

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Continuing Education Handbook

Prehospital Emergency Medical Services Personnel

Pennsylvania Department of Health
Bureau of Emergency Medical Services

February 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	1
What is Continuing Education?	2
What is Medical/Trauma Education?	2
What Qualifies for Continuing Education in PA?	2
Who are Continuing Education Sponsors	3
How are Continuing Education Records Kept	3
What Does The Law Require	4
Credit for Continuing Education	4
Continuing Education Sponsor Responsibilities	4
First Responders and Emergency Medical Technicians	6
Certification Period	6
Methods of BLS Re-certification	6
.... <i>Re-certification by Continuing Education</i>	6
.... <i>Re-certification by Examination</i>	7
EMT-Paramedics and Prehospital Registered Nurses	8
Length of Certification	8
Methods of Eligibility	8
Application for Medical Command Authorization	9
EMT-Ps and PHRNs Who Do Not Have Medical Command Authorization	9
Prehospital Practitioner’s Responsibilities	10
Role of a Prehospital Practitioner	10
Information Needed to Acquire Continuing Education Credits	10
Dual or Concurrent BLS and ALS Certifications	11
Changing a Name/Address	11
Attendance at Continuing Education/Make-up Sessions	12
.... <i>Check-In/Check-Out Process</i>	

Contents (continued)

Accrual of Continuing Education Hours	13
Continuing Education by Endorsement	13
Falsifying Records	14
Moving Out-of-State	14
CE and the ALS Medical Command Authorization/Reauthorization Process	15
Responsibilities of Continuing Education Sponsors to Practitioners	17
FR or EMT Re-certification Process: Flow Charts	19
EMT-P or PHRN Medical Command Authorization/Reauthorization Process: Flow Chart	22
Frequently Asked Questions	22
<i>Are National Registry CE Courses automatically approved for Pennsylvania?</i>	22
<i>Are CECBEMS approved and rated courses automatically approved by PA?</i>	22
<i>Are Internet courses accepted in PA?</i>	22
<i>May an ALS service medical director require more CE of a practitioner?</i>	22
<i>May ambulance services require more CE than PA DOH requires?</i>	23
<i>May a practitioner receive credit hours for CPR?</i>	23
<i>How does the American Heart Association (every 2 years) or American Red Cross (every year) CPR renewal requirement affect a practitioner's P A DOH certification?</i>	23
<i>Which CPR program is a practitioner required to complete for PA DOH re-certification?</i>	23
<i>Are out-of-state classes approved for CE within Pennsylvania?</i>	23
<i>How often will a practitioner receive a report from a regional EMS council regarding accrued CE?</i>	24
<i>Will the report include the total number of credit hours the practitioner has accrued?</i>	24
<i>How long is a regional EMS council and CE sponsor required to retain CE records and how long should a practitioner keep CE records?</i>	24

Contents (continued)

<i>Can a practitioner request an extension to continue practicing if his/her certification has expired?</i>	24
<i>If a practitioner has a complaint about the CE sponsor, whom should the practitioner contact?</i>	25
<i>How will a practitioner know the CE sponsor is accredited?</i>	25
<i>A practitioner does not agree with the report of CE hours. Whom does the practitioner contact? What is the practitioner required to do?</i>	25
<i>If a practitioner is temporarily suspended or on leave from an ambulance service (paid or volunteer) is the practitioner still eligible to take CE courses to maintain certification?</i>	25
<i>If a practitioner is a member of the military and is deployed to active duty, can the practitioner maintain their certification through CE?</i>	25
Pennsylvania Region Numbers and County Codes	27
Contact Information	29
Pennsylvania Department of Health	29
Regional EMS Councils	29
Sample Practitioner’s Record of Continuing Education	32

Overview

Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) has developed this handbook to assist prehospital personnel to understand and interpret the PA EMS Continuing Education (CE) Program. This handbook is not itself a regulation. It is not a document by which standards may be set. Consequently, it does not have the force or effect of law. Statutory, regulatory, policy changes or revisions may occur following the initial distribution of this handbook, and practitioners are encouraged to verify they are using the most current version of the handbook via the PA DOH website (www.health.state.pa.us and click on “Emergency Medical Services”) or check with regional emergency medical services (EMS) councils for additional assistance.

Pennsylvania’s EMS System is defined by the Emergency Medical Services Act (EMS Act), act of July 3, 1985, P.L. 164, No. 45, *as amended*, 35 P.S. §§6921-6934 and 28 Pa. Code Chapters 1001-1015 (the most recent amendments to the regulations published October 14, 2000) and the Statewide EMS Development Plan.

In 1994, the Pennsylvania Legislature created and passed a bill (Act 82), which amended the EMS Act and focused on re-certification for basic life support (BLS) personnel, and permanent certification with medical command authorization for advanced life support (ALS) personnel.

This handbook provides guidance on the re-certification and the medical command authorization/reauthorization requirements/process, prehospital practitioner responsibilities for re-certification by CE, and time requirements for specific processes or actions. Requirements specified in this document will be applicable to:

- A BLS practitioner [First Responder (FR) or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)] whose card was issued on January 1, 2001 or later and whose certification expiration date is January 1, 2004 or later.
- An ALS practitioner’s [EMT-Paramedic (EMT-P) or Prehospital Registered Nurse (PHRN)] annual cycle beginning on January 1, 2002.

What Is Continuing Education (CE)?

Continuing education for prehospital personnel is defined in EMS regulation as “those learning activities intended to build upon the education and experiential basis of prehospital EMS personnel for the enhancement of practice, education, administration, research or theory development, to strengthen the quality of care provided.” CE is a method used by many healthcare professionals to maintain licensure or certification.

What Is Medical/Trauma Education?

