

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH


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OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES OEMS COMMUNICATIONS STATEMENT 19-08

Date: September 16, 2019

To: All EMS Personnel 
EMS Agencies and Sponsor Hospitals

From: Raffaella Coler, RN, MEd, Paramedic
Director, Office of Emergency Medical Services

Joel Demers, NRP, EMS-I 
EMS Education Coordinator

Re: 2020 Changes to EMS Certification Process

[Public Act No. 19-118](#) made significant changes to the recertification of EMR, EMT, AEMT and EMSI certified personnel. Please find attached to this communication a detailed description of the changes. Key points include:

- Change from 3-year to 2-year certification cycle.
- Continuing Education to replace refresher classes
- Elimination of EMR and EMT refresher exam
- Online tracking of Continuing Education using NREMT website

Please note that nothing in this notice or recent legislation requires a currently certified EMR, EMT or paramedic who does not hold NREMT certification to obtain NREMT certification.

Additional notification is being provided to EMS instructors regarding changes in the initial certification process.



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CHANGES REGARDING RECERTIFICATION OF EMS PROFESSIONALS

Public Act No. 19-118, passed during the 2019 legislative session, made changes to statutory language regarding the recertification of EMS personnel including EMR, EMT, AEMT and EMS Instructor (EMSI) personnel. Section 57 and 58 of that Public Act made changes to Section 20-206jj and 20-206mm

Please note: Nothing in this notice or recent legislation requires a currently certified EMR, EMT or paramedic who *does not* hold NREMT certification to obtain NREMT certification.

Certification Expiration Time

The recertification intervals for EMR, EMT, AEMT and EMS-I have changed from three years to two years. This will be implemented with any certificate issued or renewing on or after January 1, 2020. All certifications issued prior to January 1, 2020 will remain valid until their respective expiration date.

Paramedic licensure remains valid for one year, expiring in the month of the licensee's birth.

Recertification - Continuing Education

The concept of a stand-alone traditional “refresher” course will be transitioned to a national “continued competency” program that includes a primary core education plan and a flexible continuing education model. This applies to *all certified EMR, EMT and AEMT personnel* in Connecticut, regardless of current NREMT status.

This statutory change authorizes OEMS to adopt the current model for recertification education. Effective January 1, 2020, all certified EMS personnel will be required to complete the NREMT “**National Continued Competency Program (NCCP)**” recertification training prior to applying for renewal of an EMS certificate.

Prior to applying for renewal of an EMS certificate, the holder shall complete the required hours of continuing education in the prescribed categories, complete a skills verification, and enter their continuing education in to the NREMT portal (provided at no cost to the provider or the state by the NREMT). All certified EMS personnel in Connecticut are required to have an account with the NREMT even if they do not hold NREMT certification.

The NCCP: The National Continued Competency Program (NCCP) was constructed using methodology similar to that of the American Board of Medical Specialties requirements, and streamlines the recertification process into three strategic categories of continuing education: National, Local, and Individual. [More information about the NCCP is available on the NREMT website.](#) The NCCP is designed to encourage EMS personnel to pursue life-long education while

also providing state and local agencies the freedom to customize education to meet local operational needs.

1. The **national component** of the NCCP constitutes 50% of the total recertification requirements. Topics included in the national requirement reflect current trends in evidence-based medicine, scope of practice changes and position papers from numerous associations involved with EMS research. There is an additional focus on those patient presentations that are low frequency but high criticality. **Each course must follow the outline provided by the NREMT which may be downloaded as a PDF from the NREMT site.** Instructors are free to implement these outlines in a learner-centered fashion, they need not be entirely lecture.
2. The **local component** of the NCCP constitutes 25% of the total recertification requirements. Specific topic requirements may be decided by your specific state agency, region or local organization. Examples of local content topics typically include state or local protocols, areas of specialization, or tasks that require additional focus based on QA/QI. The local component allows national recertification requirements to be adapted to the needs of the state and local agencies. **At this time, the Department of Public Health defers the local component to the local sponsor hospital medical director or EMS organization, however reserves the right to modify this at any time.**
3. The **individual component** of the NCCP constitutes 25% of the recertification requirements. EMS personnel are free to take any EMS-related education that is approved by the Commission on Approval of Prehospital Continuing Education (CAPCE) or by the Connecticut Department of Public Health, or by any other state health or EMS agency. Examples of continuing education in this category may include EMS conference sessions, in-house training or college courses relevant to EMS.
4. A skills verification must be completed prior to application for recertification. This may be completed as part of a continuing education program or may be documented by any current EMS instructor.

