
Frequently Asked Questions

By Mattie Mendoza and Phil Lockwood

Q: Soon there will be a new certification query available on the website. Are there any terms that may need clarification?

A: When you look up your status on the new certification query, if your certification is not expired and you are in Active Status, your Certification Status is going to be listed as Current, Active. That means that you are legal to work in Texas. If you are in Inactive status (no longer practicing as an EMT, but didn't let your certification expire), your status is going to be listed as Current, Inactive. If your certification is expired, your status is going to be listed as Expired **and** either Active or Inactive. You are **not** legal to work as an EMS professional in Texas with either an Expired or Inactive status. To legally work as an EMS professional in Texas, your status must read Current, Active and your expiration date must not have passed. When the new certification query is up and running, if you have any questions concerning your status listed on the web site, please call the EMS Certification section at 512-834-6700.

There may be instances when an enforcement action is listed as a status, such as Probated Suspension, Suspension or Decertified. If you have questions concerning those, please call 512/834-6700 and ask for either the Enforcement or Compliance section.

Q: I am currently in inactive status. What do I need to do to return to active status and work in Texas?

A: First you will need to submit the Inactive/Active Certification/Licensure application and fee. You can find the application on our website at: www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems. Click on the link for Recertification/Relicensure Info. Scroll down to EMS Inactive Certification and look for Inactive Certification/Application. Click on the link. To regain active status you will complete Section 3 of the application, choosing one of the two renewal options, **and** you must take and pass the National Registry Assessment Exam. You can gain information about the National Registry Assessment Exam from their website at: www.nremt.org/about/nremt_news.asp.

Q: Do I have to wait until I complete my initial EMT course to submit my state application for certification?

A: No, you can submit your application for state certification anytime. In fact, we recommend you submit your application prior to completion of your course. Your application will be classified as deficient until we get all of the requirements, including your National Registry number. But your state application will remain open and you will have two years to submit all of the requirements.

Submitting your application prior to completion of your course allows DSHS staff to complete some processing early, including fee processing, data entry and criminal background check, which normally takes 4-6 weeks. You can find the initial application for state certification on our website at: www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/CertInfo.shtm.

Q: I'm choosing Option 1, the written exam, to renew my EMT certification. What exam do I need to take?

A: The written exam you need to take if you choose Option 1 on the Recertification/Relicensure application as your certification renewal option is the National Registry assessment exam. You can request that exam using National Registry's web site at: www.nremt.org. You can review all of your state certification/licensure renewal options on our website at: www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems.

Q: What type of liability insurance is required for ambulances and at what limits?

A: The liability insurance requirement for EMS providers is the minimum required by the Transportation Code (601.081 – 083) regarding standard proof of vehicle liability insurance. The current minimum coverage amounts are: \$20,000 for bodily injury to, or death of one person

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in one accident; \$40,000 for bodily injury to or death of two or more persons in one accident, subject to the amount provided by Subdivision (1) for bodily injury to, or death of one of the persons; and \$15,000 for damage to, or destruction of property of others in one accident. We also ask that the service provide us a copy of the certificate showing DSHS as the certificate holder (so we'll be informed if it expires or is cancelled). In the last legislative session, Senate Bill 502 was passed, increasing the minimums to \$25,000 / \$50,000 / \$25,000 in April of 2008 and to \$30,000 / \$60,000 / \$25,000 in January of 2011.

Q: I am trying to find out the scope of practice for a paramedic. What is allowed for patient treatments, limitations, etc.?

A: Texas does not have a rigid scope of practice for EMS personnel defined in rule or law as some other states do. That's because Texas Medical Board rules allow physician-medical directors to delegate medical tasks to EMS personnel as long as they've trained and/or verified and documented the training, in the context of the Texas Medical Board language of 22 Texas Administrative Code, Section 197.1. Medical personnel with specific training and competencies may be able to perform skills outside the

bounds of traditional practice if their medical director evaluates, provides additional training, authorizes them accordingly and develops protocols to match. For the purpose of this explanation, traditional practice may be defined as the knowledge and competencies described in the DOT National Standard Curriculum at each EMS training level.

Q: Would a licensed ambulance service be in violation of Texas Administrative Code if it has a unit respond to a call with only person on the unit and then once on scene, pick up the second crew member to place the unit in service?

A: Responding to a scene with only one person is not considered a violation of EMS rules, but it's

not advisable. The definition of an "in-service" EMS vehicle is found in Texas Administrative Code Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 157, Subsection A, Section 157.2 (76): When in-service — *The period of time when an EMS vehicle is at the scene or when en route to a facility with a patient.*

An EMS provider will be required to explain how they will meet the in-service staffing requirement, especially when the resources of the provider may not always allow them to have two certified staff (paid or volunteer) on the vehicle when it responds. We strongly encourage all EMS providers to have a staffing plan that prevents the occurrence of only one EMS person arriving at the scene, therefore being potentially unable to transport the patient.

***Questions about
certification? Call EMS
Certification at
(512) 834-6700. Or email
emsinfo@dshs.state.tx.us***