Medical/trauma (direct patient care) education is education on the care, including assessment, of an individual who is believed to be sick, injured, wounded, or otherwise incapacitated and helpless and in need of immediate medical attention. Medical/trauma CE includes all clinical aspects of patient care, but for the purpose of CE credit does not include topics such as: response planning, legal aspects, communications, documentation, hazardous materials, EVOG, or other operational issues. These items would be considered CE in the “other” category.

What Qualifies for Continuing Education in PA?

Credit hours will be granted for portions of a course that relate to the prehospital practitioner’s scope of practice, enhances patient care, or is related to the D.O.T. National Standard Curriculum objectives or a basic training course approved by the PA DOH. For example, BLS practitioners will not be awarded CE credit for the portions of ALS courses that include skills that are beyond the scope of practice of the BLS practitioner. FRs will not be awarded CE credit for courses regarding “patient assisted medications” because it is beyond the scope of practice for the FR.

No Pennsylvania prehospital practitioner will be awarded CE credit for CPR (1 & 2 person adult, infant, child CPR and obstructed airway) because the EMS Act specifically requires it. A practitioner will be granted CE credit for a specific course only once in a certification cycle even if the practitioner has taken the course each year of the cycle. See “Accrual of CE,” page 13.

Continuing education credits will be granted for skill review only if learning objectives are identified and accomplished. Skill performance verification required as part of annual skill verification does not qualify for CE credits.

GRAND ROUNDS is a category of CE that is frequently submitted for credit. Practitioners should understand that for a course to be recognized for CE, an ALS service medical director or a medical command physician must teach it and specifically address the assessment and care of patients in the **prehospital setting**.

Who Are Continuing Education Sponsors?

Continuing education sponsors are entities that apply to the PA DOH to become a sponsor of CE courses. Entities (e.g. individuals, companies, organizations) and institutions may apply for accreditation as a CE sponsor by submitting an application to the PA DOH through their regional EMS council. Accreditation as a CE sponsor is valid for a three (3)-year period.

How Are Continuing Education Records Kept?

CE records are maintained according to the regional EMS council in which the practitioner resides. Records from all regional EMS councils are uploaded to a central and secure database, at which time information is disseminated to the appropriate council.

What Does the Law Require?

Credit for Continuing Education

A prehospital practitioner shall receive one (1) hour credit for each sixty (60) minutes of approved instruction presented in a classroom setting by an accredited CE sponsor. For courses not presented in a classroom setting, the practitioner shall receive the number of credit hours assigned by the PA DOH. Credit will be granted in half (0.5) hour or one (1) hour increments when:

The practitioner meets the following criteria:

- Attends or participates adequately in the course to meet the educational objectives of the course.
- Completes the course successfully.
- Completes the check-in/check-out process as defined by the EMS regulations. See “Check-In/Check-Out Process” page 12.

The course meets the following criteria:

- A minimum of one (1) hour in length.
- Is of intellectual and practical content.
- Contributes directly to the professional competence, skills and education of the prehospital practitioner.
- Uses instructors who possess the necessary practical and academic skills to conduct the course effectively.
- Is well written, carefully prepared, readable and distributed to attendees at or before the time the course is offered whenever practical.
- Is presented by a qualified responsible instructor in a suitable setting devoted to the educational purpose of the course.

Continuing Education Sponsor Responsibilities

The CE sponsor is responsible for:

- Advertising the correct PA DOH approved CE credit for each level of practitioner.

- Maintaining a record of attendance as evidenced by the check-in/check-out process defined in the EMS regulations. See “Check-In/Check-Out Process,” page 12.
- Providing a method of course evaluation to each course participant.
- Submitting completed CE documentation to the regional EMS council within ten (10) days after the course has been presented.
- Retaining course records for four (4) years.
- Ensuring that each course is presented in a manner that meets all of the educational objectives for the course.
- Determining whether a practitioner who enrolled in the course has met the requirements for successful completion of the course and has accomplished the objectives set forth for the course.
- Providing a practitioner who successfully completes the course with documentation of successful completion of the course.

Also see “Responsibilities of Continuing Education Sponsors to Practitioners” page 17.

First Responders (FRs) and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)

Certification Period

After initial certification as a FR or EMT, an individual must re-certify every three (3) years.

Methods of BLS Re-certification

- Re-certification by CE
- Re-certification by written and practical skill examination

Re-certification by Continuing Education

In order for a practitioner to continue to function as a FR or EMT without interruption, a practitioner must complete the following *prior* to the expiration date of each three (3)-year certification:

- Successfully complete the specified hours of CE provided by an approved CE sponsor, as follows.

FIRST RESPONDER (FR):

- Sixteen (16) hours CE
- At least eight (8) hours of the sixteen (16) hours must be medical/trauma education

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (EMT):

- Twenty-four (24) hours CE
- At least twelve (12) hours of the twenty-four (24) hours must be medical/trauma education

- Correctly complete the CE documentation.
- Successfully complete or teach a CPR course [one (1) & two (2) person adult, infant, child CPR and obstructed airway], sponsored by the American Heart Association or American Red Cross or any other CPR course approved by PA DOH biennially [once every two (2) years] and submit a current copy to the regional EMS council.

The practitioner shall ensure that the information listed under “Information Needed,” page 10, is available when attending a course.

Forms that are incomplete or incorrect will not be processed for CE credit. See “Accrual of CE” on page 13 for additional information.

Re-certification by Examination

A practitioner seeking re-certification by examination should:

- Contact the regional EMS council that serves the county where the practitioner resides. See “Regional EMS Council List,” page 29.
- Request information regarding available examination dates.
 - If no examination is available in the local EMS region, an examination may be taken in any of the EMS regions in the Commonwealth of PA.
- Request information to register for the Pennsylvania practical skills and written examination for the practitioner’s level of certification.

