

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES



August 2019
EMS
Regulations Update

Frequently Asked Questions

Revised October 2020



Office of Emergency Medical Services
Section of Rural and Community Health Systems
Division of Public Health
August 2019

It is an exciting time in Alaska EMS! This is the first major revision of the EMS regulations in over 15 years and it has added an Advanced EMT level, revised the scope of practice, and updated educational standards to meet the demands of a changing EMS landscape. We hope the following information is helpful in answering many of your questions, and if you have further inquiries please feel free to contact the EMS Unit Manager, Todd McDowell at todd.mcdowell@alaska.gov.

Where can I find a copy of the regulations and accompanying documents?

You can find the regulations, EMT Scope of Practice and other supporting documents at the following link.

<https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/View.aspx?id=194931>

Why is this happening?

The State Office of EMS is currently updating scope of practice, curriculum, as well as learning objectives for all EMT Levels. Regulations have not been changed since 2002. The regulations effective, August 21, 2019 will bring our state's EMS practice to current standards.

Who has been working on the 2019 EMS Regulations rollout?

The State of Alaska Office of EMS has been working with a group of EXTREMELY dedicated and experienced EMS instructors, directors, and providers from across Alaska. This group of individuals are known as the Implementation Task Force (ITF). The ITF was assembled by the Advisory Council of EMS (ACEMS). Established in November, 2018 the ITF has been working to bring the new EMS regulations to life by creating new objectives, curriculum, supporting manuals, and other rollout materials supporting the new scope of practice.

Were these changes open to stakeholder and public comment?

Yes. Two periods of public comment were completed and questions as well as comments were given great consideration during the regulation update process.

I am an EMT 2 or EMT 3, will my certification go away?

No. The EMT 2 and EMT 3 levels are an important part of the Alaska EMS system. The scope of practice will change, but EMT 2s and EMT 3s will be able to maintain their certification by completing a transition course involving both cognitive and psychomotor skills, that will update individuals to the new scope of practice.

I keep seeing AEMT, is that the same as National Registry AEMT?

No. In documents, specific to Alaska regulations, AEMT refers to Alaska's AEMT certification. This certification offers a scope of practice that exceeds what is recognized as the scope of practice at the national level. National Registry is a testing body which offers a national certification. We use the National Registry AEMT test, as our certification exam when a candidate takes an AEMT class in Alaska. Persons from out of state with a National Registry AEMT, who wish to become an AEMT in Alaska, will need to take an approved transition course, which is being developed by the ACEMS Implementation Task Force.

I took a Pilot AEMT class at the university will I need to take a transition course?

Yes, you will have to transition as if you were an EMT 3. There will be three pathways for transitioning to Alaska AEMT:

- 1) EMT 3 to Alaska AEMT
- 2) EMT 1 to Alaska AEMT
- 3) NR AEMT to Alaska AEMT

When will changes go in to effect?

The implementation and transition will occur over time. Though the regulations, including the scope of practice, went into effect August 21, 2019, it is only valid after the appropriate transition class has been taken as per regulations. The implementation task force is still finalizing materials for transitions and once these are ready, instructor and provider transitions can begin to occur.

Can I start practicing at the new scope of practice once the new regulations go in to effect?

No, not yet. You must complete a transition course before performing at this new level of care. Students taking pilot classes this fall will still need to meet the guidelines and scope of practice as allowed by the Medical Director.

What if I am not able to complete a transition course in time?

You may be placed in an “inactive status,” or offered a lower level of certification.

I see that endotracheal intubation was removed from the scope of practice for EMT 2s and EMT 3s when does this take effect?

As this skill is not supported by current data at the EMT 2 and EMT 3 level the transition to supraglottic airways (SGAs) will occur more rapidly. All EMT 2s and EMT 3s will need to be transitioned to the exclusive use of SGAs by **September 23, 2019**. Any use of this skill after this date is not allowed.

I have expanded scope (670) now with my department. Will that go away?

Part of the vision of this new scope of practice is to include common expanded scope skills and therapies into appropriate levels. Expanded scope as filed by 670 criteria will still be valid until the end of the department’s certification period. When the department recertifies a new expanded scope application will need to be submitted under the new expanded scope requirements.

Will expanded scope (670) be permitted after the new scope of practice is implemented?

Yes, but in limited and exceptional circumstances. Applications will be required to include a needs assessment, department plans for compliance, service medical director approval, and the State Medical Director’s approval.

Will transition courses apply toward re-certification requirements?

Yes, transition courses will apply towards CME requirements.

What else will change for recertification?

