

**M A S S A C H U S E T T S**  
**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENT MANUAL**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 14, 2021 **AUTHORIZATION:** W. Scott Cluett III, Director

**TITLE:** EMT Continuing Education Standards

**SUPERSEDES:** August 25, 2020

**PURPOSE:**

To further specify the standards for EMT continuing education, pursuant to 105 CMR 170.810(C)(2); 170.820(C)(2), and 170.840(C)(2), including: (1) the subject matter of training programs eligible for EMT continuing education credit by the Department and eligible courses to be used for renewal of EMT certification; (2) the administrative standards for continuing education submission; and (3) the administrative standards with respect to EMT submission and tracking of their continuing education record through the Department-designated web-based continuing education tracking platform for Massachusetts EMTs for this purpose; (4) the transition timeline for changes made within this document; and (5) the standardized courses that have Department pre-approval numbers and requirements for use of these approval numbers.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**I. Administrative and Subject Matter Standards for Continuing Education and Use of the Department-designated Web-based Tracking Site:**

- A. To qualify to meet the continuing education requirements pursuant to 105 CMR 170.810(C)(2); 170.820(C)(2), and 170.840(C)(2), EMT continuing education training programs must be:
1. Department approved in accordance with 105 CMR 170.945, as documented by having received an OEMS approval or, in the case of those offered by Department accredited EMT training institutions, OEMS registration number; or
  2. approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Pre-Hospital Continuing Education (CAPCE), as documented by having a valid CAPCE approval number and not listed in section I. (C). CAPCE is a private, nonprofit national accrediting body for EMS continuing education courses and course providers.
- B. Course content eligible to be used by EMTs to meet the continuing education requirements for recertification and be eligible to receive MDPH/OEMS approval must be:
1. related to delivery of patient care within the EMS scope of practice, or
  2. within the defined roles and responsibilities of the EMT, or
  3. related to vaccine administration, in accordance with Special Protocols issued pursuant to a Commissioner's Order under 105 CMR 700.003(H), for those EMTs authorized under such Order to administer vaccine, during the time the Order is in effect.

All training must be based on the categories and objectives contained in the Statewide Treatment Protocols, Special Protocols issued in accordance with, and in effect during, a Commissioner's Order under 105 CMR 700.003(H), the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT's) National Highway Transportation Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) National EMS Education Standards, National EMS Core Content, and the Commonwealth's EMS laws, regulations and administrative requirements. Please see DOT/NHTSA's National EMS Core Content for a detailed list of approvable subjects, in addition to matters covered in the Statewide Treatment Protocols, state EMS laws, regulations and administrative requirements. There may also be other topics that are related to pre-hospital patient care that do not appear in the National EMS Education Standards, National EMS Core Content or the Statewide Treatment Protocols. For such topics, the proposed course outline must demonstrate specifically the patient care portions of the course or how the course relates to the defined roles and responsibilities of an EMT in attendance.

- C. Course content that is NOT eligible to be used by EMTs to meet continuing education requirements for recertification or be eligible to receive Department approval (regardless of CAPCE approval):
1. Programs that do not reasonably relate to the National EMS Education Standards, National EMS Core Content, Statewide Treatment Protocols, Special Protocols issued in accordance with, and in effect during, a

**M A S S A C H U S E T T S**  
**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENT MANUAL**

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**TITLE:** EMT Continuing Education Standards

**SUPERSEDES:** August 25, 2020

Commissioner's Order under 105 CMR 700.003(H) or Massachusetts EMS statute, regulations and administrative requirements.

2. Programs for Police, Fire, Rescue, Dispatch or other employment required training that does not include content directly related to use of patient care devices and equipment carried on ambulances and/or delivery of patient care by EMTs.
3. Programs for management, leadership, or instructor methodology courses (train the trainer).
4. Clinical or Field Internship requirements.
5. Performance of duty as an EMT, preceptor, or examiner.
6. Programs with the same approval number, taken a second time or more within the same renewal cycle will not count towards multiple times within that renewal cycle.

Please note that the Department acknowledges the value of other training courses related to other aspects of public safety or employment, but reminds EMTs and ambulance services that the purpose of EMS continuing education is for EMTs to update and maintain continued knowledge and competency in the scope of their EMT certification. Courses and training required for other aspects of employment or other certification and/or licensure that are not directly related to use of patient care devices and equipment carried on ambulances and/or delivery of patient care by EMTs, regardless of CAPCE approval, are not eligible for EMS continuing education numbers or to be used towards EMT certification renewal.

