’s available now. To download an application and view detailed instructions, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/10CoordinatorCourse.shtm.