

INITIAL CERTIFICATION VERSION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING

MASSACHUSETTS &

NATIONAL EMS STANDARDS

NATIONAL EMS EDUCATION STANDARDS

**NATIONAL EMS CERTIFICATION STANDARDS
& THE ADOPTION OF NATIONAL EMS
CERTIFICATION BY THE NREMT**

NATIONAL SCOPE OF PRACTICE TRANSITION

VERSION I.B

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OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
— DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH —

OVERVIEW

There are a lot of changes currently occurring to EMS in Massachusetts. The goal of this document is to answer many of the questions regarding these changes and **initial certification**. This document is intended for **initial certification candidates, educators, training officers, physicians, and other leadership**.

The most significant distinction to make is that there are two separate changes occurring that affect Massachusetts EMS providers' certifications:

- The adoption of National Registry of EMTs (NREMT) certification as the basis for Massachusetts initial certification and recertification, as part of the requirement to maintain MA state certification (licensure). and;
- The transition to the National EMS Scope of Practice model. These two changes are occurring independently of each other.

If you do not see your question answered, please email it to gibson.mccullagh@state.ma.us. Please be sure to regularly check our website (<http://mass.gov/dph/oems>) for the most recent version of this guide.

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FUTURE CANDIDATES: NREMT ADOPTION

Q1. I am currently an **EMT-Basic** candidate; what **practical** (psychomotor) examination will I take after July 1, 2013?

A1. At the EMT-Basic level, you will take the same state practical as candidates prior to July 1, 2013; the stations and skill sheets will not change. What will change is the processing time. Practical exams will be able to be held immediately following course completion (versus a current three week administrative delay) and results will be available approximately 24-48 hours after the exam occurs (versus a current turn-around period of 8-10 weeks).

Q2. I am currently an **EMT-Basic** candidate; what **written** (cognitive) examination will I take after July 1, 2013?

A2. At the EMT-Basic level, you will take the NREMT written (cognitive) exam after July 1, 2013. To sign up for this exam, candidates would create an application with the NREMT on its website (<http://nremt.org>), affiliate with their Educational Program (Accredited Training Institution), and pay the NREMT application fee (includes testing fee). When the application is approved and successful course completion verified, an Authorization To Test (ATT) will be issued. The ATT is obtained via the candidate's NREMT login and contains the instructions on how to schedule the computer-based exam with Pearson VUE, at a time and location that works best for that individual.

Q3. I am currently an **EMT-Intermediate** candidate; what **practical** (psychomotor) examination will I take after July 1, 2013?

A3. These candidates should contact OEMS for information on completing their certification and a transition course to become an Advanced EMT.

Q4. I am currently an **EMT-Intermediate** candidate; what **written** (cognitive) examination will I take after July 1, 2013?

A4. These candidates should contact OEMS for information on completing their certification and a transition course to become an Advanced EMT.

Q5. I am currently an **EMT-Paramedic** candidate; what **practical** (psychomotor) examination will I take after July 1, 2013?

A5. At the EMT-Paramedic level, you will take the NREMT EMT-Paramedic practical (psychomotor) exam after July 1, 2013; the stations and skill sheets are fairly similar to that of the old-MA practical and can be found at:

http://www.nremt.org/nremt/about/psychomotor_exam_advanced.asp

Please note that the NREMT EMT-Paramedic psychomotor examination consists of the following stations:

- Ventilatory Management - Adult (Endotracheal Intubation)
- Supraglottic Airway Device

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- Pediatric (<2yrs.) Ventilatory Management (Endotracheal Intubation)
- Dynamic Cardiology
- Static Cardiology
- Intravenous Therapy - Intravenous Bolus Medications
- Pediatric Intraosseous Infusion
- Oral Station
- Patient Assessment - Trauma
- 1 BLS Station (picked at random):
 - Bleeding Control/Shock Management
 - Spinal Immobilization (Seated Patient)
 - Spinal Immobilization (Supine Patient)

Furthermore, EMT-Paramedic candidates will only be eligible for their practical examination after completing their entire paramedic program (didactic, field and clinical time). Results will be available approximately 2-4 weeks (typically sooner) after the exam occurs (versus a current turn-around period of 8-10 weeks). Advanced-level psychomotor examination results are processed by the NREMT the day they are received from the NREMT Representative who was responsible for the examination.

If you started your paramedic program prior to January 1, 2013, you will be eligible to receive NREMT certification (if you successfully complete both NREMT examinations). If you started your program after January 1, 2013 and did not attend a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education (CAAHEP)-accredited/CoAEMSP-reviewed program, you will take the NREMT examinations but be eligible for only Massachusetts certification (not NREMT and Massachusetts certification).

