

# COVID-19 National EMS Certification Information

## **MARCH 23, 2020 – COVID-19 Response Update**

The National Registry is committed to supporting your vital work in the community by ensuring continued operation of the certification process to ensure a qualified EMS workforce. While circumstances remain dynamic, we will provide updates as information becomes available. Test centers will begin limited reopening for essential healthcare personnel, including EMS providers. Regarding the psychomotor examination, the National Registry will be offering a provisional certification that defers the psychomotor exam until conditions stabilize.

### **Cognitive Exam Update**

Preserving the pipeline of EMS personnel during the pandemic is essential, and vital to public health. *Therefore, on Wednesday, March 25, some Pearson VUE Professional Centers (PPCs) across the nation will re-open for the testing of essential healthcare personnel, including EMS providers.* Appointments at these centers will be available on a first come, first served basis. More appointments and availability will be available as soon as possible. More information about Pearson VUE's testing for EMS personnel during the pandemic is available on Pearson VUE's website (<https://home.pearsonvue.com/nremt/essential-services>).

In addition to the PPCs, we are working with state and local officials to re-open Pearson VUE Testing Centers (PVTCs) strictly for the testing of essential healthcare personnel, including EMS providers. As a reminder, some PVTCs are currently open and operational. The National Registry is also aggressively pursuing the option of offering cognitive examinations through newly available Remote Proctoring technology, with more information on that in the coming weeks.

### **Psychomotor Examinations**

Conducting psychomotor examinations, while adhering to national Public Health guidelines, is generally not achievable nor recommended. Therefore, last week the National Registry's Board created a new *Provisional Certification*.

Provisional Certifications will be automatically assigned to any candidate that (1) completes an educational program at the EMR, EMT, AEMT or Paramedic level and (2) successfully passes the National Registry's cognitive examination. The requirement for completing the psychomotor examination is suspended for the duration of the national emergency or until psychomotor examinations can be safely reinstated in the United States.

### **National Registry Continues Operations with Remote Work**

On Sunday afternoon, the State of Ohio issued a Stay at Home Order effective 11:59 p.m. on March 23, 2020, until 11:59 p.m. on April 6, 2020. This order (like many other state orders across the nation) identifies certain organizations, businesses, and operational functions as essential, and therefore are exempt. Although the National Registry of EMTs is designated an essential organization – and a vital component of maintaining the national EMS system – last week we implemented extraordinary measures to shift 90% of our staff to remote work.

As a result, the National Registry is operational and we will continue fulfilling our duty and responsibilities to the National EMS System, while also maintaining our commitment to employee safety and our shared responsibility to 'flatten the curve'. Our workforce is leveraging technology to complete work from home and will continue to do so. Staff working in our office are following the CDC's recommendations and guidance provided by our local authorities.

**Continued Monitoring** We will continue to monitor the evolving situation and will make adjustments as needed to support the pandemic response efforts, while also ensuring the long-term sustainability and viability of the Nation's Emergency Medical Services system.

**MARCH 19, 2020**

## **National Registry Board Approves Provisional Certification**

Responding to the nationwide need for Emergency Medical Services personnel and the social-distancing public health guidance, the Executive Committee of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians gave emergency approval to add a *Provisional Certification*. The *Provisional Certification* will be automatically assigned to any candidate that (1) completes an educational program at the EMR, EMT, AEMT or Paramedic level and (2) successfully passes the National Registry's cognitive examination. The requirement for completing the psychomotor examination is suspended for the duration of the national emergency or until psychomotor examinations can be safely reinstated in the United States.

"This is a vital step in ensuring that we are able to continue to get qualified and competent EMS personnel into our communities during this national emergency," said Bill Seifarth, executive director of the National Registry. "This decision, along with this pandemic, is evolving and requires swift, bold measures to ensure the continued safety and health of the public."

## **Transition from Provisional to Fully Registered**

Once the national emergency is over, Provisionally Registered EMS providers will be given ample time (months) and specific instructions on the psychomotor examination requirements. Whenever a Provisionally Registered EMS provider's record at the National Registry indicates the successful completion of valid cognitive and psychomotor examination requirements, the provider's status will automatically transition from provisional to fully registered.

## **Access to Cognitive Examinations**

The National Registry cognitive examinations are administered via the global Pearson VUE network of test centers. In addition to National Registry examinations, the Pearson VUE network is used to administer the certification/board examinations for many health professions, including nurses, pharmacists and physician assistants.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many (but not all) of the Pearson VUE testing centers across the globe are closed. The National Registry is

aggressively working to restore the cognitive examination network and to implement an alternative cognitive testing option. Details on the status of the cognitive examination network will be updated on a regular basis.

### **Provisional Registry Status, the Workforce and State Licensing**

Individual states will need to determine how to incorporate the Provisional Certification into their rules and regulations, and ultimately the local workforce. Provisional Certification is not a substitute for full National Registry certification, but it is a mechanism the National Registry is making available to states as they enact emergency rules and regulations to preserve the EMS workforce, with an assurance that the Provisionally Certified EMS providers completed the cognitive examination. States may implement a practice of requiring a Provisionally Certified EMS provider to only work with a nationally registered and state licensed EMS provider.

### **Implementation of the Provisional Registration Status**

"Although the Provisional Certification status was approved, it will take some time for our technology systems to display the new certification. Our technology team is aggressively working to modify our systems", according to Donnie Woodyard, the Chief Operating Officer.