In accordance with NREMT standards, the following table outlines how much content may be obtained through distributive learning:

Component level	Distributive learning allowed
National Component	Up to one-third (1/3)
Local Component	Up to two-thirds (2/3)
Individual Component	Up to 100%

Continuing education may be completed in Connecticut or in another state. Education earned in another state will be authorized by Connecticut if it is approved by CAPCE or by the local authority having jurisdiction over EMS education.

	EMR	EMT	AEMT	Paramedic
National	8	20	25	30
Local	4	10	12.5	15
Individual	4	10	12.5	15
Total Hours	16	40	50	60

Recertification - Examination

Effective **January 1, 2020**, the OEMS-administered recertification exam for EMR and EMT personnel will be discontinued. In keeping with current national trends, no written examination will be required for recertification provided all continuing education has been completed. The current EMR, EMR-R and EMT-R exams will be recalled by the OEMS, and the system of proctor assignments will be concluded on December 31, 2019.

Implementation Timeline

All persons seeking **initial** certification as an EMR, EMT or AEMT on **or after January 1, 2020** must complete the NREMT cognitive and psychomotor exams.

Standardized courses, such as those from the American Heart Association (AHA), National Association of EMTs (NAEMT), the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and others **may** be used to fulfill topics in the National, Local, and Individual Components. *For example, an EMT who attends an Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) may apply those hours towards the “Ambulance Safety”, “Culture of Safety” and “Crew Resource Management” portions of the Operations topics. Or, if that EMT has already fulfilled those topics, the EMT may apply those hours to the LCCR or ICCR categories.*

2019-2021 Recertification Education Requirements

Exp. Date	EMR	EMT
2019	Traditional 18-hour refresher with exam	Traditional 30-hour refresher with exam
2020	NCCP 16-hour program	NCCP 40-hour program*
2021 or later	NCCP 16-hour program	NCCP 40-hour program

Traditional EMR and EMT refreshers will only be provided until December 31, 2019. Any application processed in 2020 will be issued a 2-year certification.

A person who completes a traditional refresher course including the OEMS written exam on or prior to December 31, 2019 AND submits the application for renewal by December 31, 2019 will receive a 3-year certification.

*A person who attends a traditional refresher course may claim credit for that training towards the 40-hour requirement. *For example, an EMT whose certification expires June 30, 2020 attends a 30 hour refresher in November, 2019, and fails to complete the application for renewal until 2020, they may apply 30 hours from the refresher towards the 40 hours required of the NCCP.*

Tracking Continuing Education

All certified providers must track their continuing education activity utilizing the NREMT.org platform. This is available at no cost to the user or to the state. That platform will identify the categories of education that are needed and allow the user to track their own progress.

Completion of the NREMT continuing education alone does not complete the recertification process. During the final 6 months of a provider's certification period, the provider must complete an application for renewal on the eLicense system. At that time, the provider will certify that they have completed the required education and uploaded evidence of training to NREMT.

Other Changes

Effective January 1, 2020, all persons who earn NREMT certification should maintain such NREMT certification throughout the life of their Connecticut certification. Those persons who did not hold NREMT certification may continue to maintain Connecticut certification alone.

The Department of Public Health will enter into an agreement with the NREMT called the Mark King Initiative, which allows EMS providers holding a current certification by CT DPH, who previously held NREMT certification, to re-enter the NREMT with a one-time fee and application, and without the need for any written or practical exam. Any NREMT certified provider who obtains their NREMT certification through this process **MUST** maintain it for the life of their state certification.

No provision is made for those who have never held NREMT certification to be granted such certification automatically. A currently certified EMS professional who has never been certified by the NREMT may obtain such certification by completing the NREMT cognitive and psychomotor examinations.

