



**COVID-19 EMS Information**  
**April 6, 2020**

**Due to the current COVID-19 state of disaster in Texas, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) requested and the Office of the Governor granted the following waivers and extensions:**

**Staffing Waiver**

In accordance with section 418.016 of the Texas Government Code, the Office of the Governor grants DSHS's request to suspend Health & Safety Code 773.050(a) and 25 TAC 157.11(h)(1)-(6), to the extent necessary to allow a local medical director for a licensed EMS provider to permit individuals who are qualified, but not formally certified, to provide critical emergency response services for patients treated and transported by the EMS provider.

This suspension is in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the March 13, 2020 disaster declaration is lifted or expires.

**EMS Personnel License Renewal Extension**

In accordance with section 418.016 of the Texas Government code, the Office of the Governor grants DSHS's request to suspend 25 TAC 157.34(a)(3), to the extent necessary to allow EMS personnel whose certification or license expired after March 13, 2020 and 90-days thereafter, to delay submitting their online renewal application and recertification/re-licensure requirements until the end of the 90-day waiver period.

This suspension is in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the March 13, 2020 disaster declaration is lifted or expires.

**EMS Personnel Skills Verification Waiver for Late Renewals**

In accordance with section 418.016 of the Texas Government code, the Office of the Governor grants DSHS's request to suspend 25 TAC

157.34(e)(2)-(3), to the extent necessary to allow EMS personnel whose certification expired less than one year and prior to the Governor's declaration on March 13, 2020, to temporarily waive the required skills verification for 90-days.

This suspension is in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the March 13, 2020 disaster declaration is lifted or expires.

### **EMS Personnel Skills Verification Waiver for Reciprocity AEMTs**

In accordance with section 418.016 of the Texas Government code, the Office of the Governor grants DSHS's request to suspend 25 TAC 157.33(i)(2)(B), to the extent necessary to temporarily waive the skills verification for Out-of-State AEMT applicants for 90-days and allow the applicant to certify at the EMT level, if all other requirements are met, until required AEMT skills are verified.

This suspension is in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the March 13, 2020 disaster declaration is lifted or expires.

### **EMS Provider License Renewal Extension**

In accordance with section 418.016 of the Texas Government code, the Office of the Governor grants DSHS's request to suspend 25 TAC 157.11(o)(2)(A)(B)(C)(D)(E), to the extent necessary to allow an EMS Provider whose license expires after March 13, 2020 and 90-days thereafter, to delay submission of their renewal application and completion of the re-licensure requirements until the end of the 90-day waiver period.

This suspension is in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the March 13, 2020 disaster declaration is lifted or expires.

### **First Responder Organization (FRO) License Renewal Extension**

In accordance with section 418.016 of the Texas Government Code, the Office of the Governor grants DSHS's request to suspend 25 TAC 157.14(f)(1) and (2) to the extent necessary to allow a first responder organization whose license expires after March 13, 2020 and 90-days

thereafter, to delay submission of their renewal application and completion of the re-licensure requirements until the end of the 90-day waiver period.

This suspension is in effect until terminated by the Office of the Governor or until the March 13, 2020 disaster declaration is lifted or expires.

**Due to the current COVID-19 state of disaster in Texas, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has considered the following issues for EMS Education Programs, National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians testing and Fingerprint-based background checks:**

### **EMS Education Programs**

EMS Education Programs are preparing, have prepared or are enacting action plans to keep students, faculty and staff, and the public safe due to the COVID-19 state of disaster in Texas. DSHS is aware that programs are expecting major challenges to delivery of didactic courses, as well as clinical and field rotation sites.

DSHS is offering several recommendations when education programs are making decisions to meet these learning experiences:

- Postpone all on-site evaluations and skills testing for groups of 5 or more.
- Extend the deadline for clinical and field internship requirements.
- Offer didactic coursework via distance/online education whenever possible.

DSHS understands these interim modifications may change course schedules and possibly the course end date. Both scenarios need to be noted on a Course Notification Change Form and submitted to DSHS via the [EMS Education e-mail inbox](#) or, you may submit a Course Schedule Change application electronically, by [using this link](#).

### **National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians Testing**

Preserving the pipeline of EMS personnel during the pandemic is essential, and vital to public health. Therefore, on Wednesday, March 25, some Pearson VUE Professional Centers (PPCs) across the nation reopened the

testing of essential health care personnel, including EMS providers. Appointments at these centers are available on a first come, first served basis. More appointments and availability will be offered as soon as possible. More information about Pearson VUE's testing for EMS personnel during the pandemic is available on [Pearson VUE's website](#).

In addition to the PPCs, NREMT is working with state and local officials to re-open Pearson VUE Testing Centers (PVTs) strictly for the testing of essential health care personnel, including EMS providers. As a reminder, some PVTs are currently open and operational. The National Registry is also aggressively pursuing the option of offering cognitive examinations through newly available Remote Proctoring technology, with more information on that in the coming weeks.

### **Fingerprint-Based Background Checks**

Given the increased activity in planning and responding to COVID-19 and the need to minimize burdens on the EMS and Trauma System, DSHS will allow a 90-day extension for renewal applicants that have not completed their fingerprint-based background checks. The effective date for this requirement will still be June 1, 2020, however, personnel with certifications that expire in June, July and August will have until August, September and October, respectively, to complete the fingerprint-based background check requirement for their renewal application. There is a list [on the DSHS EMS website](#), showing EMS personnel that have completed a fingerprint-based background check. Initial applicants are still required to meet the fingerprint-based background check requirement to obtain a certification or license.