EMT-Paramedics (EMT-Ps) and Prehospital Registered Nurses (PHRNs)

Length of Certification

After initial certification as an EMT-P or PHRN, a practitioner is considered permanently certified. However, for the individual to function as an ALS practitioner in an ALS ambulance service, the ALS service medical director of that ALS ambulance service must grant the practitioner medical command authorization for that ambulance service.

Methods of Eligibility

To be **eligible** to receive medical command authorization, an EMT-P or PHRN must fulfill the following CE requirements:

- Successfully complete eighteen (18) hours of CE provided by an approved CE sponsor in each calendar year; at least nine (9) of these hours must be in medical/trauma education. It is recommended that this be completed at least 60 (sixty) days (October 1) prior to Medical Command Authorization Review. The Medical Command Authorization Review is to be *completed* annually by December 31.

Note: In the initial year of certification, continuing education requirements shall be prorated based upon the month the certification was secured. See “CE and the ALS Medical Command Authorization/Reauthorization Process” on page 15.

- Correctly complete the CE documentation.
- Successfully complete or teach a CPR course (1 & 2 person adult, infant, child CPR and obstructed airway) biennially [once every two (2) years], sponsored by the American Heart Association or American Red Cross or any other CPR course approved by PA DOH and submit a current copy to the regional EMS council.

The prehospital practitioner must have the information specified under “Information Needed” (page 10) available when attending a course.

Forms that are incomplete or incorrect will not be processed for CE credit. See “Accrual of CE” on page 13 for additional information.

Application for Medical Command Authorization

See “CE and the ALS Medical Command Authorization/Reauthorization Process” on page 15.

EMT-Ps and PHRNs Without Medical Command Authorization

An EMT-P or PHRN who does not have or chooses not to maintain medical command authorization may apply to the PA DOH for certification as an EMT through a regional EMS council. An EMT-P or a PHRN without medical command authorization who is certified as an EMT may provide only the BLS services within an EMT’s scope of practice until the EMT-P or PHRN has regained medical command authorization.

Note: Following the loss of medical command authorization, an EMT-P or PHRN may function as an EMT for the ALS ambulance service under which the practitioner has lost medical command authorization for 30 (thirty) days without securing EMT certification. This can be done only if the ALS service medical director of that ambulance service approves the practitioner to do so.

EMT-Ps or PHRNs who apply to the Department and receive certification as an EMT will be required to renew their EMT certification by fulfilling the requirements specified in the previous section that applies to EMTs (see “Methods of BLS Re-certification” on page 6).

Prehospital Practitioner's Responsibilities

For re-certification by CE, a practitioner must successfully complete all courses for which CE credit is being requested. This includes satisfying the requirements of the check-in/check-out process in the classes, satisfying the successful completion requirements specified for the course (i.e., grades on test, etc.) and the educational institution, and correctly completing a CE card.

The practitioner will receive a report from the regional EMS council sent to the address that the council has on record. The report will be sent annually to FRs and EMTs and semiannually to EMT-Ps and PHRNs.

Note: If any of the information concerning a practitioner's CE credits is not correct, the practitioner has **THIRTY (30) DAYS FROM THE DATE OF ISSUE OF THE REPORT** to notify the regional EMS council of the discrepancy. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to provide substantiating documentation of continuing education credits for which the practitioner is claiming credit.

Role of a Prehospital Practitioner

The practitioner should monitor the quality of each course attended. If appropriate education is not provided or the sponsor does not deliver the course or content that was implied by the advertisement or course title, the practitioner should report this to the regional EMS council responsible for the region in which the course is being held. See "Regional EMS Council List" on page 29.

A practitioner who knowingly participates in a fraudulent act by a sponsor, e.g., completing CE documentation and submitting a course for three (3) hours of CE credit that was only in session for one (1) hour or adding practitioner names to the official course roster when the practitioner never attended the class, etc., will be subject to disciplinary action by the PA DOH.

Information Needed to Acquire Continuing Education Credits

When attending a course for CE credit, a practitioner must complete a CE form. Proper completion of the form requires the practitioner to provide the following information correctly:

- Certification Number and Level
- Date of Birth

- Class number
- Date of final class
- County of Residence [two (2) digit number]; see “Pennsylvania Region Numbers and County Codes” on page 27.
- Regional EMS council [home region; two (2) digit number]; see “Regional EMS Council List” on page 29.

The practitioner shall ensure that this information is available when attending a course.

CE forms that are incomplete or incorrect will **not** be processed for CE credit.

Dual or Concurrent BLS and ALS Certifications

Continuing education taken may be applied to both certification levels (ALS and BLS) if credits have been granted to the course at both levels, i.e., some ALS credit courses may only be applied to ALS level certifications; BLS level CE may be applied to both ALS and BLS certifications. A practitioner must complete two (2) CE cards with the appropriate certification numbers and levels at the time the practitioner takes the CE to have it awarded to both levels. Application of CE credit to both certification levels is not an automatic process at this time, and it **will not** be done unless the practitioner completes the appropriate scan cards at the time the practitioner takes the CE.

Changing a Name/Address

It is the PRACTITIONER’S RESPONSIBILITY to keep his/her name and address current with the regional EMS council. All reports are mailed to the address ON FILE. See “Prehospital Practitioner’s Responsibilities” on page 10. The practitioner **must** report changes to the regional EMS council for the county where the practitioner resides when there are any changes to a name or address. It is recommended that this be done within 30 days of a change of address to ensure that the CE status report is sent to the correct address. The practitioner should not depend on the mail to be forwarded to a new address or that the regional EMS council will automatically correct an address without proper notification by the practitioner him/herself.