Reinstatement of Lapsed Certification

A certification (EMR, EMT, AEMT, EMSI) that has expired remains valid for ninety (90) days.

A certification that expired less than 2 years may be reinstated by completing the required NCCP continuing education requirements as listed in the earlier section. The applicant must submit an approved "Reinstatement Application" which is available on the OEMS website.

A certification that has expired more than 2 years may be reinstated by completing the initial training and testing requirements required for initial certification. This is in line with current NREMT certification policies.

A person may apply to OEMS during their active certification period to request approved inactive status, during which time they may not practice in their certified capacity. They may return to active status by completing the required NCCP continuing education requirements as listed above as if their certification had expired less than two years.

Licensed Paramedics

These changes have limited impact on paramedics.

There is no current statutory or regulatory requirement for Connecticut licensed paramedics to document continuing education. Those who elect to maintain NREMT certification are subject to the education requirements of the NREMT. Connecticut licensed paramedics who function only at the EMR, EMT or AEMT level should consult with their medical director for advice on minimum EMS continuing education requirements.

This office will continue to provide approval to paramedic level continuing medical education in the manner outlined above.

Acronyms & Definitions

NCCR – National Continued Competency Requirement – 50% of the continuing education required based on NREMT recommendations. This replaces the traditional refresher program. Up to 1/3 of this portion may be obtained through distance education.

LCCR – Local (or State) Continued Competency Requirement – 25% of the continuing education required based on NREMT recommendations. This replaces the traditional refresher program. Up to 2/3 of this portion may be obtained through distance education. Must be CAPCE or state OEMS approved education.

ICCR – Individual Continued Competency Requirement – 25% of the continuing education required based on NREMT recommendations. This replaces the traditional refresher program. All of this portion may be obtained through distance education. May be obtained from conferenced, journals, in-house training etc.

CAPCE – The Commission on Accreditation for Prehospital Continuing Education

Distributive Education - An educational activity in which the learner, the instructor, and the educational materials are not all present at the same time, and students and instructors are not able to interact in real time.

Video Instructor Led Training (VILT) - training that is delivered in a virtual or simulated environment, or when instructor and learner are in separate locations. Virtual instruction environments are designed to simulate the traditional classroom or learning experience. VILT can be conducted synchronously or asynchronously. This counts as “live instructor” for EMS education.

Approved Inactive Status – An EMR, EMT, AEMT or EMSI certified person may enter a voluntary “Approved Inactive” status by applying on an OEMS form. They may resume normal certification and practice upon completing the usual recertification requirements. During the inactive period, the person may not practice in any way, including as a volunteer. This allows a person to remain inactive for a period without the need to retake an initial course.

Resources

[NREMT Agency Guide to Recertification](#) – This document outlines the NREMT requirements for recertification continuing education.

[NREMT One Page Grid – All Levels of NCCR](#) – Outline the topic and hour requirement for NCCR continuing education by level of certified provider.

Detailed education outlines for NCCR programs:

- [EMR NCCP](#)
- [EMT NCCP](#)
- [AEMT NCCP](#)
- [Paramedic NCCP](#)

One-page flyers regarding NCCR programs:

- [EMR Brochure](#)
- [EMT Brochure](#)
- [AEMT Brochure](#)
- [Paramedic Brochure](#)

[NREMT Standardized Course Guide](#)

[NREMT Webpage about NCCP](#)

Note to instructors: The NREMT “Agency Guide to Recertification” and education outlines are hereby incorporated by reference as official policy of the OEMS. All continuing education programs shall follow these guidelines.

