

PENNSYLVANIA MASSAGE THERAPY BOARD
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How can I contact the Board office?

- A. Phone number: 717- 783-7155
Via support ticket on www.pals.pa.gov
Mailing address: State Board of Massage Therapy
PO Box 2649
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

Q. How do I file a complaint with the Board?

- A. If you wish to file a complaint you may do so online at www.pals.pa.gov by clicking the File a Complaint link in the box on the lefthand side.

Q. Where can I apply for licensure?

- A. You can apply online at www.pals.pa.gov.
The following applications are online applications in PALS:
- Massage Therapist Licensure by Examination
 - Massage Therapist Licensure by Reciprocity
 - Massage Therapist Temporary Practice Permit
 - Massage Therapist Reactivation of Expired/Inactive License

Q. Can I get a temporary license?

- A. Only recent graduates of a massage therapy program are eligible for a temporary license. The Board may issue a Temporary Practice Permit during the six-month period after completion of your massage therapy program. For more information refer to the Massage Therapy Law at Section 5(c). Applicants for temporary licensure must still meet all the licensure requirements with the exception of the exam, before a temporary license may be issued.
- Applicants who have taken the exam are not eligible for a temporary permit.
 - Applicants who have taken the exam and failed it are not eligible for a temporary permit.

Q. Where can I find information about the examinations?

- A. As of November 1, 2014, the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodyworks (NCBTMB) longer offers an examination. Individuals who previously took the National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage (NCETM) or National Certification Examination or Therapeutic Massage and Bodyworks (NCETMB) examination including the NESL option, offered by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage Boards (NCBTMB) shall contact the NCBTMB directly at www.ncbtmb.org to request their results be released to the Pennsylvania Board of Massage Therapy.

Individuals planning to take the MBLEx offered by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) shall contact the FSMTB directly at www.fsmtb.org to apply for the examination.

- Q. FSMTB/ NCBTMB sent my exam scores to the Board, but my checklist still says, “not received”?**
- A. Exam scores received prior to the submission of your application will be filed under your name and will not be added to your online application until the application is reviewed by an evaluator.
- Q. What is the CPR requirement?**
- A. Basic Adult CPR is required. On-line CPR course are not acceptable. You may take additional training as long as the adult CPR is included in your class. Courses must be hands-on, taken through the American Heart Association, American Red Cross or an agency substantially similar approved by the Board. CPR certification is not counted towards fulfillment of the required credits. A list of approved providers is posted under the Announcements section of the Board’s website.
- Q. My school has closed, and I don’t know how to get my education verified. What should I do?**
- A. You need to locate the custodian of records for the school and have them complete the verification of education form and submit your official transcripts. If you are not able to locate the custodian of records, you can contact the Department of Education for this information. If your education was outside of PA, you will have to check with the Department of Education for that state to see who holds the records for that school.
- Q. In the past ten years, I’ve lived in several states other than Pennsylvania. Will a Pennsylvania State Police criminal background check suffice?**
- A. No. You must submit a state level CHRC from the state in which you reside. Then you can submit either a state level history check for any additional state(s), or an FBI history summary report to cover the rest of the states. FBI will not be accepted for the state in which you reside.
- Q. I requested some third-party documents be sent to the Board. What if they arrive at a different time than my application?**
- A. Any documents received separate from the application are maintained and matched to the applications as they are received or during the time of review.
- Q. How do I reactivate my inactive, or expired license?**
- A. You will need to submit a reactivation application by logging into your account on www.pals.pa.gov and clicking the pencil icon to the left of your license number. The application provides detailed instructions on what documentation is required to be submitted with the application. You must have all 24 hours of continuing education completed, as well as a current certification in CPR, prior to reactivating the license. The continuing education cannot have been completed more than 2 years prior to the date of reactivation.

Q. My license has been in an expired, or inactive status for an extended period of time. Will this make it more difficult to reactive my license?

A. A licensee, whose license has been inactive/expired for 5 or more years, may be required to meet competency requirements as outlined in the Board's regulations at Section 20.31(j). Continued competency is defined as licensed practice in another state for at least 2 of the last 5 years or retaking the exam.

Q. If I have a question about scope of practice or an interpretation of the law or regulations, may I contact the Board office for answers?

A. The Board staff and Counsel cannot provide legal advice or advisory opinions regarding practice questions or interpretations. You may contact your personal or business attorney or a professional massage therapy association.

Q. I completed a Massage Therapy program of less than 600 contact hours, can I still apply for licensure?

A. The Board cannot predetermine if someone is qualified for licensure. The Board's Laws and Regulations are available on our website at www.dos.pa.gov/massagetherapy for your review. If the existing endorsement/reciprocity options do not provide a means of licensure, applicants who hold an active license in another state or country, who have practiced for at least 2 of the last 5 years will be given Act 41 consideration on a case-by-case basis. More information visit <https://www.dos.pa.gov/ProfessionalLicensing/Pages/Act-41-2019.aspx>

Q. Can any of my Massage Therapy program hours be taken online?

A. To apply for licensure as a massage therapist in Pennsylvania, an individual must have completed at least 600 "contact hours" of in-class, postsecondary education instruction approved by the State Board of Massage Therapy Board at a regionally accredited college or university, Pennsylvania private licensed school or its equivalent. Contact hours is defined as in the physical presence of an instructor. No webinars or online courses acceptable.

Q. What are the CE requirements for renewal?

A. All licenses expire January 31 of the odd numbered years. Licensees must complete at least 24 hours of continuing education. 16 of the 24 hours must be contact hours, 4 hours must be in professional ethics and 2 hours must be in ACT 31 recognizing and reporting child abuse from an approved provider as outlined under the Announcements section on the Board's website.

Q. Am I exempt from the CE requirement for my first renewal?

A. Under the Board's Regulations, all licenses expire January 31st of the odd-numbered years. If your initial license is issued during the biennial period, you would be exempt from the CE credits for the biennial period during which your initial license was issued with the exception of the 2 hours in recognizing and reporting child abuse CE.