- D. Courses that have Department approval for continuing education credit hours are documented as such with an "OEMS continuing education number." This number is an alphanumeric consisting of the following parts: first two digits to indicate date of approval after April 1 of the year, then two digits to indicate a date equal to or prior to March 31 of the expiring year, then a dash, then the character "R", then a digit to indicate the reviewing Regional EMS Council (0 through 5, with 0 being issued by OEMS), then a dash, then five digits indicate the unique course number, then a dash, then the character "T", then one digit to indicate the type of instructional method by which the course is being run. For example, "1617-R3-12345-T1" would be a course to be run within the approval window of April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017, with approval/registration from Region 3, with unique course number 12345 held as an in-person, one-time occurrence course.

The Department's course approval runs from April 1 to March 31. Courses may be issued blanket approval if the same training course is to be offered multiple times within the approval window. Courses that have the same content, but different methods of instruction must obtain separate continuing education numbers for each method of instruction the class is taught.

Course instructional methods are designated as follows:

- T1 – A Department-approved "in-person" course with a single occurrence (may be a course made up of single or multiple days)
- T2 – A Department-approved "in-person" course with reoccurring occurrences (referred to as "blanket" approval)
  - i. A course sponsor is responsible for notifying the applicable Regional EMS Council office of their intention of using the existing OEMS course approval number with the date and time.
- T3 – A Department-approved distributive education course
  - i. Distributive Education is defined by the Department, in accordance with CAPCE's definition, as an instructional model that allows instructor, participants, and content to be located in different locations

**M A S S A C H U S E T T S**  
**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENT MANUAL**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 14, 2021 **AUTHORIZATION:** W. Scott Cluett III, Director

**TITLE:** EMT Continuing Education Standards

**SUPERSEDES:** August 25, 2020

so that instruction and learning may occur independent of time and place; the learner, the instructor, and the educational materials are not all present in the same place at the same time, and students and instructors are not able to interact in real time. Continuing education activities that are offered on the Internet, via video, or listening to audio tapes are considered distributive learning. These courses are self-paced or do not have an instructor leading the course during instruction (having an instructor “on-call” does not qualify as instructor-led training). In order to receive Department approval for a T3 course, a summative knowledge assessment (i.e., end course examination) must be completed and retained with the course attendance.

T4 – Pre-approved Department-issued continuing education course approval, for standardized courses with set curricula. This area is limited to widely distributed courses with consistent content and evaluation tools developed by a central organization. Please see chart in section III.

T5 – A Department-approved Virtual Instructor Lead Training (VILT)

- i. VILT training is defined by the Department, in accordance with CAPCE’s ‘definition, as a course that is a learning model which utilizes online technology to deliver educational programs in a virtual classroom. The instructor and participant are in different locations but have the ability to see teaching materials and verbally communicate synchronously during a live session. Instructor/learner interactions must be possible in real time via simultaneous visual and audio communication during the session. Chat-based interfaces may be used for housekeeping or support actions, but all learning activities must support real time audio. (Examples: a live webinar with synchronous audio and visual interaction with the instructor). In order to receive Department approval for a T5 course, a summative knowledge assessment (i.e. end course examination) must be completed and retained with the course attendance.

E. Course sponsors must have students and instructors sign an OEMS approved roster for every occurrence of a course taught by the following teaching methods; T1, T2, or T4. Course sponsors of courses taught by T3 or T5 method must ensure course attendance. This roster or the course attendance must be retained by the course sponsor and is subject to audit. Course completion documentation must be provided to the EMT at the completion of the course. Course sponsors shall issue course completion certificates or provide attendees with a copy of the roster signed by the instructor and student. The course sponsor is responsible for retaining the original signed roster for seven years. If personnel have Massachusetts EMT certification, they are to use that certification number on the attendance roster; not another state or NREMT certification number.

1. OEMS Course completion certificates must include the following (must be legible in ink or typed):
  - i. Attendee’s full name as it appears on their certification card; and
  - ii. Course instructor’s full name and signature; and
  - iii. Date of course completion and if applicable, dates of all course sessions; and
  - iv. Number of approved hours; and
  - v. Which portion of the course, if any, meets any of the National Continued Competency Requirements (NCCR) for the specific level of EMS personnel and which NCCR version it follows; and
  - vi. OEMS Continuing Education Approval Number.
2. CAPCE policies regarding the requirements for course completion certifications should be reference for any course run with CAPCE approval.