Attendance at Continuing Education/Make-up Sessions

Check-In/Check-Out Process

The check-in/check-out process is defined in the EMS Act regulations as a process approved by the PA DOH to maintain a record of participant attendance. The CE sponsor shall assign at least one (1) person to ensure that all individuals attending the course check-in when entering and check-out when leaving. If an individual enters a course after the starting time, or leaves a course before the course has officially ended, the assigned person shall ensure that the time of arrival or departure is recorded for the individual.

Continuing education hours will NOT be counted by the CE sponsor when a practitioner:

- Is absent for an entire session that is not made up.
- Arrives after the start of the course or departs prior to course completion.
- Is expelled from class for disruptive or unacceptable behavior.
- Attends a session or a class, but does not participate in the activities scheduled for that session.
- Fails to check-in/check-out on the class roster or other method of recording student-in/student-out times as defined in the EMS regulations.
- Fails to complete the CE paperwork properly. Incomplete or incorrect information could cause credit to be applied to the wrong certification number or not applied at all. See “Information Needed to Acquire Continuing Education Credits,” page 10.

Sessions can be made-up by the following methods if the educational institution has a written policy on the make-up process that has been reviewed and approved by the regional EMS council:

- Attending another class session that has been arranged with the CE coordinator.
- Listening/watching an audio/video tape of the session as approved by the CE sponsor.
- Attending the missed session at another course with the approval of the CE sponsor.

Accrual of Continuing Education Hours

- The regional EMS council will process all CE paperwork.
- All CE courses will be assigned CE credits by the PA DOH. The smallest unit of credit awarded is half (0.5) hours. Courses must be a minimum of one (1) hour long to be rated for CE.
- CE credit hours cannot be carried over from one (1) certification period to another. This means that if a practitioner has accrued more than the required number of CE credits for the three (3)-year period, the practitioner cannot apply these hours to the next certification period. Likewise, an EMT-P or PHRN may not carry over CE credit hours from one (1) calendar year to the next to satisfy CE requirements for medical command authorization.
- Continuing education credit hours accrued for one (1) course cannot be accrued again for the same course within a certification period or within the same calendar year for EMT-Ps and PHRNs. However, a practitioner may be required to repeat a course or program as a condition of employment.
- A practitioner may complete an approved CE course wherever it is offered and receive the appropriate credit. This means that a practitioner could live in Philadelphia, attend a CE course in Erie, and still receive credit. The tracking system does not limit an individual to a designated EMS region.
- EMS video courses and other materials are acceptable for CE credit if they have been reviewed and approved by the PA DOH. It is recommended that this form of CE be used on a limited basis. Practitioners should vary their educational experiences.
- Distributed education, such as Internet courses, is under review. The practitioner should check with the regional EMS council **prior** to taking these courses for CE credits.

Continuing Education by Endorsement

The EMS regulations provide a special process to approve courses for CE credit that are applicable to prehospital EMS and are within the scope of practice of Pennsylvania practitioners. The regulations state, “A prehospital practitioner who attends or teaches a course offered by an

organization with National or state accreditation to provide education may apply to the Department to receive credit for the course. The prehospital practitioner shall have the burden of demonstrating to the Department that the course meets the standards substantially equivalent to the standards imposed” for CE in Pennsylvania.

This approval process is known as CE by endorsement. Contact the regional EMS council for details.

Falsifying Records

Falsification of records is a serious violation, which could result in disciplinary action imposed upon the sponsor, the instructor and the student receiving the false record, including the revocation of certification or recognition. Examples of falsifying records include, but are not limited to:

- Completing a CE card for a course a practitioner did not attend.
- Completing a CE card for a course that was not held.
- Completing a CE card for another individual.
- Completing a CE card for a course that did not meet the approximate time estimated for the course or the CE credits granted for the courses, and not reporting it to the regional EMS council.
- Purchasing or obtaining course completion credentials for courses not taken.
- Completing a skills verification form when skills were not completed.
- Submitting credentials known to be false.

Moving Out-of-State

- If a practitioner who is certified or has secured medical command authorization in Pennsylvania is moving to another state, the practitioner must contact the authorities of that state to determine its requirements for certification or medical command authorization.

CE and the ALS Medical Command Authorization/Reauthorization Process

The ALS service medical director has the authority to grant, deny, or restrict medical command authorization to an EMT-P or PHRN who seeks to provide emergency medical services on behalf of the ALS ambulance service.

New ALS practitioners who have secured initial certification in the current year are required to complete continuing education credits prorated equal to 1.5 credits per month with at least 50% of the total CE in the medical/trauma category to apply for medical command authorization for the next year. Prorating begins with the month that the ALS practitioner secures certification.

For example, if an ALS practitioner receives certification on June 1st, that ALS practitioner will be responsible for 1.5 credits, with at least 50% of the CE in the medical/trauma category for every month until the end of the year (June thru December). The ALS practitioner will, therefore, be required to complete 10.5 total CE with at least 5.25 CE in the medical/trauma category prior to applying for medical command authorization for the next year.

Prerequisites to determine medical command authorization/reauthorization are:

- The individual seeking medical command authorization must complete an application on a form prescribed by the PA DOH.
- The individual must verify the completion of the required CE for the calendar year prior to the calendar year for which the practitioner is requesting authorization/reauthorization. For example, if a practitioner is making application for authorization/reauthorization for the calendar year beginning January 1, 2002, the practitioner will be required to show that the required eighteen (18) CE credits [at least nine (9) CE in medical/trauma] were completed between January 1, 2001 and December 31, 2001. It is recommended that this be completed at least 60 (sixty) days prior to Medical Command Authorization Review, as the entire Medical Command Authorization process must be completed by December 31.
- The ALS service medical director shall inquire of the PA DOH whether disciplinary action has been or is currently being imposed against the individual.

