

# Frequently Asked Questions

By Mattie Mendoza and Phil Lockwood

**Q: How do I check my certification status?**

**A:** Click on the “Check Certification Status” link, located in the upper left of the home page. Then click on the “Click here for live online Certification/License Search” link, which will take you to DSHS online license search. Ignore the request for registration on the right and click on the “Public License Search” link on the left. Choose the type of license you need and when prompted, type in the name of the person. This live link to our certification database will enable you to see real-time information. You can print the certification status page to use as temporary proof of certification until certificate/wallet card arrives. You can find the link on our website at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems).

**Q: I am applying for certification in Texas from out of state. One of the requirements is to submit the Out-of-State Verification Form A. How do I submit that form?**

**A:** When applying for reciprocity for State of Texas certification, one of the requirements is to submit a completed *Out-of-State Verification Form A* for each state that you have held certification in. Complete the information on the top portion of the form, then either fax or mail the form to each state EMS certification department in which you have held certification. The state offices complete the form and can either fax or mail the completed form to the State of Texas EMS certification office at the addresses listed on the top of the form. You will find this form on the reciprocity link on our website at: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/stdrecip.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/stdrecip.shtm).

**Q: I am in EMT class and considering going on to a paramedic class, but some of my classmates tell me I will have to get a degree in EMS to become a paramedic. Is this true?**

**A:** No. You can become certified as a paramedic without having a degree in EMS. Texas has both certified (EMT-

P) and licensed paramedics (LP). To become certified as a paramedic, you must successfully complete a paramedic course and pass the National Registry exam at paramedic level. To be certified as a licensed paramedic, you must pass the National Registry at paramedic level and have an associate’s degree in EMS or baccalaureate or postgraduate degree in any field. You can find all of the initial certification requirements on our website at: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems).

**Q: My certification expires this year and I would like to recertify choosing National Registry as my renewal option, but my National Registry card expires in the next few months. Do I have to renew my NR card before I can renew my Texas certification?**

**A:** No, as long as you submit a **complete** Texas application before your NR card expires. Your NR card must be current when you apply for Texas renewal. If your application is not complete, it will delay the processes, and you may have to renew your NR or choose another renewal option. Also, don’t forget to factor in the four-to-six week application processing time.

**Q: My service hires many out-of-state medics. Among other things, the reciprocity process requires them to get FBI fingerprints for a background check prior to certification. It seems to take a long time -- up to 18 weeks. Can anything be done about this?**

**A:** Yes. We’ve just begun a new process to speed up background checks by moving from traditional fingerprinting to scanned prints through Fingerprint Applicant Services of Texas (FAST). Candidates can download a reciprocity application and a FASTPASS form from our website, then schedule an appointment with L-1 Identity Solutions for electronic submission of fingerprints to the FBI (many sites are available throughout Texas – see [www.iisfingerprint.com](http://www.iisfingerprint.com)). The results are sent

directly to DSHS EMS Compliance electronically, significantly reducing the turnaround time – *usually* it takes about two weeks. Applicants are responsible for the processing fee of \$44.20, which includes both FBI and Texas DPS crime history reports.

**Q: I am somewhat clueless about the rulemaking process as it affects EMS regulations. Although I’m aware of GETAC’s role, it’s not clear to me how I can best get involved or affect the process. I really can’t afford to travel to a lot of meetings, but unless I attend, I don’t know how to have my voice heard or share ideas from my perspective.**

**A:** Big question, little space. I’ll hit the high points. GETAC and DSHS represent a variety of perspectives, some of which may match yours. The law requires GETAC to name members from affected professions, as follows: an emergency physician, medical director, fire chief, private EMS provider, volunteer EMS provider, EMS educator, air medical provider, fire department EMS provider, trauma facility hospitals (one urban, one rural), county EMS, pediatrician, trauma surgeon and two general public representatives. You can provide input through one of these representatives (see [www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/governor.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/governor.shtm) for contact information), or communicate directly to DSHS through one of the many opportunities in the formal rulemaking process. Stakeholder input via GETAC most often occurs at the early stages, but direct public input opportunities are also available when rules are proposed at State Health Services Council meetings and during the public comment period after proposed rules are published in the *Texas Register*, the official journal of state agency rulemaking (see [www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg)). Written comments can be made directly to the department at any stage of the process, but the department provides official responses to those submitted during the public comment period.