F. Specific situations eligible for EMS continuing education:

**M A S S A C H U S E T T S**  
**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENT MANUAL**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 14, 2021 **AUTHORIZATION:** W. Scott Cluett III, Director

**TITLE:** EMT Continuing Education Standards

**SUPERSEDES:** August 25, 2020

1. EMT Basic credit hours for Initial Paramedic or Advanced EMT training –
  - i. Training institutions with Department accreditation (ATI) at the ALS level will receive a continuing education course approval number for the EMT Basic and/or AEMT content covered in an initial AEMT or Paramedic training course for which the ATI has received a Department registration. The Department will assign two numbers to each course; one for 20 hours to count towards Local and Individual category and one for 20 hours to count towards the National category. The ATI is responsible for determining which student is eligible to receive each number and issue the student documentation of such. Only students who have successfully completed the entire course within their two year renewal cycle are eligible to be issued the hours for the National category. All enrolled students may be issued the 20 hours to count towards the Local and Individual category after completion of 20 hours of the program.
  - ii. If the course splits a student’s renewal cycle, the Program Director may submit to the Department for a third approval number on the other side of the split.
  - iii. Clinical and Field Internship hours are not eligible to receive credit.
2. Instructor credit for teaching continuing education or initial courses
  - i. Continuing Education Instructors: Educators may receive credit for courses with OEMS continuing education numbers a credit hour-for-credit hour basis, for one occurrence per certification cycle (i.e. an EMT teaching a two-hour class on “Burns” approved for credit may only receive two hours of credit under that OEMS continuing education number, regardless of how many times the EMT teaches this course in that cycle).
  - ii. Initial Education Instructors: Educators who present and teach students new material may receive credit for the hours that they taught. Educators who present and teach an entire initial training course at their level of certification may receive full credit for their own recertification requirements (National, Local, and Individual). Teaching assistants who are reinforcing material already presented or administering lab scenarios are not eligible to receive credit unless they are teaching unique material. Submission of Special Credit request for teaching credit hours to OEMS must include a letter from the ATI’s Program Director. The letter must attest to the dates and hours an educator taught under a specific initial course approval number.
3. Other health profession courses, such as nursing, physician assistant, respiratory therapist, etc.
  - i. It is the individual EMS personnel’s responsibility to take classes that have been pre-approved or understand that there is a chance any special credit submission may not be awarded credit.
  - ii. In order to be eligible for special credit, courses must encompass content applicable to the provision of prehospital emergency medical care as an EMT working in connection with an ambulance service
  - iii. Submission of special credit requests to OEMS must include A) a completed form supplied by the Department , B) outline or syllabus showing course content, and C) proof of course completion. These courses may only be applied to the Local and Individual recertification requirements.
4. College (Undergraduate or Graduate level) courses with subjects that have related EMS content as outlined
  - i. Credits can be applied for courses that relate to the role and practice of an EMT, and are awarded credit based on an individual review by the OEMS. 8 hours of credit is awarded for each credit hour of course (2 credit course is issued 16 hours of credit). These courses could include, but are not limited to, anatomy, physiology, biology and pharmacology.

**M A S S A C H U S E T T S**  
**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENT MANUAL**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 14, 2021 **AUTHORIZATION:** W. Scott Cluett III, Director

**TITLE:** EMT Continuing Education Standards

**SUPERSEDES:** August 25, 2020

- ii. Submission of Special Credit requests by OEMS must include A) a completed form supplied by the Department, B) outline or syllabus showing course content, and C) proof of course completion. These courses may only be applied to the Local and Individual recertification requirements.
5. Standardized Courses
- i. The table at the end of this document lists Department blanket approval numbers for specified courses. A course sponsor is responsible for notifying the applicable Regional EMS Council office of their intention of using the existing OEMS course approval number with the date and time, having attendees signs a roster at the time of the course, issuing appropriate course completion documentation as listed above, and any other requirements in this document or regulations that apply.
    - 1. Courses on this list that have approval as distributive online classes (T3) do not need to notify a regional council.
  - ii. To be eligible to use a blanket Department approval number, a standardized course must include a practical or in-person component (may not be done online), unless specifically noted as being completed online.
  - iii. Initial BCLS (i.e., CPR) and ACLS courses will not receive credit, as they are required for initial certification; credit may be awarded for BCLS and ACLS renewals as appropriate.
6. Education for EMTs operating in connection with an ambulance service licensed at the critical care transport (CCT) level, holding a special project approval (SP approval) from the Department, or, for EMTs working for an ambulance service's or other EMS agency's Department-approved Community EMS (CEMS) or Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) program.
- i. Applications for CCT or SP course approval are to be submitted to the Regional EMS Council with documentation of the service's CCT service license or SP approval and how the content taught in the course relates to the CCT license or SP. EMTs taking these courses are only to be working at an ambulance service holding a CCT license or a Department-issued SP approval. All other EMTs are not eligible for such continuing education credit unless the SP is within the EMS scope of practice.
  - ii. Applications for CEMS or MIH course approval are to be submitted to the Department directly, as part of an application for CEMS or MIH program approval, or at another time with a copy of the CEMS or MIH program approval letter. The application should include specific details of how the content taught in the course relates to the CEMS or MIH approval. EMTs taking these courses are only to be working for an ambulance service or other EMS agency with CEMS or MIH program approval and in connection with that CEMS or MIH program specifically.
- G. Uses of Department designated web-based continued education tracking platform:
- 1. EMTs:
    - i. An EMT is responsible for ensuring completed courses are accurately entered onto the Department designated continuing education tracking website. Courses may be entered by the individual EMT or an agency's training officer, but the EMT assumes responsibility for the accuracy of the information. The EMT must retain proof of completion for each course listed under his or her name and certification for 3 years from course-end date.
    - ii. After meeting the minimum continuing education course requirements, the EMT is to submit the online continuing education recertification packet to be reviewed by a training officer using the Department-designated continuing education tracking website.

