

Chad Blosser

From: Chad Blosser
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2020 4:44 PM
To: 'chad.blosser@vdh.virginia.gov'
Cc: Deborah Akers; 'Brown, Gary'; Adam Harrell; 'Owens, Karen'; 'Jones, Tracie'
Subject: COVID-19 Update #5 for EMS Educators

This is a blanket e-mail message to all certified Education Coordinators and ALS Coordinators.

Dear Educator,

The Office of EMS continues to work toward ensuring that students from Academic Year 2020 and certified EMS providers are impacted as little as possible due to the sudden arrival of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth. The Division of Accreditation, Certification & Education continues to work together with other Divisions in the Office and the Virginia Department of Health to address concerns as the COVID-19 situation in the Commonwealth remains fluid.

All ACE Division communications with Education Coordinators can be found in *The Briefing Room* on the OEMS website: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/education-certification/the-ace-briefing-room/>

This update provides further guidance about EMS education in light of the Governor's issuance of [Executive Order 51](#) and 53.

Executive Order 51 provides for the declaration of a State of Emergency and [Executive Order 53](#) defines Temporary Restrictions on Gatherings and the Closure of K-12 schools in the Commonwealth.

Initial Certification Courses

Effective immediately, the Office of EMS **will not approve any new requests for initial certification courses** in the Commonwealth until at least April 24, 2020 at a minimum. Any initial programs approved by the Office on March 25 or 26, 2020 will be administratively cancelled and the EC will be notified of this cancellation in a separate message.

It is important that each of you understand why this decision was made. First, and most importantly, Executive Order 53 prohibits all public and private in person gatherings of 10 or more individuals effective 11:59 p.m., Tuesday, March 24, 2020 until 11:59 p.m., Thursday, April 23, 2020.

Second, holding initial EMS courses—regardless of the number of students in the course—in the midst of an internationally declared pandemic is reckless and irresponsible. Not only would you be placing yourself in danger, you would also be placing students, lab instructors and their respective family members in a vulnerable situation.

Further, it will be very difficult for students to gain psychomotor competency in a safe and effective way when putting into practice “social distancing” requirements of 6 feet between individuals together with no physical contact with others. Additionally, Virginia has not even reached its peak curve for COVID-19, so your ability to find clinical sites, patient contacts and field time with an EMS agency is going to prove very difficult, if not impossible to achieve. Moreover, all BLS and ALS psychomotor testing has been paused.

Finally, there is the distinct possibility, depending on how sharp the slope of Virginia's COVID-19 curve is, that the Governor may implement additional restrictions within his power. We will continue to monitor the situation and will provide updated guidance as we get it.

National Registry Certification Extensions

The National Registry is currently in the process of programming updates for the extension of National Registry expirations (for those who have yet to recertify) from March 31, 2020 to June 30, 2020.

NREMT also decided to eliminate the distributive education requirements for this cycle as well, in order to allow EMS providers to complete needed hours through distributive education. The availability of completing online continuing education through distributive education was already available for Virginia providers.

Registry is aiming to have the new expiration dates visible on the NREMT website in the next two (2) weeks.

National Registry Psychomotor Exams and Provisional Certification

National Registry has started cancelling scheduled psychomotor exams and will not be approving any new psychomotor exams for an indefinite period.

NREMT is in the final stages of being able to issue a provisional National Registry certification when the following components are completed:

1. Students must complete their certification program according to state or CoAEMSP requirements.
2. Students must sit for and pass the NREMT cognitive exam.
3. When these two items are completed, a 2-year provisional certification will be issued. The issued certification will clearly indicate the awarding of provisional certification pending completion of the psychomotor exam when successfully completed.

It is anticipated that National Registry will be able to start issuing provisional certifications in the next 30 days. Provisional certifications can be converted to full certification once the COVID-19 threat is mitigated and the student takes and passes their NREMT required psychomotor exam. States are not required to accept provisional NREMT certifications if they cannot legally do so.

Virginia will accept NREMT provisional certifications and will issue a full Virginia certification at the level indicated by National Registry. Should a provider who was granted full Virginia certification based off of a National Registry provisional certification not fulfill the requirements of their National Registry certification, the Office of EMS will initiate the process of revocation of the provider's certification in the Commonwealth.

When being scheduled for work, National Registry strongly urges that no two provisionally certified providers work on the same truck. There should always be a fully certified provider riding with a provisionally certified provider.

Pearson VUE Centers Opening for Essential EMS Testing

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](#).

Information for Candidates with an Authorization to Test (ATT) and candidates that had an examination canceled are encouraged to log into the Pearson VUE site to reschedule your examination. (<https://home.pearsonvue.com/nremt>)

[These centers are strictly for the testing of essential healthcare personnel, including EMS providers.](#)

What if a student can't find a test center near them?

If you are not able to locate a Pearson VUE testing center today, we encourage to check back in a few days. Conditions vary greatly across the United States and the testing network availability is expected to change daily. We are working with state and local officials to re-open testing centers across the United States, while adhering to public health guidance on social distancing and Stay at Home Orders.

COAEMSP Statement Regarding COVID-19

More information about how the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the EMS Professions (CoAEMSP) is handling COVID-19 can be found at: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/23/2020/03/CoAEMSPs-Statement-on-COVID-19-2020.03.20.pdf>

Thank you for all you do in support of Virginia's EMS System. We will be back in touch soon.

Best,

Chad

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Please let us know how we are doing by [clicking here](#) to complete a short customer experience survey.

The Office of EMS continues to monitor the ongoing situation regarding the spread of COVID-19. For more information and updates on COVID-19 please visit the link below: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/coronavirus-2019-covid-19/>

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