

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

By Mattie Mendoza and Phil Lockwood

Q: I have coordinated basic EMT courses for years, but I have never been able to clearly explain details to my students about how the certification/licensing process works or why it takes the length of time it does. Can you give me a quick run-down?

A: Processing times can vary according to special circumstances, such as our recent transition to a new computer system, application volume, deficient applications, criminal history administrative review and so on, but there are a few constants we can share:

- **Mail**—6 days; at least three business days (average) each way
- **Fee Processing**—10 days; can range from five to 10 business days. All applications first go to the department's fiscal processing office, which is in a different building from the office in Austin. Staff there open envelopes and process all money received before forwarding your applications to us. Electronically submitted applications can go faster because the fee is processed electronically.
- **Application processing**—five to 10 business days; includes running the criminal history background check, data entry, assuring all documentation is accounted for and correct, printing the certificates and

preparing them for mail out.

- **Total: 26 business days**—about five weeks from the time you put your application in the mail until you receive your certificate or license. Applying online can reduce this time. Online applications eliminate mail time and reduce the time it takes to process the fee, so we encourage electronic application submissions whenever possible.
- **Note: the portion the EMS Certification office controls is only five to 10 days of that whole process.** We process all certification applications for every EMS personnel in the state of Texas. As previously mentioned, this processing time will be extended if your application is subject to an administrative review based on your criminal history, if an application is submitted incomplete, if your check is returned due to non-sufficient funds or if we have to wait for your National Registry test scores to be posted.

For information on NR exams, you will need to contact National Registry. Lots of information can be found on the NR's website; you may want to explore it first to see whether your quest for information can be fulfilled there. The NR website is www.nremt.org. If their

website cannot help you, contact National Registry by phone by calling (614) 888-4484.

Q: I recently lost my EMS certification wallet card. How do I get another one sent to me?

A: You should submit the Wallet Card Replacement form along with the \$10 processing fee. We will process your request for a replacement wallet card in the order in which we receive the form, but you can expect to receive your new card within four to six weeks. Your new wallet card will be mailed to the address we have on file for you, so if you have had a change of address since your last contact with the Certification office, make sure you note the new address on the Wallet Card Replacement Form. While you wait for the card, your certification status can be verified through our website by clicking on the Check Your Certification link and then choosing the Public License Search. You can also print your status from the Check Your Certification Status link, and keep it with you as proof of your certification until you receive your replacement wallet card. You will find the Check Your Certification Status link at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm.

You can find the Wallet Card Replacement form along with all other EMS Certification forms on our website by clicking on the Forms and Resources tab on

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the right-hand side of the EMS Certification home page, or by going directly to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/formsresources.shtm#EMS.

Q: I am planning to renew my certification by obtaining the required continuing education (CE) hours. I obtained some of the required hours online, but I would like to take a refresher course to gain the remaining hours I need to meet the CE requirement. Where can I find a list of providers that offer a refresher course or other types of classroom CE hours?

A: A list of EMS providers that offer refresher courses as well as continuing education hours can be found on the EMS Certification website. Click the Forms and Resources tab on the right-hand side of the EMS Certification home page. The list of providers is at the bottom of that page, which can be printed as either a PDF format or as an Excel log. Or you can view the list at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm.

Q: How does the electronic TexasOnline EMS personnel renewal process work?

A: Access the electronic TexasOnline application at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/Txonlinelinks.shtm. Use your EMS ID (Personnel ID) and social security number to enter the system. The system will verify your eligibility and let you know

whether you can renew your certificate online, or if you will have to print out the application and mail it in. If you are eligible to renew electronically, the system will prompt you with questions to answer regarding maintenance of your certificate or license. A change of address can also be completed at this time. Once the application is completed, you will be given an opportunity to review the information you entered. Next, proceed to the payment page. After providing payment information (you may pay using Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express or electronic check), the final step is to view and print the transaction receipt. **Keep this transaction receipt—it is your proof of electronic application submission and of payment.** Once processed by EMS Certification staff, the renewed certification or license will be mailed to the address you provided. You can always check your certification status at the Check Your Certification link on our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm.

Q: I'm a new EMT and I keep hearing about EMS rules. I assume they're directives for EMS workers and services, but how do they differ from state EMS laws?

A: The Texas Administrative Code (TAC), commonly referred to as rules, is the official public policy for state agencies to implement

and enforce state law (statutes). The Administrative Procedure Act, a portion of Government Code statute, outlines the process for creating, revising (with input from the public), publicizing and otherwise maintaining rule language and procedures. EMS rules are authorized by Chapter 773 of the Health and Safety Code statute and can be found on the internet under Title 25 of the TAC. To find the posted EMS rules, go to [http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.viewtac](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.viewtac), then select Title 25, Health Services, Part 1, Department of State Health Services, Chapter 157, Emergency Medical Services. An example of a rule reference (i.e., for the purpose of EMS rules) is: 25 TAC, Part 1, Chapter 157, Section 157.1 (or §157.1).

Q: Do EMS people get to give input on the rules we have to abide by? If so, how do I do it?

A: You can give input on rules at stakeholder meetings (one of the most prominent is the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council – see www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/governor.shtm for more information), through the Texas Register process (see www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/about.shtml) or by providing direct input to the EMS/Trauma Systems Coordination unit of the Department of State Health Services (see www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/default.shtm).