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# Frequently Asked Questions

By Mattie Mendoza and Phil Lockwood

***Q: I am planning to renew my EMT certification by taking the written assessment exam. If I do not pass the exam, can I apply for inactive status?***

**A:** No, if you fail the assessment exam you may not apply for inactive status. In fact, once you submit your application and select the written exam (Option 1), you may not even renew using another option. If you fail the exam, you will be allowed two retest opportunities after submitting the retest application and fees. If you fail the retests, you can repeat this testing process by completing a recertification/refresher course and submitting the required applications and fees. All exams must be completed within one year of your expiration date. You can find information about all of the recertification options, including the written assessment exam, on our website at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/recertinfo.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/recertinfo.shtm). You can also find information about the assessment exam and retest options on the National Registry's website at [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org).

***Q: I submitted my renewal application two weeks ago and my certification status has not changed on your website. When will I get my new card?***

**A:** Whether you submit your renewal application online through our Texas Online system or send it through the mail, your application goes through the same

process once it reaches DSHS. All applications go first to the DSHS main campus where all fees are processed. The processing time for the fee portion of the application process is virtually the same for online and mailed applications, around five working days. Once the fee is processed, applications are sent to the EMS Certification Unit for processing. Applications sent in through Texas Online are sent electronically, while paper applications are sent via inter-agency mail. Once the application reaches the EMS Certification unit, it is processed in the order it is received. All those steps add up: the complete processing time for your application, once it is received, can be 4-6 weeks. If you want to speed up the process, you can use the online system, which at least cuts out mail time. You can check your certification status on our website at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm). If it has been longer than the typical processing time of 4-6 weeks and your status has not been updated on the website, please call the EMS Certification unit at 512-834-6700.

***Q: I submitted my certification renewal application then received a deficiency notice that stated I needed to submit my current National Registry card to the EMS Certification unit. I faxed my National Registry card two days ago and my status has not yet been updated on the website. How long***

***does it take to process deficiency items that are faxed in?***

**A:** The processing time for deficiency items is around two weeks. Deficiency items are processed in the order in which they are received. Deficiency items or other information the EMS Certification Unit needs to process your application can be faxed to 512-834-6714. Faxing is usually the fastest way to get information to us, as it cuts out mail time. If it has been longer than the normal processing time of two weeks since you faxed the information, please call the EMS Certification unit at 512-834-6700.

***Q: I submitted my EMT renewal application just a few days past my expiration date and I received a deficiency letter stating I needed to submit a completed Verification of Skills Proficiency form. Where can I find this form and who has to sign it?***

**A:** According to Texas Administrative Code §157.34(d) (2) Late recertification. *A candidate whose certificate has been expired for 90 days or less may renew the certificate by submitting an application accompanied by a non-refundable renewal fee that is equal to 1-1/2 times the normally required application renewal fee for that level as listed in subsection (a)(4) of this section. Applicant shall meet one of the recertification options described in subsection (b) (1) - (5) of this section and submit*

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verification of skills proficiency from an approved education program.

The Verification of Skills Proficiency form can be found on the EMS & Trauma Systems website at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/recertinfo.shtm#laterrenewal](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/recertinfo.shtm#laterrenewal), under late renewal, and **must** be signed by a Texas-certified EMS Coordinator.

**Q: I've tried several times to look up my certification information and it will not open after the selection. What's wrong?**

**A:** First off, let me report some good news. In addition to EMS personnel certification queries, the look-up now includes EMS provider licenses, first responder organizations, CE providers, medical directors (be sure to enter MD or DO after the last name) and EMS Education programs, which weren't available on the old cert query system. As for the problems, there are lots of variables that sometimes make it hard to pinpoint. Occasionally, when there is a lot of internet traffic or communication line congestion, the best solution is to just try again later. The most common *user* problems include accessing the wrong site, not narrowing down the search or a slow internet connection. The following series of instructions has helped other inquirers.

Link to the Public License Search from [www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm).

Scroll down to the link "Click Here for Live Online Certification/License Search." Then click on the "Public License Search" link on left side of that page. (The login windows prompting for user ID and password on the same page aren't functional yet.) From that page, narrow down the search by selecting one of the choices *other* than the "Search by Name" selection. Searching by license number or by a specified license type narrows down the databases that the query must search through, as the Public License Search includes all licenses issued by DSHS. The above search narrowing advice is especially important if you use dial-up internet access. As the search time increases, the possibility of a "time-out" error increases.

**Q: I read that several bills from the last legislative session added requirements for EMS providers. When are these requirements effective and where can I read about them for myself?**

**A:** The new legislation mandates provider licensing for all vehicle transport of patients by stretcher and calls for epinephrine auto-injector devices to be added to the list of the minimal standards for EMS vehicles. The bills specified effective dates for rule adoption, and rules have already been presented to and approved by GETAC and the Department of State Health Services Council. Proposed rules will be published

in the *Texas Register* in late March or early April, with public comment accepted for 30 days after publication (see [www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/index.shtml](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/index.shtml)). Use the following internet URLs for more information:

**Senate Bill 10:** [www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/80R/billtext/html/SB00010F.htm](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/80R/billtext/html/SB00010F.htm) (scroll down to SECTION 14).

**House Bill 2827:** [www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/80R/billtext/html/HB02827F.htm](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/80R/billtext/html/HB02827F.htm).

**Health and Safety Code (statute) (epinephrine auto-injector devices):**

<http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/docs/HS/content/html/hs.009.00.000773.00.htm#773.014.00>.

**Health and Safety Code (statute) (transport of patients by stretcher):**

<http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/docs/HS/content/html/hs.009.00.000773.00.htm#773.041.00>.

**Letter from State EMS Director**

**Re: SB 10 & HB 2827:**

[www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/ProviderLtrSB10HB2827.pdf](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/ProviderLtrSB10HB2827.pdf).

**Texas EMS  
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