Q6. I am currently an **EMT-Paramedic** candidate; what **written (cognitive)** examination will I take after July 1, 2013?

A6. At the EMT-Paramedic level you will take the NREMT written (cognitive) exam after July 1, 2013. To sign up for this exam, candidates create an application with the NREMT on its website (<http://nremt.org>), affiliate with their Educational Program (Accredited Training Institution), and pay the NREMT application fee (includes testing fee). When the application is approved and successful course completion verified, an Authorization To Test (ATT) will be issued. The ATT is obtained via the candidates NREMT login and contains the instructions on how to schedule their computer-based exam with Pearson VUE, at a time and location that works best for that individual.

If you started your paramedic program prior to January 1, 2013, you will be eligible to receive NREMT certification (if you successfully complete both NREMT examinations). If you started your program after January 1, 2013 and did not attend a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education (CAAHEP)-accredited/CoAEMSP-reviewed program, you will take the NREMT examinations but be eligible for only Massachusetts certification (not NREMT and Massachusetts certification).

CURRENT CANDIDATES: NREMT ADOPTION

Q7. I am an **EMT-Basic** candidate who is currently in the middle of retesting the **practical** (psychomotor) examination; how will this change after July 1, 2013?

A7. At the EMT-Basic level, you will take the same state practical as candidates prior to July 1, 2013; the stations and skill sheets will not change. You will still apply for the exam with the appropriate Accredited Training Institution. What will change is the processing time. Practical exams will be able to be held immediately following course completion (versus a current three week administrative delay) and results will be available approximately 24-48 hours after the exam occurs (versus a current turn-around period of 8-10 weeks).

Q8. I am an **EMT-Basic** candidate who is currently in the middle of retesting the **written** (cognitive) examination; how will this change after July 1, 2013?

A8. If you require retesting at the EMT-Basic level, you will switch from the Massachusetts written exam to the NREMT written (cognitive) exam after July 1, 2013. To sign up for this exam, candidates would create an application with the NREMT on its website (<http://nremt.org>), affiliate with their Educational Program (Accredited Training Institution), and pay the NREMT application fee (includes testing fee). When the application is approved and successful course completion verified, an Authorization To Test (ATT) will be issued. The ATT is obtained via the candidates NREMT login and contains the instructions on how to schedule their computer-based exam with Pearson VUE, at a time and location that works best for that individual. It is important to note that when the individual switches to the NREMT written exam, he or she will be given six chances to pass (regardless of previous attempts with PSI).

Q9. I am an **EMT-Intermediate** candidate who is currently in the middle of retesting the **practical** (psychomotor) examination; how will this change after July 1, 2013?

A9. These candidates should contact OEMS for information on completing their certification and a transition course to become an Advanced EMT.

Q10. I am an **EMT-Intermediate** candidate who is currently in the middle of retesting the **written** (cognitive) examination; how will this change after July 1, 2013?

A10. These candidates should contact OEMS for information on completing their certification and a transition course to become an Advanced EMT.

Q11. I am an **EMT-Paramedic** candidate who is currently in the middle of retesting the **practical** (psychomotor) examination; how will this change after July 1, 2013?

A11. If you require retesting at the EMT-Paramedic level you will be contacted by OEMS before July 1, 2013 for the opportunity to retake your specific station(s); this will be a one time opportunity. If you are not successful in your retest or elect to pass on this opportunity, you will need to switch from the Massachusetts practical exam to the NREMT practical (psychomotor) exam after July 1, 2013; the stations and skill sheets are fairly similar to that of the old-MA practical and can be found at:

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http://www.nremt.org/nremt/about/psychomotor_exam_advanced.asp

If you are not successful in your retest or elect to pass on the above opportunity, you will have to complete the entire NREMT-examination. Please note that the NREMT EMT-Paramedic psychomotor examination consists of the following stations only:

- Ventilatory Management - Adult (Endotracheal Intubation)
- Supraglottic Airway Device
- Pediatric (<2yrs.) Ventilatory Management (Endotracheal Intubation)
- Dynamic Cardiology
- Static Cardiology
- Intravenous Therapy - Intravenous Bolus Medications
- Pediatric Intraosseous Infusion
- Oral Station
- Patient Assessment - Trauma
- 1 BLS Station (picked at random):
 - Bleeding Control/Shock Management
 - Spinal Immobilization (Seated Patient)
 - Spinal Immobilization (Supine Patient)

Furthermore, EMT-Paramedic candidates will only be eligible for their practical examination after completing their entire paramedic program (didactic, field & clinical time). Results will be available approximately 24-48 hours after the exam occurs (versus a current turn-around period of 8-10 weeks).