**M A S S A C H U S E T T S**  
**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENT MANUAL**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 14, 2021 **AUTHORIZATION:** W. Scott Cluett III, Director

**TITLE:** EMT Continuing Education Standards

**SUPERSEDES:** August 25, 2020

- iii. The EMT is responsible for providing proof of attendance to the Training Officer, as necessary, in order for the Training Officer to review accuracy of the information entered for all personnel on their agency's roster of affiliated EMTs.
- 2. Training Officers:
  - i. Each EMS Agency listed on the Department-designated continuing education tracking website must have at least two designated Training Officers listed on this site.
    - 1. At least one Training Officer must be currently certified by the Department as an EMT (at any level); and
    - 2. At least one Training Officer must be a member of the agency. An additional Training Officer may be a member of the agency or may be a third-party vendor or a member of another ambulance service.
  - ii. The Training Officers shall at minimum be responsible for the following related to the Department-designated continuing education tracking website :
    - 1. Maintaining the EMS Agency's demographic information;
    - 2. Reviewing and approving affiliation requests for all levels of EMTs;
    - 3. Maintaining an accurate roster of affiliated EMTs;
    - 4. Reviewing submitted continuing education recertification packets for accuracy based on proof of attendance documentation, and
    - 5. Attestation of the continued competency of skills for EMTs in accordance with NREMT guidelines and OEMS Administrative Requirements, as applicable.
  - iii. A Training Officer may not verify his or her own continuing education packet for recertification and/or skills.
- 3. Affiliate Hospital Medical Directors:
  - i. Advanced EMTs and Paramedics who also hold National Registry of EMTs (NREMT) certification must have their service's affiliate hospital medical director or service medical director verify continued skill competency as part of the renewal of their NREMT certification.

**H. Continuing Education Course Category and Topical Hour Requirements:**

- 1. Minimum content requirements to meet recertification requirements in 105 CMR 170.810(C)(2), 170.820(C)(2), and 170.840(C)(2): Massachusetts certified EMTs without NREMT certification, or NREMT certified personnel affiliated with a Massachusetts agency on NREMT.org must meet the NREMT's National Continued Competency Program (NCCP) requirements. In accordance with this program, EMTs must take continuing education courses falling into three categories: National, Local and Individual. The national category requirements are determined by the NREMT Board of Directors based upon data and input from EMS researchers, EMS physician and EMS provider stakeholders. The local category requirement is determined by 1) State EMS Offices, 2) EMS region (where applicable), or 3) agency-level administrators (for example Medical Directors and Training Officers). The individual category requirements are determined by the individual provider. Please refer to the NCCP documentation available on the Department website, [www.mass.gov/dph/oems](http://www.mass.gov/dph/oems), or from the NREMT, at [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org).
- 2. Distributive education restrictions: Due to the novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) 2020 outbreak, from now through June 30, 2021, these restrictions are temporarily adjusted as follows:
  - i. For EMS certification expiring in 2020 and 2021: All continuing education course hours to meet the National, Local and Individual categories may be done through distributive education.