- The ALS service medical director shall verify that the individual can competently perform each of the services set forth within the scope of practice authorized by the individual's certification or recognition.
- The ALS service medical director shall grant, restrict or deny the medical command authorization.

Responsibilities of Continuing Education Sponsors to Practitioners

CE sponsor shall ensure that:

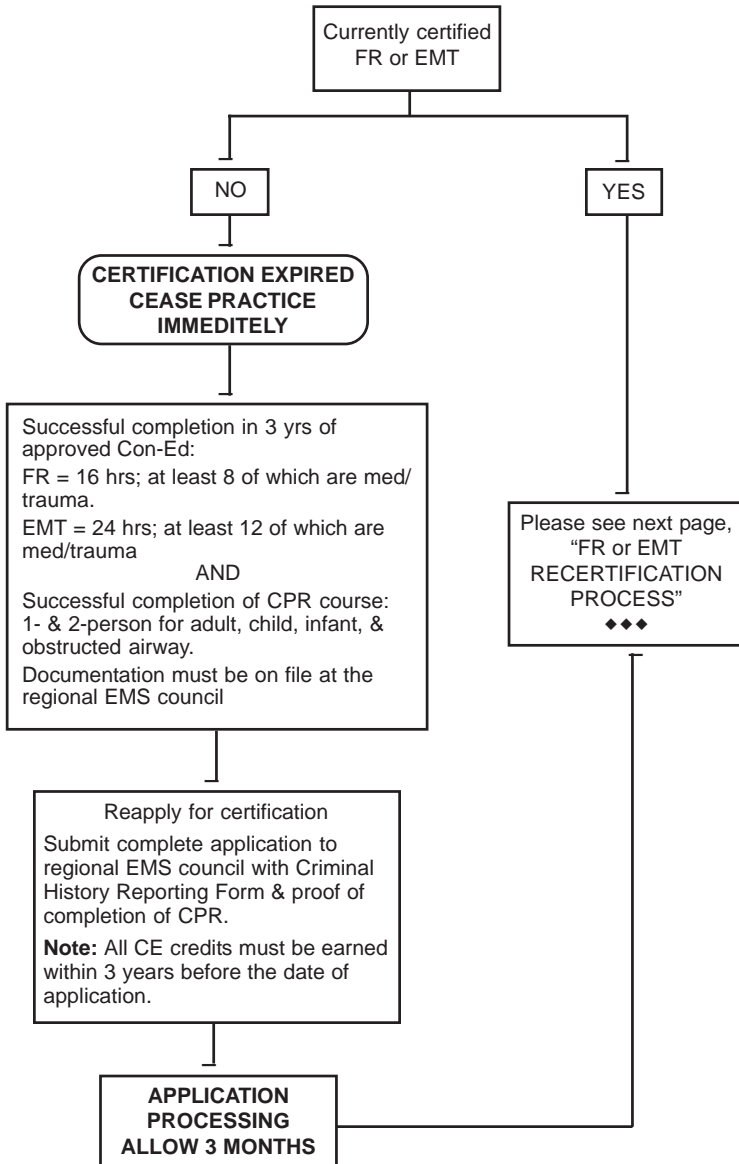
- The course is approved for CE prior to the course being conducted.
- The course is registered at the regional EMS council for verification of course specifics, i.e. instructor qualifications and hours, and issuance of a class number prior to the course being conducted.
- The course meets the educational objectives identified.
- Each prehospital practitioner enrolled in a course meets the requirements to receive credit for completion of the course.
- A record of attendance is maintained.
 - The record of attendance must be a check-in/check-out process approved by the Department. This process requires a record of check-in when an individual enters, and check-out when an individual leaves.
 - If an individual enters a course after the starting time, or leaves a course before the finish time, the time of arrival or departure shall be recorded for the individual.
- A method to evaluate the course is provided to each person that attends the course.
- All course completion paperwork is submitted to the regional EMS council within ten (10) days after the course has been presented.
- Course records are retained for at least four (4) years from the presentation of the course.
- Documentation of successful course completion is provided to the practitioner who successfully completes the course within a reasonable time [no more than thirty (30) days] after course completion.
- Only a course that has been approved by the PA DOH is advertised as a course that meets the Pennsylvania requirements of CE for the practitioner.