- Skills verification will be updated
- Total continuing medical education (CME) hours required will be consistent with National Registry requirements for correlating levels. Content will be formalized, adopting the National Continuing Competency Program (NCCP) from National Registry
- Those that have a corresponding National Registry certification will only be required to have proof of current National Registry certification and a valid CPR card, in order to recertify.
- CME hours will change to align with National Continued Competency Program (NCCP) Guidelines:
 - EMT 1- 40 hours
 - EMT 2- 50 hours
 - EMT 3- 50 hours
 - AEMT- 50 hours

I am an instructor. What will change for me?

Your instructor level will change. EMT 1 instructors will now be certified as an EMS Instructor or EMS Instructor Coordinator. EMT 2, EMT 3, and AEMT instructors will be certified as an EMS Instructor- Advanced or EMS Instructor Coordinator- Advanced. Advanced EMTs that meet minimum qualification will be permitted to teach AEMT, EMT 2, EMT 3, and EMT 1 classes. Re-certification requirements for EMS Instructor and EMS Instructor Coordinators are as follows:

EMS Instructor

Re-certification- Obtain 24 hours of CME through any of the following methods:

- Lead and instruct a complete EMT-1 course
- Co-instruct on an hour-for-hour basis
- Instruct CME or skill evaluations on an hour-for-hour basis
- Attend a course focused on instructor development
- Complete an 8 hour minimum EMS instructor refresher course, as approved by the department

EMS Instructor Coordinator

Re-certification- Must lead and instruct one complete EMT Instructor course (minimum) and meet one or all of the following methods of obtaining 24 hours of continuing education:

- Co-instruct on an hour-for-hour basis
- Instruct CME or skill evaluations on an hour-for-hour basis
- Attend a course focused on instructor development
- Complete an 8 hour minimum EMS instructor refresher course, as approved by the department

I am an instructor. What will I need to do to be approved to teach the new curricula?

Instructor development and updates will be rolled out first. These materials will be offered in a combination of web and in-person delivery. Instructors will not be approved to teach new curriculum without completing an update or by having specific permission from the State of Alaska EMS Office to hold a pilot class. Instructors are expected to teach the 2002 curricula until approved to teach the 2019 curricula.

Will there be a standardized curricula for the new courses?

Yes, the ACEMS Implementation Task Force is completing the task of developing objectives and curricula for all levels and transitions.

I am a Medical Director – do I have to let my EMT's practice at the new scope of practice level?

No, ultimately, an EMT practices under the Medical Director's authority and Medical Directors may limit the scope of practice but not exceed it without going through the expanded scope approval process. The scope of practice is designed to be a ceiling, not a floor.

As a Medical Director of a department is there anything I need to do to help make the transition to the higher scope of practice?

Yes, you will need to update the department protocols, become familiar with new scope of practice (especially if you are an EMT 2 - only department) and assist in developing the ongoing training program for these levels.

Will there be a State Model Standing Orders for the new Scope of Practice?

Not at this time, however the State Medical Directors Committee will be collaborating to develop one in the future.

Office of EMS timeline for transition:

- **Fall 2019:** Start pilot classes (approved by application to the State Office) to help fine-tune curricula of the new courses.
- **October 2020** “Current” *EMS Instructor Transition Course*: – *This course, which will be facilitated through Southern Region EMS Council, will be the first of several.*
 - This course is designed to bring current instructors up to date with the new content contained within the new course objectives and curriculum;
 - Inform our instructors of the updated forms and processes;
 - Bridge the competency gap that occurred for “Alaska Basic EMS Instructors” who must learn the new skills and concepts prior to instructing on them.
 - *The course is designed in three phases*
 - Phase 1 = Mandatory asynchronous Moodle introductory training
 - Phase 2 = Synchronous on-line training (Instructors must have phase 1 complete prior to enrolling in phase 2)
 - Phase 3 = Psychomotor competency workshops (Scheduled with EMS Regions)
- **November 2020** *EMT Transition Courses*:
 - Beginning January 1, 2021, EMT transition courses may be provided by EMS instructors who have successfully completed an *EMS Instructor Transition Course*.
- **January 2021** *EMT Courses Begin*:
 - Once an EMS Instructor has successfully completed the *EMT Transition Course* they may submit for course approval to teach the new material.
 - Some beta courses have already occurred and are ongoing. These courses are provided by EMS Instructors that are members of the ITF.
- **January 2021** *EMS Instructor Courses Begin*:
 - The Alaska Methods of Instruction (MOI) and the Alaska Specific course are actively being developed and are projected for a January 2021 rollout.
- **July 2021** Instructor Coordinator Courses Begin:
 - Courses designed to develop Instructor Coordinators formally known as Instructor Trainers
- **December 2021:** Complete instructor rollout
- **December 31, 2021:** EMTs renewing their certification on or after this date will be using the new NCCP (National Continued Competency Program) format for renewal of their certification.
- **December 31, 2022:** (EMT 1): All EMTs will be updated to new EMT 1 scope of practice
- **March 31, 2023:** All EMT 2, 3, and AEMTs will be updated to new correlating scope of practice.