Note to providers: This document refers to certification practices only. Local EMS organizations and sponsor hospital medical directors may continue to apply other requirements to EMS personnel such as certification in ACLS, PALS, BLS, compliance with policies and procedures and specific trainings or skill competencies.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. May a certified person whose certification expires on September 20 or December 31, 2019 wait until after January 1, 2020 to complete recertification training in order to avoid taking the current examination?**
 - a. Allowing one's certification to expire is not advised. All certified personnel should strive to complete all recertification education well before their expiration date and prepare for a 4 to 6 week timeframe for processing.
- 2. Should a certified provider submit continuing education certificates to OEMS?**
 - a. No – providers should keep their proof of completion of continuing education and produce it upon request of the Department. The NREMT.org website allows for uploading of documents for safe keeping.
- 3. Can a provider hold NREMT certification in place of Connecticut state certification?**
 - a. No – The state certification is permission to practice and must be maintained. NREMT certification is one route of earning state certification.
- 4. Will expiration dates be changed to match the NREMT cycle?**
 - a. No – The current calendar-quarter based system of expiration will be maintained.
- 5. Who may document skills competency?**
 - a. Certified EMS instructors may document skills competency using the NREMT.org website.
 - b. Agency approved “training officers” may document skills competency for affiliated EMS professionals. Unaffiliated EMS professionals must have their skills verified by an EMS instructor.
- 6. How does a certified provider get an account on NREMT.org?**
 - a. Providers should wait for further directions from OEMS. NREMT will create an account and distribute directions on how to claim the account.

Sample EMT Recertification Cycle

This outline could apply to an EMT whose certification expires on September 30, 2021. This is a representation only and does not need to be followed exactly.

During the period of October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2021, the EMT will complete the following:

1. **NREMT NCCR – 20 hours of compliant education**
 - a. 12 hours classroom
 - b. 4 hours online CME
 - c. 4 hours live distance education (Virtual Instructor Led)
2. **NREMT LCCR/ICCR – 20 hours of compliant education**
 - a. 1 hour Bloodborne Pathogens at local agency
 - b. 2 hours EMS journal article CME
 - c. 3 hours CPR certification course
 - d. 2 hours stroke CME at local hospital
 - e. 8 hours PHTLS course
 - f. 2 hours call review with sponsor hospital physician
 - g. 2 hours skill verification with EMS-I

After each training session, the EMT will utilize their NREMT.org account to log their education hours and upload a course completion certificate.

During the final six months of the certification cycle (between April 1, 2021 and September 30, 2021) the EMT will utilize their eLicense account to file a renewal application with the Department of Public Health. In this application they will verify that they have completed the required continuing education, subject to audit by the Department.

Please note: This applies to Connecticut EMT certification.

To recertify NREMT certification, visit NREMT.org.

Connecticut and the NREMT – All Providers

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Are currently certified providers (EMR, EMT) who do not hold NREMT certification required to become nationally certified?**
 - a. **No** – Currently Connecticut certified EMR and EMT personnel may choose to continue as state certified providers only, however they must utilize the new system of education to maintain certification (see NCCP below)
2. **Do future certified providers (EMR, EMT, AEMT) have to become nationally certified?**
 - a. **Yes** – All levels of EMS providers will require NREMT certification. Any person certified after 1/1/2020 will be required to maintain NREMT certification as a pre-requisite of becoming recertified as an EMR, EMT or AEMT.
3. **How does a person who once held NREMT certification become recertified?**
 - a. The NREMT “Mark King Initiative” allows any certified provider who held NREMT certification to regain that certification without retesting. They must maintain their certification with continuing education thereafter. (This applies to every EMT and paramedic certified or licensed since 1998 when Connecticut began using the NREMT)
 - b. The fee is \$10 for EMR, \$15 for EMT or AEMT and \$20 for paramedic.
4. **What will happen to refresher classes and testing?**
 - a. Refresher classes and tests as currently conducted will no longer exist. The new model will include “Continuing Education” like all other medical professions. See “NCCP” below for details. The current paper and pencil EMR and EMT refresher exam will no longer be required.
5. **What is the National Continued Competency Program (NCCP)?**
 - a. NCCP is a continuing education system approved by NREMT and adopted by Connecticut DPH for the ongoing education of EMS providers. Instead of a “refresher course” the NCCP incorporates three categories of learning:
 - i. National Competencies – Information for all providers nationwide.
 - ii. Local Competencies – Information for local and state needs.
 - iii. Individual Competencies – Information that interests the individual provider

	EMR	EMT	AEMT	Paramedic
National	8	20	25	30
Local	4	10	12.5	15
Individual	4	10	12.5	15
Total Hours	16	40	50	60