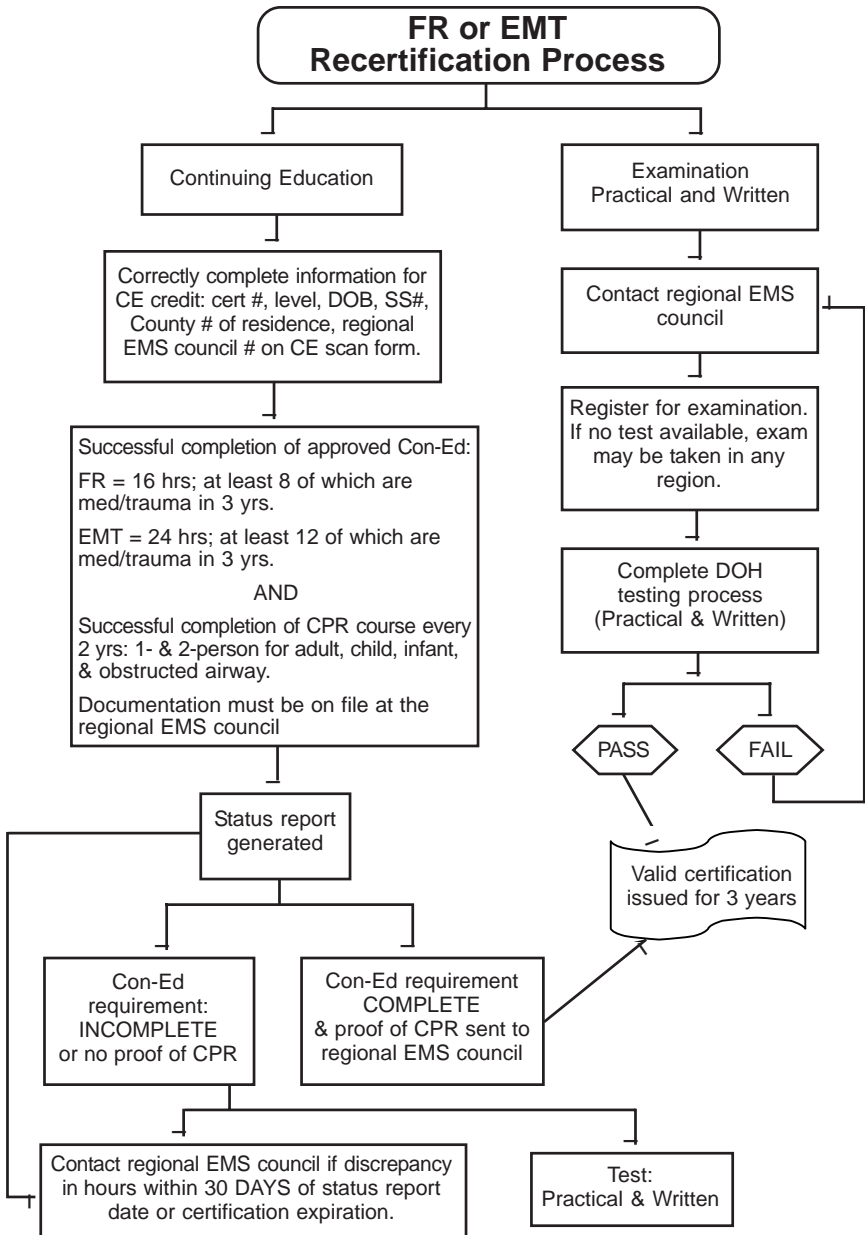
For a course approved for CE by the PA DOH, the CE sponsor informs the prehospital practitioner of the number and type of CE credits awarded and the level of certification for which the credits are given prior to presentation of the course.

Note: The CE sponsor must be able to provide a course number if the Department has approved the course.

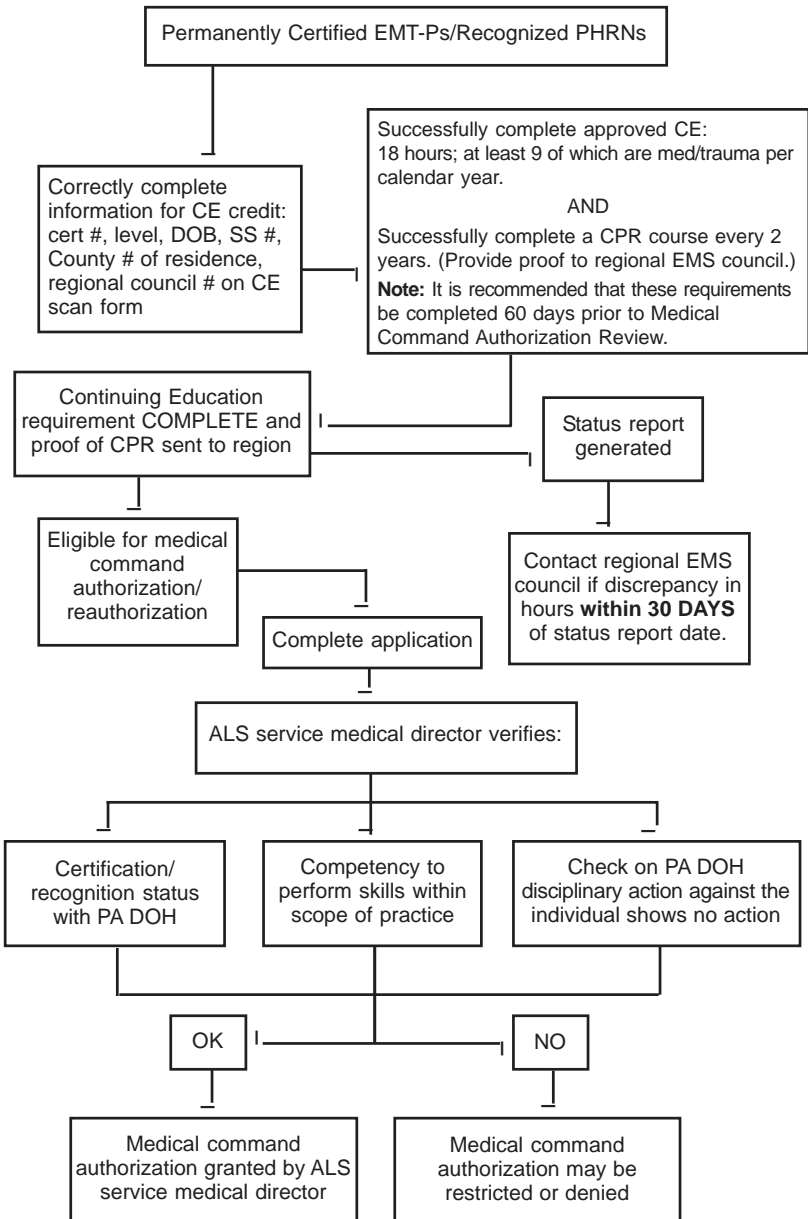
Also see “Continuing Education Sponsor Responsibilities” page 4.

FR or EMT Re-certification Process





EMT-P or PHRN Medical Command Authorization/Reauthorization Process



Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1:

Are National Registry CE Courses automatically approved for Pennsylvania?

