



# Digital Certification Card Fact Sheet<sup>1</sup>

A Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (heretofore referred to as the Virginia Office of EMS) digital certification card (sample attached) is the electronic form of a Virginia Office of EMS printed certification card. "Digital" is defined as "composed of data in the form of especially binary digits. E.g. "digital images".<sup>2</sup> The term "certification" means verification that on the indicated completion date the participant named on the Virginia Office of EMS certification card demonstrated achievement of the required knowledge and hands-on skill performance objectives to the satisfaction of a qualified and currently authorized Virginia Office of EMS provider. Certification (or recertification) in a Virginia Office of EMS training program is documented by the legitimate issuance of a correctly completed Virginia Office of EMS print or digital certification card.

Virginia Office of EMS does not offer or endorse online-only initial emergency medical services certification training programs. Virginia Office of EMS training is competency-based and certification requires evaluation and verification of a participant's cognitive and psychomotor skills as required by the National Registry of EMT's. Online-only initial EMS certification training does not meet the standards of the Virginia Department of Health Office of Emergency Medical Services or the National Registry of EMT's.

## Relevant Facts Concerning Electronic Records

1. The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) have permitted electronic recordkeeping of employee safety training records since 1997.<sup>3</sup>
2. Just as with paper documents, electronic documents are a record. Regarding its own records management program, OSHA has stated "*The electronic data may be considered a copy of a hard copy or paper record. If a hard copy or paper record is not maintained, then the electronic copy is the record copy*".<sup>4</sup>
3. Since 2001 U.S. Federal courts have accepted electronic records (legal filings) over the Internet via the Public Access to Court Electronic Records ([PACER](#)) system.
4. Amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure require civil litigants to preserve and produce any electronically stored information as it can play an important role as evidence.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that electronic records have the same legal force as those produced in other formats (such as paper).
5. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations permit electronic records and electronic signatures as equivalent to paper records and handwritten signatures executed on paper. FDA regulations are intended to permit the widest possible use of electronic technology, compatible with FDA's responsibility to protect the public health.<sup>6</sup>
6. Web content is rendered in two basic forms - dynamic and static. Dynamic web content consists of information that is rendered differently based on specific user input and is managed in a database associated with a server. Static content consists of information in the form of documents that are rendered identically each time they are accessed. Both static and dynamic web content are considered a permanent record and meet the requirements of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Electronic Records Management (ERM) E-Gov Initiative.<sup>7</sup>
  - a. Virginia Office of EMS Digital Certification Cards are both static and dynamic. Each document is rendered identically in static format (PDF) and is based on the providers dynamic certification records in the Virginia EMS Portal.
  - b. Every Digital Certification Card is a true and accurate record of the original information received by the Virginia Office of EMS on the date the record was downloaded and is uniquely tracked in the Virginia EMS Portal electronic content managementsystem.

7. The United States Federal Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) uses *reliability, authenticity, integrity, and usability* to describe the characteristics of trustworthy records.<sup>8</sup> The Virginia Office of EMS follows best practice guidelines regarding reliability, authenticity, integrity, and usability. Consequently, a Virginia Office of EMS Digital Certification Card(s):
- a. *Reliably* identifies the certified Virginia Office of EMS Education Coordinator and the National Registry of EMT's as the record source and provides evidence that the Virginia Office of EMS certified Education Coordinator documented achievement of the participant's knowledge in cognitive and psychomotor performance according to the program standard.
  - b. *Authentically* establishes what it purports to be. The Virginia Office of EMS business practices and electronic content management system controls the creation, transmission, receipt, and maintenance of the Digital Certification Card. The transaction is tied electronically to the Virginia Office of EMS Portal.
  - c. *Integrity* is supported by Virginia Office of EMS rules and regulations, standards, business practices, and electronic content management system that prohibit alteration.
  - d. *Usability* ensures that it can be located, retrieved, presented, and directly connected to the provider's certification records and certified Education Coordinator who coordinated the program. The link to the Digital Certification Card remains permanently active.

## About the Virginia Office of EMS

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Virginia Office of EMS (OEMS) is responsible for planning and coordinating an effective and efficient statewide EMS system. Our programs and services are designed to assure quality prehospital patient care, from when the call is received by the 911 center to the delivery of the patient to the trauma center or hospital.

*If you have questions please contact us at 804-888-9100.*

**Disclaimer:** Governmental entities may or may not be authorized, empowered, or required by law to accept electronic records. This Fact Sheet cannot address all the possible implications, applications, or exceptions to acceptance of electronic records, including Digital Certification Cards.

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<sup>1</sup> Last reviewed/updated: October 26, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/digital>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/1997-08-14>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.osha.gov/enforcement/directives/adm-03-01-004>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2010-title28/html/USCODE-2010-title28-app-federalru-dup1-rule34.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fda.gov/RegulatoryInformation/Guidances/ucm125067.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/web-content-records.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-105publ277/pdf/PLAW-105publ277.pdf>

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EXPIRES  
03/31/2021

CERTIFIED AS  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

CERTIFICATE NUMBER  
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QR code takes you to the OEMS Digital Certification Verification web page.

Provider continuing education QR code.

State seal with micro printing for document security.

Unique font kerning for document security.

Director of OEMS signature with micro printing for document security.