

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

By Mattie Mendoza and Phil Lockwood

Q: Are there EMS rules that protect against worker fatigue? Do the rules regulate the number of hours EMS personnel work in one shift?

A: The Department of State Health Services does not regulate or conspicuously monitor the number of hours worked by EMS technicians. If the emergency medical care provided is substandard because of long work hours, disciplinary action may be taken through our normal compliance process. The Department of Labor standards, as regulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), would likely regulate applicable labor laws. For more information, see <http://www.osha.gov>.

Q: I've seen it before, but now I cannot find the rule that says I must carry my EMS ID card on my person at all times. Where in the rules does that requirement appear?

A: The applicable rule is within the EMS provider rule, and it's the provider's responsibility to ensure you are correctly identified. 25 TAC, Section 157.11(m)(5) reads, "Responsibilities of the EMS provider. During the license period the provider's responsibilities shall include: . . . (5) assuring that all personnel, when on an in-service vehicle or when on the scene of an emergency, are prominently identified by, at least, the last name and the first initial of the first name, the certification or license level and the provider name. A provider may utilize an alternative identification system in incident-specific situations that pose a potential for danger

if the individuals are identified by name." Years ago, all personnel were required to have the card on their person at all times, but certain rescue operations (i.e., water rescue) made that impractical, so the rule was revised. Many providers prepare laminated credentials for employees that include a photo, certification or license number, status and so on. However, it's never a bad idea to take the initiative and have your EMS ID card with you whenever possible. If you lose it, you can get a new one by completing a replacement form (see <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/idcard.pdf>).

Q: I do not want to be registered through the National Registry and would prefer to sit for the state exam only. How do I do that?

A: Candidates for Texas EMS certification must take and pass the NREMT exam to receive certification because the state no longer develops a separate exam. Generally, the NREMT will not allow a person to sit for the exam unless he or she is eligible for NREMT registration. The assessed fee is for both examination and registration. It is virtually impossible to obtain initial Texas certification without first registering with NREMT.

Q: In October of 2007, the State EMS Director sent a letter informing us of two bills passed by the 80th Legislature that affected EMS provider licensing rules. What are the provisions, and have they become rule yet?

A: At press time, the new provider rule was on track to become effective in August 2008. The major provisions incorporated into the rule include

both legislative mandates as well as a variety of other revisions. One of the legislative changes mandated that all vehicle transports of stretcher patients be done by licensed EMS providers. Other provider licensing changes include a requirement for all licensed providers' EMS vehicles to be equipped with devices for treatment of anaphylaxis (i.e., epinephrine auto-injector devices), requirements for license numbers to appear on the side of ambulances, a professional liability insurance coverage mandate, new notification requirements (vehicle collisions, administrator changes, etc.), and a requirement for credentialing of staff that includes a policy for new employee internships. Provider name changes will require a new provider license application and prorated fee, if applicable. Vehicle authorization changes during the license period require an additional fee. This space is insufficient to highlight all of the additional changes, so you are advised to look up and review the new rule on the Secretary of State's Texas Register webpage at <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/index.shtml>, or view it when it becomes available on the Administrative Code webpage at <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac/index.shtml> (see Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 157, Subchapter B, Section 11).

Q: I've worked with DSHS for many, many years, and one of the constants has been the 1100 West 49th Street address for correspondence going to the central office. Someone told me that's not your address any more. What's your new address and why has it changed?

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A: In order to comply with the new contract provider for state mail service, we now use a post office address and separate program mail codes (MC). The post office address is PO Box 149347, and the mail codes for EMS-related functions include Office of EMS/Trauma Systems Coordination – MC 1876, EMS Compliance & QA – MC 1979, EMS Certification & Licensing – MC 2835 and Cash Receipts Branch – MC 2003. For example, mail going to the Office of EMS/Trauma Systems would be addressed in the following manner: Office of EMS/Trauma Systems MC 1876, Texas Department of State Health Services, PO Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347. **Note:** Any mail that includes payments should be sent to Cash Receipts Branch, not directly to the program. Be sure to use payment forms that correctly designate the program or budget. The 1100 West 49th Street address remains the physical address, and express, parcel or overnight shipments can still be sent to that address. Each of the EMS field offices has a unique mail code, too. For field office mail codes, see <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/regions.shtm>.

Q: When I try to renew my EMT-B certificate using the TxOnline electronic application system, I get an error message that states my license information does not match the information in the database. Why do I get this error message?

A: This message appears for a few different reasons. Most often, however, applicants assume the system is prompting them to enter a social security and driver's license

number. In fact, the system is asking for a social security number and EMS license number, not the driver's license number. If the error message continues to appear, verify that these numbers are accurately entered. If you have further questions, please call the EMS Certification department at (512) 834-6700.

Q: I used the TxOnline electronic application system to submit my EMT-B renewal application. I later realized that I forgot to answer one of the questions. Can I access my application and make changes to it after submission?

A: No. Once you complete and submit your electronic application you *cannot* go back into the application and update or change any of the information. However, at the end of the application process you should have received a trace number (a.k.a., tracking or confirmation number). That trace number is your *only* proof that you submitted your application and payment. After Fiscal processes your application fee (in five to seven business days), they will electronically send the application to EMS Certification for processing. At that point, EMS Certification will be able to access your application with your trace number. Necessary changes to your application can then be made by contacting EMS Certification (five to seven business days after submission) and providing them with your trace number. You can contact EMS Certification at (512) 834-6700.

Q: I recently received notification that I have passed my National Registry exam, but I have already submitted my EMT-Basic

application to the state. Do I need to notify the state that I have passed my National Registry exam?

A: No. The National Registry will submit your exam results electronically to EMS Certification. It typically takes approximately five to seven days for National Registry to notify EMS Certification of your exam results. You can check our website (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm>) to see whether your application has been approved.

Q: I plan to move to Texas from another state, and I am completing the Reciprocity application. The Reciprocity Verification Form A, which is part of the Reciprocity application, is a little confusing. Do I complete and send that form to Texas EMS Certification or to the EMS certification department that holds my current certification?

A: The Reciprocity Verification Form A should be completed by the EMS certification department(s) with whom you are currently certified or have *ever* been certified. Send a copy of the form to each state agency, who should then fax or mail the completed Reciprocity Verification Form A directly back to Texas EMS Certification. You complete only the top portion of the form, which includes your name, social security number and certification/license number, allowing the other state(s) to verify your certification information. You can find the out-of-state Reciprocity application, including the Reciprocity Verification Form A, on our website at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/stdrecip.shtm>.