Answer: The National Registry does not approve CE courses – it recognizes CE approved by the Continuing Education Coordinating Board for Emergency Medical Services (CECBEMS) on a 1:1 basis for basic, rescue, and advanced CECBEMS categories. Distributed education (such as Internet courses, etc.) is accepted by NREMT on a limited basis. PA DOH does not automatically approve NREMT or CECBEMS CE at this time.

Question 2:

Are CECBEMS approved and rated courses automatically approved by PA?

Answer: The PA DOH currently recognizes only those courses reviewed and approved by the Department and does not ‘automatically’ accept *any* externally approved courses.

Question 3:

Are Internet courses accepted in PA?

Answer: Internet courses fall under a category that is being defined nationwide as “Distributed Education.” Distributed education is currently a hotly debated topic in the educational arena, with no consensus on what, or how much, if any, should be accepted as CE in prehospital education. Check with a local regional EMS council to verify whether or not the course has been approved for CE.

Question 4:

May an ALS service medical director require more CE of a practitioner?

Answer: Yes, an ALS service medical director may require a practitioner to do more if, during review of the qualifications of a practitioner, the ALS service medical director determines that the practitioner does not demonstrate competence in performing the skills needed for the ALS ambulance service. Alternatively, the ALS service medical director may specify the area of CE for the practitioner to complete to perform all prescribed skills under medical command authorization/reauthorization (i.e., new skills, techniques or medications, or areas of weakness). However, an ALS service medical director may not require a practitioner

to complete additional CE requirements for medical command authorization/reauthorization unless the ALS service medical director first determines that the practitioner has not demonstrated competence to secure medical command authorization/reauthorization to perform all skills in the practitioner's prescribed scope of practice.

Question 5:

May ambulance services require more CE than PA DOH requires?

Answer: Yes, a service may require this as a condition of employment (paid or volunteer). For example, providers may be required to maintain annual or biennial EVOC, BTLS or HazMat course completion for employment. Therefore, even if a practitioner meets PA DOH CE requirements, the practitioner may need to attend additional courses if required by the employer.

Question 6:

May a practitioner receive credit hours for CPR?

Answer: No, the law requires CPR in addition to a specified number of CE hours.

Question 7:

How does the American Heart Association (every 2 years) or American Red Cross (every year) CPR renewal requirement affect a practitioner's PA DOH certification?

Answer: This does not relate to a practitioner's PA DOH certification. It is the practitioner's decision as to whether or not to choose to comply with another organization's requirements. However, the practitioner must have a current CPR authorization when re-certifying with the PA DOH.

Question 8:

Which CPR program is a practitioner required to complete for PA DOH re-certification?

Answer: A practitioner must complete a CPR program approved by the PA DOH for prehospital practitioners and the program must include one (1) and two (2) person adult, infant, child CPR and obstructed airway. If a practitioner is not sure that a program is approved, the practitioner should contact the regional EMS council.

Question 9:

Are out-of-state classes approved for CE within Pennsylvania?

Answer: Yes. The regulations provide procedures for “CE by endorsement.” It is the applicant’s responsibility to provide the course outlines and time allocations to the regional EMS council for approval. Topics must relate to the practitioner’s scope of practice and enhance patient care. Applications for “CE by endorsement” may be obtained from the regional EMS council.

Question 10:

How often will a practitioner receive a report from a regional EMS council regarding accrued CE?

Answer: BLS providers will receive a report one (1) time a year. ALS providers will receive a report at least two (2) times a year. This report will be sent to the address on file at the regional EMS council.

Note: The practitioner should verify that his/her name and address is current. If a practitioner does NOT receive this report, call the regional EMS council to verify this information.

Question 11:

Will the report include the total number of credit hours the practitioner has accrued?

Answer: Yes, the practitioner must verify the accuracy of the report WITHIN 30 (thirty) DAYS of the issuance of the practitioner’s CE report. After thirty (30) days, the report will be considered accurate and no adjustments will be made to the records.

Note: It is the practitioner’s responsibility to verify that the practitioner’s name and address is current with the regional EMS council.

Question 12:

How long is a regional EMS council and CE sponsor required to retain CE records and how long should a practitioner keep CE records?

Answer: 4 years.

Question 13:

Can a practitioner request an extension to continue practicing if his/her certification has expired?

Answer: No, once the certification expired, the practitioner cannot practice under that certification, until the requirements are met for recertification.

Question 14:

If a practitioner has a complaint about the CE sponsor, whom should the practitioner contact?

Answer: The practitioner should contact the regional EMS council.

Question 15:

How will a practitioner know the CE sponsor is accredited?

Answer: A list of PA DOH accredited CE sponsors may be obtained from the regional EMS council's web site or the PA DOH web site (www.health.state.pa.us), or a practitioner may request a list from the regional EMS council. If a practitioner is in doubt, contact the regional EMS council prior to attending any session.

Question 16:

A practitioner does not agree with the report of CE hours. Whom does the practitioner contact? What is the practitioner required to do?

Answer: The practitioner should contact the regional EMS council issuing the report WITHIN 30 (thirty) DAYS of the issuance of the report. After 30 (thirty) days, the report will be assumed to be correct if no changes are made. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to provide documentation verifying successful completion of the courses for which the practitioner is claiming continuing education credit.

Question 17:

If a practitioner is temporarily suspended or on leave from an ambulance service (paid or volunteer) is the practitioner still eligible to take CE courses to maintain certification?

Answer: Yes, the practitioner is still eligible to take CE courses anywhere across the Commonwealth of PA. CE can be attained through many sources. A list of available classes throughout the state can be found at the EMS Office education website (www.health.state.pa.us/ems). Education is available to everyone.

Question 18:

If a practitioner is a member of the military and is deployed to active duty, can the practitioner maintain their certification through CE?