If you started your paramedic program prior to January 1, 2013, you will be eligible to receive NREMT certification (if you successfully complete both NREMT examinations). If you started your program after January 1, 2013 and did not attend a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education (CAAHEP)-accredited/CoAEMSP-reviewed program, you will take the NREMT examinations but be eligible for only Massachusetts certification (not NREMT and Massachusetts certification).

Q12. I am an **EMT-Paramedic** candidate who is currently in the middle of retesting the **written** (cognitive) examination; how will this change after July 1, 2013?

A12. If you require retesting at the EMT-Paramedic level, you will switch from the Massachusetts written exam to the NREMT written (cognitive) exam after July 1, 2013. To sign up for this exam, candidates would create an application with the NREMT on their website (<http://nremt.org>), affiliate with their Educational Program (Accredited Training Institute), and pay the NREMT application fee (includes testing fee). When the application is approved and successful course completion verified, an Authorization To Test (ATT) will be issued. The ATT is obtained via the candidates NREMT login and contains the instructions on how to schedule their computer-based exam with Pearson VUE, at a time and location that works best for that individual. It is important to note that when the individual switches to the NREMT written exam, they will be given six chances to pass (regardless of previous attempts with PSI).

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If you started your paramedic program prior to January 1, 2013, you will be eligible to receive NREMT certification (if you successfully complete both NREMT examinations). If you started your program after January 1, 2013 and did not attend a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education (CAAHEP)-accredited/CoAEMSP-reviewed program, you will take the NREMT examinations but be eligible for only Massachusetts certification (not NREMT and Massachusetts certification).

ALL EMS PROVIDERS: RECERTIFICATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Q13. I understand continuing education requirements are changing. What does that mean to me?

A13. Massachusetts is the second state to adopt the new-NREMT Continued Competency Program as the recertification standard. EMS providers who expire in 2014 will have the choice of completing continuing education requirements for recertification under either the old-MA standard or this new-NREMT standard. Providers who expire in 2015 will have to recertify under the new-NREMT standard. However, if providers who expire in 2015 have already completed requirements for the old-MA standard, OEMS will assist them in “translating” those credits to the new-NREMT standard. More information on the new Continuing Education requirements can be found at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/hcq/oems/national-registry-for-massachusetts-ems.html>

Q14. Where can I find the requirements and what is included in the new-NREMT standard (the Continued Competency Program)?

A14. You can find more information on our website at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/hcq/oems/national-registry-for-massachusetts-ems.html>

Q15. Under the new-NREMT standard (Continued Competency Program), what is the national portion? What is the local portion? What is individual portion?

A15. The levels are broken down as follows:

NATIONAL Continued Competency Requirements (NCCR)

National Continued Competency Requirements are determined by the NREMT Board of Directors based upon widespread input from EMS researchers, EMS physician and EMS provider stakeholders. The NCCR comprises 50% of the overall requirements necessary to recertify. Topics in the NCCR are chosen among the following: evidence-based medicine, any changes in the National EMS Scope of Practice Model, science-related position papers that affect EMS patient care, topics which cover patient care tasks that have low frequency yet high criticality, and articles which improve knowledge to deliver patient care. The NREMT will provide the educational materials for this component to the EMS community as part of their mission - to protect the public.

LOCAL Continued Competency Requirements (LCCR)

Local Continued Competency Requirements are developed and delivered at the state or local EMS level. LCCR represents 25% of the necessary requirements for all provider levels. The LCCR topics are chosen by local authorities (or State EMS Office, if applicable). These topics may include changes in state protocols, tasks which require remediation based upon a quality assurance system, and/or topics noted to be of importance based upon run data reported to the National EMS Information Systems from the local level. These topics are locally chosen and will likely be different for every EMS system in the nation.

INDIVIDUAL Continued Competency Requirements (ICCR)

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Individual Continued Competency Requirements represent 25% of the needed education. For the individual's first ICCR, they may select any EMS related education. For following recertification cycles, individuals will identify what these requirements are based upon outcomes of a self-assessment guide (offered at no additional fee) on the NREMT website as part of the recertification submission process. The assessment guide will help providers assess their knowledge and remediate any identified deficiencies (over four core content areas). The specific assessment guide results are provided only to the individual EMS provider; de-identified, aggregate data will be provided to Training Officers and no actions will be taken to restrict practice or certification of providers who need remediation. If no deficiencies are indicated, the EMS provider may select any EMS-related education for their ICCR component

Q16. How do I find out what is acceptable under the new-NREMT standard?

A16. The NREMT will be making available educational resources for the Continued Competency Program. Agency (employer) Training Officers and Medical Directors will establish the Local requirements (LCCR). The resources materials will provide guidance on that process.

Q17. Where will my continuing education be tracked?

A17. All continuing education will be tracked on the NREMT's website, regardless of an individual's NREMT status.