### **MARCH 18, 2020**

#### **Pearson VUE Testing Centers**

Many Pearson VUE testing centers have closed; however, a few remain open and operational. If your National Registry examination is canceled, you will get an email from Pearson VUE. If you have NOT received an email about the cancellations of your exam... it is scheduled as normal.

### **MARCH 16, 2020**

#### **National Registry's Response to Pearson VUE Suspending Operations**

In response to the rapidly developing COVID-19 situation, Pearson VUE unexpectedly announced the temporary closure of testing centers in the United States and Canada. This directly impacts all National Registry examinations delivered by Pearson VUE. The National Registry was already preparing alternative pathways, in conjunction with partners, to ensure the

continuity of certification and support the national EMS system during this crisis.

These are unprecedented times. As the Nation's EMS Certification organization, we recognize the thousands of providers on the path to EMS service. We are finalizing potential solutions and will be sharing additional details in the coming days. We remain committed to supporting the vital work that you do.

For candidates and registrants with pending applications, no immediate action is required at this time. We will provide details as solutions are implemented.

### **MARCH 13, 2020**

#### **National Registry Extends 2020 Recertification Deadline; Modifies Requirements**

**Columbus OH** — As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians today announced two important modifications to the current recertification cycle for Nationally Registered EMS personnel.

The National Registry's Board of Directors approved a motion **extending the current recertification deadline from March 31, 2020 to June 30, 2020**. Additionally, for Registrants due to recertify March 31, 2020 Distributive Education (DE) limitations will be removed. This allows all continuing education to be accomplished outside of classrooms.

"Given the dynamic nature of this global pandemic, the focus of our nation's EMS personnel should remain on personal well-being, patient safety and supporting their communities in need," said Bill Seifarth, Executive Director of the National Registry.

#### **Summary of modifications**

- All certifications with an expiration date of March 31, 2020 will remain valid until June 30, 2020.
- The current recertification deadline of March 31, 2020 extended to June 30, 2020.
- There will be no late fees for submissions after March 31, 2020.

- The Distributive Education (DE) limits will be waived for the remainder of this recertification cycle. However, if you need to take advantage of this new option, it will take time for our software to be modified.

"We know that there are still many unanswered questions as to how these changes will be implemented and how the closures of schools and universities will impact the pipeline of EMS personnel seeking to test," said Bill Seifarth. "The Registry will take the necessary time to work with the State EMS Offices, Program Directors, and other stakeholders to properly address these issues and will share updates as information becomes available."

## **MARCH 11, 2020**

### **Statement on Covid-19**

The safety, security and good health of our candidates, registrants, staff, subject matter experts (SMEs) and partners are of the highest priority for the National Registry of EMTs. Considering the evolving COVID19 (Coronavirus) situation, I wanted to personally update you, to ensure you're informed on our response.

### **Registrants & Recertification**

The two-year recertification season for EMTs, AEMTs, and Paramedics scheduled to expire in 2020 remains March 31, 2020. The vast majority of the registrants due to expire on March 31 have already completed the required educational components. However, registrants who have not yet completed the recertification requirements, are reminded that (F5) Virtual Instructor Lead Training (VILT) courses satisfy the requirements for instructor-led training and can be accomplished outside of classroom environments. Registrants who are unable to complete the educational requirements due to quarantine or impacts of the public health emergency are encouraged to coordinate with their State Office of EMS and contact [support@nremt.org](mailto:support@nremt.org) prior to their expiration date.

## Candidates

*Psychomotor Examinations* — The National Registry psychomotor examinations for AEMT and Paramedic will continue to be administered, subject to the guidance of local health authorities. The decision to cancel an examination lies with the Examination Coordinator and the National Registry Representative in coordination with the National Registry examinations team. The decision to cancel an examination will be made as soon as is practical and candidates will be notified as soon as possible. Candidates should contact the Examination Coordinator for questions and to reschedule an examination if necessary.

*Cognitive Examinations* — Pearson VUE is closely monitoring local conditions and following the guidance of local health authorities. Decisions will be made by each individual test center. The latest information can be found at the [Pearson VUE website](#).

*Course Completion Requirements* — Some colleges and universities are suspending in-person courses and activities. This may impact learning labs, practicums, and clinical experiences. Candidates who are unable to complete the educational requirements due to the public health emergency are encouraged to coordinate with their Program Director. Program directors are encouraged to coordinate with their State Office of EMS for any needed modifications to training schedules. Paramedic programs directors are also encouraged to review the [CoAEMSP website](#) for additional information.

*Examination Eligibility Deadlines* — Applicants who are unable to complete the testing requirements within required National Registry two year deadline due to quarantine or impacts of the public health emergency are encouraged to coordinate with their State Office of EMS and contact [support@nremt.org](mailto:support@nremt.org) prior to their expiration date.

## National Registry Travel

The National Registry is restricting all routine travel for conferences, meetings, and events until April 12, 2020. Tele-conferencing technology will be leveraged to reduce impacts.

## Additional Resources

- CDC guidance, situation updates, and information about COVID-19: <http://coronavirus.gov>
- CoAEMSP Statement on COVID-19 and Paramedic Education Programs: <https://coaemsp.org>
- NHTSA Office of EMS webinar on COVID-19: <https://youtu.be/ZrnbufgDqjo>

We are monitoring this developing situation closely and are staying in regular contact with our national EMS system partners. We will publish updates as this situation evolves. Thank you for the vital role you fill in the nation's Emergency Medical Services system.