Answer: Yes, the practitioner can attempt to fulfill CE requirements by taking course while on deployment. Some methods of attaining CE for

military personnel include JEMS magazine articles, EMS Magazine articles, Pulse videos, etc. The military has many very good programs that may be available to the active duty personnel. If a practitioner is unable to maintain his/her CE requirements, the practitioner will be required to provide the regional EMS council with the official paperwork, verifying the tour of duty and the official discharge dates. The regional EMS council will work with the practitioner to fulfill his/her CE requirements.

Pennsylvania Region Numbers and County Codes

Region Number is the region of the practitioner's residence. Region Number is to be placed on the top left side of the CE scan card.

County Code is the county where the practitioner resides. Place in columns AB on far right side of scan card.

Example: Delaware County Regional Number = 12, Delaware County Code = 23

Region #	County		Region #	County	
	Name	Code		Name	Code
03	Adams	01	19	Elk	24
04	Allegheny	02	18	Erie	25
04	Armstrong	03	04	Fayette	26
04	Beaver	04	18	Forest	27
09	Bedford	05	03	Franklin	28
02	Berks	06	09	Fulton	29
09	Blair	07	04	Greene	30
01	Bradford	08	09	Huntingdon	31
10	Bucks	09	04	Indiana	32
04	Butler	10	19	Jefferson	33
09	Cambria	11	08	Juniata	34
19	Cameron	12	05	Lackawanna	35
02	Carbon	13	03	Lancaster	36
08	Centre	14	04	Lawrence	37
11	Chester	15	03	Lebanon	38
18	Clarion	16	02	Lehigh	39
19	Clearfield	17	05	Luzerne	40
08	Clinton	18	07	Lycoming	41
15	Columbia	19	19	McKean	42
18	Crawford	20	18	Mercer	43
03	Cumberland	21	08	Mifflin	44
03	Dauphin	22	02	Monroe	45
12	Delaware	23	13	Montgomery	46

Pennsylvania Region Numbers and County Codes (continued)

<i>Region #</i>	County		<i>Region #</i>	County	
	Name	Code		Name	Code
<i>15</i>	Montour	47	<i>01</i>	Susquehanna	58
<i>02</i>	Northampton	48	<i>07</i>	Tioga	59
<i>15</i>	Northumberland	49	<i>15</i>	Union	60
<i>03</i>	Perry	50	<i>18</i>	Venango	61
<i>14</i>	Philadelphia	51	<i>18</i>	Warren	62
<i>05</i>	Pike	52	<i>04</i>	Washington	63
<i>19</i>	Potter	53	<i>05</i>	Wayne	64
<i>02</i>	Schuylkill	54	<i>04</i>	Westmoreland	65
<i>15</i>	Snyder	55	<i>05</i>	Wyoming	66
<i>09</i>	Somerset	56	<i>03</i>	York	67
<i>07</i>	Sullivan	57			

Contact Information

Pennsylvania Department of Health

Pennsylvania Department of Health
Bureau Emergency Medical Services
7th and Forster Streets
Room 1032, Health and Welfare Building
Harrisburg, PA 17108
(717) 787-8740

Regional EMS Councils

Bradford Susquehanna EMS Council (#01)

123 West Lockhart Street
Sayre, PA 18840
(570) 882-6390; FAX (570) 882-6053

Bucks County Emergency Health Services (#10)

911 Ivyglenn Circle
Ivyland, PA 18974
(215) 340-8735; FAX (215) 957-0765

Chester County EMS Council (#11)

Department of Emergency Services
601 Westtown Road, Suite 12
P.O. Box 2747
West Chester, PA 19380-0990
(610) 344-5000; Fax (610) 566-3947

Delaware County EHS Council, Inc. (#12)

Government Center Building, Room 117
201 W. Front Street
Media, PA 19063
(601) 891-5310; Fax (610) 566-3947

Eastern PA EMS Council, Inc. (#02)

1405 North Cedar Crest Blvd., Suite 208
Allentown, PA 18104
(610) 820-9212; Fax (610) 820-5620

EHS Federation, Inc. (#03)

722 Limekiln Road
New Cumberland, PA 17070
(800) 334-3473 in PA; (717) 774-7911; Fax (717) 774-6163

Emergency Medical Services Institute (#04)

221 Penn Avenue, Suite 2500
Pittsburgh, PA 15221
(412) 242-7322; Fax (412) 242-7434

EMMCO East, Inc. (#19)

1411 Million Dollar Highway
Kersey, PA 15846
(814) 834-9212; Fax (814) 781-3881

EMMCO West, Inc. (#18)

16271 Conneaut Lake Road, Suite 101
Meadville, PA 16335-3814
(814) 337-5380; Fax (814) 337-0871

EMS of Northeastern PA, Inc. (#05)

1153 Oak Street
Pittston, PA 18640
(570) 655-6818; Fax (570) 655-6824

LTS EMS Council (#07)

542 County Farm Road, Suite 101
Montoursville, PA 17754-9621
(800) 433-9063 in PA only; (570) 433-4461; Fax (570) 433-4435

Montgomery County EMS (#13)

Office of Emergency Medical Services
1175 Conshohocken Road
Conshohocken, PA 19428
(610) 278-2666; Fax (610) 278-6254

Philadelphia EMS Council (#14)

Philadelphia Fire Department
240 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123-2991
(215) 686-1313; Fax (215) 686-1321

Seven Mountains EMS Council, Inc. (#08)

523 Dell Street
Bellefonte, PA 16823
(814) 355-1474; Fax (814) 355-5149

Southern Alleghenies EMS Council, Inc. (#09)

Olde Farm Office Centre
Carriage House
Duncansville, PA 16635
(814) 696-3200; Fax (814) 696-0101

Susquehanna EHS Council, Inc. (#15)

249 Market Street
Sunbury, PA 17801-3401
(570) 988-3443; Fax (570) 988-3446