Q18. Do I need to use the NREMT website to track my continuing education and if I am a Massachusetts certified EMT who is not NREMT certified?

A18. Yes. All Massachusetts EMTs (regardless of NREMT status) will be utilizing the NREMT website to track their continuing education. Non-NREMT Massachusetts EMTs will have a separate login page (instructions and details to be available July 2013).

Q19. How will continuing education be approved?

A19. Continuing education will still be approved under the old-MA system. Instructors will apply to their Regional EMS Council office for course approval and a course number; Accredited Training Institutions will simply register for the course number (no approval). Once the course is completed, however, the training officer is responsible for uploading the attendance information to the NREMT website. If a provider takes a course outside of their typical agency or service, they will receive proof of attendance and manually enter their own credit hours (verified later by their training officer).

Q20. Our ambulance service typically uses a traditional refresher to provide continuing education to EMTs and paramedics. Will we still be able to do so?

A20. For 2014, refreshers will still be applicable (if providers are recertifying under the old-MA standard). In the future, it is likely that many of the institutions that offered refreshers will offer the National Continued Competency Program (NCCP) as a bundle.

ALL EMS PROVIDERS: MA-NATIONAL EMS SCOPE OF PRACTICE TRANSITION

Q21. What is “National EMS Scope of Practice” and why does Massachusetts need to transition?

A21. In 2007, the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released the EMS Education Agenda for the Future. This document was the result of several years of research, outreach, and revisions, and represents the collective vision for where EMS education should be across the nation. The Task force that contributed to it was comprised of a diverse group of representatives from NHTSA, U.S. Health and Human Services, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, the American College of Surgeons, the American College of Emergency Physicians, the American Ambulance Association, the National Association of State EMS Officials, EMS for Children, the National Association of EMTs, and the National Registry of EMTs and many others. Rarely has such a diverse but representative group of EMS leadership gathered and collectively supported such a report. The National EMS Scope of Practice was one element that was developed in this Agenda, and a recommendation that all of these entities supported.

The National EMS Scope of Practice reflects the changing demands of EMS across our nation. The new standards are meant to provide not only a higher level of care from all providers but care that reflects evidence-based medicine, with quality and patient safety as top priorities. The health care industry is constantly developing its practices to best address the needs of our populations. EMS is not exempt from this need to continually reassess how we should provide the best possible care. To reinforce this national development, it should be noted that all states are being prompted to make this transition. Even states that do not use the NREMT as the testing basis for their state EMS certification, such as New York, have already started the transition. It is vital to the citizens and visitors of our Commonwealth that we do not withhold this new national standard of emergency care from them

It is important to note that a non-NREMT MA EMS provider who transitions will not automatically receive a NREMT certification: The only way to obtain a NREMT-certification is to test.

Q22. I am an EMT-Basic. Do I need to do to transition to National EMS Scope of Practice? Do I still need to transition even if I am a non-NREMT Massachusetts EMT-Basic?

A22. Yes, all Massachusetts EMS providers will have to transition, regardless of NREMT status. An “EMT-Basic” will transition to an “EMT” after completing their first recertification under the new-NREMT standard (the Continued Competency Program). By completing the National Continued Competency Program, they will have effectively transitioned. No additional courses are required. The deadline to transition at the EMT level is 2015 or 2016, depending on the EMT’s recertification year.

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Q23. I am an EMT-Intermediate; do I need to do to transition to National EMS Scope of Practice? Do I still need to transition even if I am a non-NREMT Massachusetts EMT-Intermediate?

A23. Yes, all Massachusetts EMS providers will have to transition, regardless of NREMT status. The transition from EMT-Intermediate to the new mid-certification level under the National EMS Scope of Practice, now called "Advanced EMT," is the most significant of all. An EMT-Intermediate will transition to Advanced EMT after completing a state-approved transition course which is approximately 60-100hrs long (continued education credit hours will be available for this transition course). It should be noted that this is a significant shift in assessment skills, and thus the longer transition course. **EMT-Intermediates will have one full certification period to transition** (deadline is 2016 or 2017, depending on your recertification year). For more information on the EMT-Intermediate to Advanced EMT transition, please review the following document:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/emergency-services/scope-of-practice/emt-intermediates.pdf>

Q24. I am an EMT-Paramedic. Do I need to do to transition to National EMS Scope of Practice? Do I still need to transition even if I am a non-NREMT Massachusetts EMT-Paramedic?

A24. Yes, all Massachusetts EMS providers will have to transition, regardless of NREMT status. An "EMT-Paramedic" will transition to "Paramedic" after completing a state-approved transition course which is approximately 10-20hrs long (continued education credit hours will be available). **EMT-Paramedics have one full certification period to transition** (deadline is 2016 or 2017 depending on your recertification year).