**M A S S A C H U S E T T S**  
**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENT MANUAL**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 14, 2021 **AUTHORIZATION:** W. Scott Cluett III, Director

**TITLE:** EMT Continuing Education Standards

**SUPERSEDES:** August 25, 2020

- ii. For EMS certification expiring in 2022 or after: Only one-thirds (1/3) of the continuing education hours to meet the National category may be done through distributive education; none of the hours for the Local category and all of the hours to meet the Individual category may be done through distributive education, in accordance with NCCP.
  - 3. Local Category of NCCP for Massachusetts EMTs: There are no required courses or content that must be taken for this category at this time. Please keep in mind that all EMTs working for an ambulance service as EMTs have required courses in order to staff ambulances. If these courses receive OEMS Continuing Education approval numbers, they may be eligible towards renewal of an individual's EMT certification.
- I. Minimum hours requirements to meet recertification requirements in 105 CMR 170.810(C)(2), 170.820(C)(2) and 170.840(C)(2):
- i. EMT-Basics: The total number of hours required under the NCCP is 40 hours – 20 National, 10 Local and 10 Individual topics.
  - ii. Advanced EMT: The total number of hours required under the NCCP is 50 hours – 25 National; 12.5 Local and 12.5 Individual topics.
  - iii. Paramedics: The total number of hours required under the NCCP is 60 hours – 30 National, 15 Local and 15 Individual topics.

**M A S S A C H U S E T T S**  
**OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENT MANUAL**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 14, 2021 **AUTHORIZATION:** W. Scott Cluett III, Director

**TITLE:** EMT Continuing Education Standards

**SUPERSEDES:** August 25, 2020

**III. Standardized courses and Pre-approved Department-issued continuing education course numbers**

Please reference Section I. (F)(5) above for when to use these numbers. A course sponsor is responsible for notifying the applicable Regional EMS Council office their intention of using the existing course approval number with the date and time, having attendees signs a roster at the time of the course, and any other requirements in this document or regulation that apply. Unless the appropriate requirements under Section I. (F)(5) are followed, no credit for the below classes will be awarded after the fact.

XXXX in the number below is a placeholder for the year. When notifying the Regional EMS Council of use, replace XXXX with the appropriate years.

Please note, many of these courses may have CAPCE approval. It is up to the course sponsor to decide based on the students in attendance what is the most appropriate approval number to run a course under. Course sponsors may elect to apply for separate continuing education numbers if their content or method of instruction differs from the standardized course content or instruction.

| COURSE TITLE   | HOURS | OEMS CON ED #    |
|--|-------|------------------|
| ACLS Refresher (AHA)   | 6     | XXXX-R0-10011-T4 |
| Advanced Medical Life Support: AMLS (NAEMT)                      | 16    | XXXX-R0-10012-T4 |
| Advanced Medical Life Support: AMLS Refresher (NAEMT)            | 4     | XXXX-R0-10013-T4 |
| BLS CPR: Healthcare Provider Refresher                           | 4     | XXXX-R0-10014-T4 |
| Emergency Pediatric Care (NAEMT)                                 | 16    | XXXX-R0-10015-T4 |
| EMS Safety (NAEMT)   | 4     | XXXX-R0-10016-T4 |
| FEMA-NIMS: IS-100.c (only online)                                | 3     | XXXX-R0-10017-T3 |
| FEMA-NIMS: IS-200.c (only online)                                | 3     | XXXX-R0-10018-T3 |
| FEMA-NIMS: IS-700.b (only online)                                | 3     | XXXX-R0-10019-T3 |
| FEMA-NIMS: IS-800.c (only online)                                | 3     | XXXX-R0-10020-T3 |
| Initial MA First Responder (MDPH/OEMS AR 2-100)                  | 14    | XXXX-R0-10021-T4 |
| International Trauma Life Support: ITLS                          | 16    | XXXX-R0-10022-T4 |
| Neonatal Resuscitation Provider (AAP)                            | 8     | XXXX-R0-10023-T4 |
| PALS (AHA)   | 8     | XXXX-R0-10024-T4 |
| PALS Refresher (AHA)   | 6     | XXXX-R0-10025-T4 |
| Pediatric Education for Pre-hospital Providers (AAP)             | 8     | XXXX-R0-10026-T4 |
| Pediatric Emergency Assessment Recognition & Stabilization (AHA) | 6     | XXXX-R0-10027-T4 |
| Pediatric International Trauma Life Support: P-ITLS              | 8     | XXXX-R0-10028-T4 |
| Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support: PHTLS (NAEMT)                  | 16    | XXXX-R0-10029-T4 |
| Principles of Ethics (NAEMT)                                     | 16    | XXXX-R0-10030-T4 |
| Tactical Combat Casualty Care (NAEMT)                            | 16    | XXXX-R0-10031-T4 |