
FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

By Mattie Mendoza and Phil Lockwood

Q: I submitted my renewal application online 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 the TexasOnline system or you send it through the mail, your application will go through the same process. The online system is faster only because it cuts out *mail time*. All applications first go to the DSHS main campus, where all fees are processed. Processing time for the fee portion of the application process is virtually the same for online versus mailed applications—from three to five working days. Once the fee is processed, the application is sent electronically (online applications) or mailed via inter-agency mail (hard copy applications) to the EMS Certification unit for processing. After the application reaches the EMS Certification unit, it is processed in the order in which it was received. The processing time for your application once it is received in EMS Certification can be from four to six weeks. After the four to six week processing time, you can check your certification status on our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm. If it has been longer than the typical processing time and your status has not been updated on the website, please call the EMS Certification unit at (512) 834-6700.

Q: I am currently in INActive status. What do I need to do to

return to Active status and work in Texas?

A: Submit the INActive/Active Certification/Licensure Application and fee. You can access the application on our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/CertificationLicensureApplication.pdf. To regain active status you should complete the application, including Section 3, choose one of the two renewal options, and take and pass the National Registry Cognitive Exam (the cognitive exam is the written portion of the National Registry exam). You can find information about the National Registry Cognitive Exam on their website at www.nremt.org.

Q: Can an EMT-basic receive credit for attending upper- or advanced-level continuing education courses?

A: Yes. EMT-basics can receive credit for attending intermediate- and paramedic-level courses. As long as the CE comes from an approved provider and falls into one of the required content areas, you can count those CE credits. In fact, there are definite advantages in EMT participation in advanced-level CE classes. Studying and practicing together helps various levels of EMS personnel learn to work together on calls. Also, sitting in on advanced CE classes may help some EMTs make the decision to pursue intermediate or paramedic certification. Finally, attending programs that cover intermediate and paramedic content can increase an EMT's chances for success in advanced certification

courses. EMS personnel should never be hesitant about pursuing opportunities to further their skills and competence. Access more information about continuing education on our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/continuinged.shtm.

Q: I received a letter from DSHS stating that my reciprocity application is deficient or missing the Out of State Verification Form A, but I filled out the Verification Form A myself and submitted it with my application. Why did I receive this notice?

A: The Out of State Verification Form A must be completed by another state agency's EMS office personnel. If you took your EMT course outside the state of Texas or have been certified in any other state, you must complete and submit the reciprocity application. The Out of State Verification Form A is part of the reciprocity application and must be completed by *state personnel* in all of the other states you have ever held certification in. You fill out only the name and EMS certification number section of the form and then either mail or fax the form to the other state's EMS Certification office. They complete the form on your behalf and can either fax or mail the form directly to the Texas Department of State Health Services, according to the instructions on the form. One form must be submitted for each state you have ever held certification in.

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Q: I sent my EMT renewal application through the TexasOnline site. How will I know you received my application?

A: You can visit our website to check your certification status at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/NewCert.shtm. Processing the application takes approximately four to six weeks from the time you submit your application to the time you receive your certification in the mail. If you receive notification that your application is deficient or missing documentation, that can delay the application processing time. If you receive a deficiency notice pertaining to a criminal history issue or an administrative review, follow the instructions on the letter and/or contact the EMS Compliance section at (512) 834-6700. Once your application has been approved and you are certified and/or recertified, your status on our website will read "Current, Active" and reflect an expiration date four years from the date approved.

Q: Are the skills exams posted on your website the skills we'll be tested on?

A: Not necessarily. You should contact your course coordinator for skills exam details. The posted exams are examples that can be used to determine skills proficiency. Our rules, 25 TAC, §157.32(c), refer to national standard curriculum (NSC) competencies and standards, skills proficiency verification and other student evaluations, but do not address skills exams, per se. Further,

the NSC prescribes no single testing instrument and encourages utilizing outside agency-approved psychomotor evaluation instruments, such as those found in texts. For basic courses, the coordinator must both verify skills proficiency and further confirm (for NREMT exam purposes) that students were administered and passed course-end skills exams, since we utilize the NREMT exam. Any skills exam that can be proven valid/reliable and meet the national standard curriculum is okay and would be approved during the self-study / site-visit process. NREMT and state skills sheets both probably meet such standards, but you should confirm that with your course coordinator.

Q: How do I become an EMS course coordinator?

A: You must qualify for and complete an EMS course coordinator class, which is offered once a year with limited and competitive enrollment. You should not submit an initial application for coordinator certification until you've been accepted into the course. The course screening criteria are posted on our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/scoordinator.shtm#InitialCoordCert along with certification requirements. The requirements include a minimum of EMT certification, experience as a certified instructor (with positive evaluations), training program affiliation and other specific documentation. For more information, refer directly to the

EMS Coordinator rule, 25 TAC, §157.43 (see [http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.viewtac](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.viewtac)).

Q: I'd like to teach an EMS course. How do I become an EMS instructor?

A: There is no rule requiring a lecturer in an EMS course to hold EMS instructor certification. Coordinators are allowed to utilize expert/guest lecturers who don't hold certification by establishing the expertise and documenting the credentials of that person. Instructor certification is a standard credential that would serve that purpose, but other credentials can be considered and accepted. To become a state-certified instructor, you must 1) hold EMS certification as an EMT or higher, 2) complete an EMS instructor course, 3) pass the EMS instructor exam. For more information, refer directly to the EMS Instructor rule, 25 TAC, §157.44 (see [http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.viewtac](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.viewtac)).

Save the date!

**Advanced Airway
Summit
Evening of November 22
(time TBA)
Omni Hotel Fort Worth
Hosted by GETAC's
EMS Committee**