[Learn more about NCCP at www.NREMT.org](http://www.NREMT.org)

6. **Does NCCP allow online and other distance education programs?**
 - a. **Yes** – A majority of the educational hours may be met utilizing distance education. See the link above for details (Example: EMT – 24 hours of Distance Education are accepted)
7. **Will EMS instructors still have a role in continuing education?**
 - a. **Yes** – EMS instructors will still be vital in the development and deployment of quality initial and continuing education under the updated system. Continuing education will still be subject to approval by OEMS just as current refresher courses are approved.
8. **May an agency’s in-service training count as continuing education towards NCCP requirements?**
 - a. **Yes** – If in-service training has been developed in conjunction with an EMS instructor and meets the standards for continuing education as set forth by OEMS, CAPCE, medical direction and other accrediting bodies. (This may include CPR, blood borne pathogens, extrication, ACLS and other courses)
9. **Will Connecticut continue to support the certification of EMRs at age 14 and EMTs at age 16?**

- a. **Yes** – Connecticut will continue to allow EMRs to be certified at age 14 and EMTs to be certified at age 16.

10. Does the NREMT certify 16 and 17 year old EMT providers?

- a. **No** – Currently, NREMT does not provide national certification for EMTs under the age of 18. However, Connecticut will continue to support the certification of EMTs aged 16 and 17. Those aged 16 when completing their cognitive and psychomotor exams (written and practical) may apply to the NREMT for national certification on their 18th birthday and obtain NREMT certification, however must complete both exams again. Those aged 17 when completing their cognitive and psychomotor exams (written and practical) may apply to the NREMT for national certification on their 18th birthday and obtain NREMT certification without retesting.

11. Does the NREMT certify EMR’s aged 14-17?

- a. **Yes** – NREMT and Connecticut both support the certification of EMRs at age 14 and older.

12. Can other education count towards NREMT recertification?

- a. **Yes** – Related college, medical and related training courses may be counted towards recertification hours under the “Individual Component.” Typical courses may include Anatomy & Physiology, biology, chemistry, nursing school, ACLS, wilderness EMT and critical care paramedic. Programs that should not be applied include management courses, instructor courses, preceptor hours, skills examiner duties or volunteer time.

13. What is the cost of NREMT certification and recertification?

- a. Initial certification includes the cognitive exam fee. If a first time applicant fails the exam, they must pay the exam fee again. Recertification includes reconciliation of continuing education hours and issuance of new card.

	EMR	EMT	AEMT	Paramedic
Initial	\$75	\$80	\$115	\$125
Recertify	\$10	\$15	\$15	\$20

14. What is Recertification by Examination?

- a. NREMT allows a one-time “High-Stakes” attempt at recertification by registering for and taking the cognitive computer based exam in place of completing the NCCP continuing education hours. If the candidate fails this exam, they must complete the full NCCP in order to obtain recertification. The cost of this exam is the same as the initial cost of certification listed above.

15. How many providers are currently certified in Connecticut? (9/4/2018)

	EMR	EMT	AEMT	Paramedic	Total
Connecticut	6,564	12,527	288	2,427	21,806
NREMT	5	3,349	23	768	4,145

16. Will the practical exam for new EMT’s be changed with adoption of the NREMT?

- a. **No** – The practical exams will not change due to the adoption of the NREMT. However, there are several updates to the current practical exam system that are based on best practices, not on NREMT requirements.

17. How will recertification cycles be affected?

- a. EMR, EMT and AEMT personnel will have a 2-year certification cycle, similar to the NREMT cycle. Paramedics will still have an annual license renewal and will have a 2-year NREMT cycle.

18. Why should Connecticut adopt NREMT certification as a standard for all levels of EMS provider?

- a. NREMT is the industry expert at developing validated and reliable EMS exams that provide the people of the State of Connecticut with an independent standard by which to measure EMS professionals. Full adoption of the NREMT process will also make it easier for certified providers to obtain certification in other states.

19. How does this affect EMS Instructors?

- a. NREMT does not provide an instructor certification. The EMS instructor certification will remain a Department of Public Health process.