



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
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Department of Public Health  
Office of Emergency Medical Services  
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**ADVISORY 20-05-01 UPDATED**

**TO:** MA Accredited EMT Training Institutions, Non-accredited Training Providers, Licensed Ambulance Services and Chief Examiners  
**CC:** EMCAB Members  
**FROM:** W. Scott Cluett III, Director, OEMS  
**DATE:** May 23, 2020, updated September 16, 2020, updated April 8, 2021  
**RE:** In-Person EMS Courses and Psychomotor Exams Safety Requirements During COVID-19 State of Emergency

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The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (Department) continues to work with federal, state and local partners on the outbreak of novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2, and we continue to appreciate the essential role you have in responding to this evolving situation.

The Department is allowing EMS training activities – both initial and continuing education – and certification psychomotor exams to take place, but only in accordance with the precautions set out below, to keep EMS personnel safe from exposure.

EMS Training: Department-accredited EMS training institutions (ATIs) and non-accredited training providers (collectively, “training providers”) may continue to operate EMT and Paramedic courses, as long as they can do so in accordance with the requirements below, which are based on current Department and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Infection control guidelines, including social distancing.

During the declared state of emergency, for all EMS courses held in Massachusetts, whether initial or continuing education, all EMS training providers must comply with the following requirements:

- Individuals who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home and not participate in training at course sites.
- Every attempt shall be made to deliver didactic content using distributive, or virtual instructor led methods, to decrease the time students are in contact with others.
- In-person didactic education can take place in small groups of students and faculty, in accordance with current CDC/Department guidance for social distancing.
- For in-person components of courses, training providers must implement a symptom-monitoring program, to include:
  - Before entering the facility daily, the training provider must document symptom checks for all instructors, students and staff on site, which should include queries about exposure risk to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients, presence of

- symptoms, and presence of fever of 100° F or greater.
  - Use CDC guidance for risk assessment for healthcare providers, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assessment-hcp.html>.
  - If any instructors, students or staff present with a fever, or any symptoms, they must be excluded from the premises.
- Training providers must provide education to all instructors, students and staff on the donning, use, and doffing of protective personal equipment (PPE).
- Training providers must limit groups of students and staff within a room to allow for distancing of at least 6 feet, as training duties permit.
- Training providers must ensure classroom spaces utilized have adequate distancing for all occupants. Training providers sponsoring in-person course session must adhere to current state guidance for COVID-19 social distancing, including but not limited to, the Governor's order on Safety Standards for Workplaces.
- All instructors, students and staff must wash their hands immediately upon entering the training site, upon donning or doffing PPE, and frequently throughout their stay. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used when handwashing facilities are not available
- All instructors, students and staff must wear surgical masks at all times when at the training site.
- All students must thoroughly wash hands prior to and after performing psychomotor skills, including patient assessment.
- When performing assessments or skills involving or near mucous membranes (including eyes, nose, mouth, etc.), students must wear eye protection.
- Training providers must thoroughly clean and decontaminate all spaces and equipment used on a regular basis (at least daily), using EPA-registered agents.

Training providers should source their PPE in a way so as not to reduce the available stock for health care entities, including ambulance services.

Psychomotor Exams: Effective immediately, in accordance with the requirements below, and subject to approval from the Department, psychomotor examinations may be performed.

ATIs that sponsor and conduct psychomotor examinations during the declared state of emergency (exam sponsors) must comply with the following requirements:

- Individuals who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home and not participate in EMS psychomotor exams.
- Exam sponsors are expected to be in compliance with all guidelines outlined in this Advisory and all other applicable Department and CDC guidance.
- Exam location must allow for multiple large rooms for student gathering, stations and examiner holding, to allow for social distancing spacing of all participants in accordance with Department and CDC guidance. The exam location (specifically candidate orientation and holding area) must accommodate limiting groups of candidates and

examination staff within a room to allow for distancing of at least 6 feet, as examination duties permit.

- Examinations scheduled (or confirmed) before the effective date of this Advisory may be modified or consolidated, by contacting the Department.
- Exam sponsors must commit to a minimum of 8 candidates (in accordance with space considerations to enable distancing) per exam in order to receive confirmation from the Department
- Exam sponsors must implement a symptom-monitoring program, to include:
  - Before entering the facility daily, the sponsor must document symptom checks for all Examiners, candidates and staff on site, which should include queries about exposure risk to COVID-19 patients, presence of symptoms, and presence or absence of fever.
  - Use CDC guidance for risk assessment for healthcare providers, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>.
  - If any Examiners, candidates or staff present with a fever, or any symptoms, they must be excluded from the premises.
- Exam sponsors must provide education to all examiners, candidates and staff on the donning, use, and doffing of protective personal equipment (PPE).
- All Examiners, candidates and staff must perform hand hygiene or wash their hands immediately upon entering the exam site, upon donning and doffing any PPE, and frequently throughout their stay.
- All Examiners, candidates and staff must wear surgical masks at all times when at the exam site.
- All candidates must thoroughly wash hands prior to and after performing psychomotor skills, including assessment.
- When performing assessments or skills involving or near mucous membranes (including eyes, nose, mouth, etc.), students must wear eye protection.
- Exam sponsors must thoroughly decontaminate all spaces and equipment used on a regular basis (at least daily), using EPA-registered agents.
- Exam sponsors are expected to make their sites available to outside candidates whenever possible, and in accordance with social distancing standards in this Advisory.

While Chief Examiners may make modifications to the psychomotor examination format, by staggering candidates or decreasing the number of candidates at a given time, the substance of the exam, including station content and evaluation criteria, must remain in accordance with current Department standards.

Thank you all for your patience and flexibility. For any questions, please contact Susan Lewis, NRP/IC, Deputy Director, at [Susan.K.Lewis@mass.gov](mailto:Susan.K.Lewis@mass.gov).