

Virginia Continuing Education Submission Guide

2021

Last updated: February 24, 2021

Background

Ethics and Morals in EMS Education

Most healthcare professionals need to take classes as part of their continuing education requirements. Few would argue with the notion that healthcare providers should act ethically and morally, as should any professional.

The Virginia Office of EMS 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.

In order to help ensure “***quality prehospital patient care***”, the Division of Accreditation, Certification & Education is charged with setting policies and procedures in support of the Virginia EMS Rules and Regulations as they pertain to EMS education in consultation with the Training & Certification and Medical Direction Committees and the EMS Advisory Board.

The ACE Division is here to support EMS educators, but more importantly to protect the 35,000 + Virginia certified EMS providers, students in initial certification programs and the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. We do so by ensuring the integrity and

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legitimacy of initial certification and continuing education programs offered in the Commonwealth.

The field of EMS has seen its fair share of scandals surrounding the awarding of unearned continuing education in the last 15 years. Some that come to mind include:

2009 – Boston, Mass.

A state investigation into the Hamilton Police Department’s Emergency Medical Technician training program resulted last week in four indictments and legal settlements with nine other men, including four Danvers police officers, who face fines and unpaid leaves.

2011 – Baltimore, Maryland

Baltimore City Fire chief has suspended the Baltimore City Fire Academy’s EMS program until they can get some things resolved regarding a recent alleged cheating scandal as well as some major paper work issues.

2011 – Portland, Maine

Southern Maine EMS failed to win renewal of its state contract at the end of June, when the Maine Emergency Medical Services board identified shortcomings in training oversight. It cited instructors whose certification was not current and a failure to cover required topics in a course, said Jay Bradshaw, director of Maine Emergency Medical Services, part of the state Department of Public Safety.

2012 – Woburn, Mass.

A former emergency medical technician (EMT) instructor has pleaded guilty in connection with submitting training records that falsely showed dozens of emergency personnel attended courses they were required to complete.

Over the past six (6) months, the Office has received a record number of reports and complaints about unethical behavior on the part of Education Coordinators. Unethical behavior often comes from honest professionals who made a bad choice. Often, they

do so under extreme pressure and rationalize their behavior to themselves and others may convince them the action isn't wrong, or even present them with inaccurate information to get them to make a wrong decision.

The concept of ethics is more nuanced than determining whether something is legal or illegal. Different people have different ideas about what's ethical and they may change their beliefs based on the situation or over time. Ethics are personal, while the law is not. Your ethics are the result of:

- Your opinions, beliefs, values, and emotions
- Your philosophical and spiritual views
- Your friends, family, and associates
- Your background and experiences
- The information you have when you make decisions

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The fact that ethics are personal and influenced by so many different factors is what can cause tricky situations in which two people might disagree on whether something is ethical. In some cases, a person's ethics can even contradict with laws, standards, or company policies. Although in an ideal world, this wouldn't happen, it often does.

Effective January 1, 2020, the Office of EMS will begin the process of actively monitoring and enforcing Virginia EMS Rules and Regulations pertaining to the awarding of continuing education (CE) credit in the Commonwealth.

Due to recent issues with CE submission (e.g. falsification of records, missing records, etc.) and an increase in requests from the National Registry to the Office of EMS for validation of how a provider was awarded 60 hours of CE on a specific date, it has been determined that the Office can no longer allow the practice of scanning master course barcodes which award bulk CE hours, regardless of whether you have a captive audience or not. The Office of EMS and the National Registry have a collaborative and positive working relationship and we do not want something like the awarding of 60 hours of CE on a specific date to impinge on our synergetic cooperation.

The **ONLY** exception to this policy is for auxiliary training programs (e.g. ACLS, PALS, PEARS, ITLS, etc.) where the Education Coordinator has a captive audience for the entire course AND all providers completing the program gained a certification from a national organization—thus earning CE.

The ACE Division has worked in collaboration with the Division of Regulation and Compliance to develop this guidance document on proper submission of continuing education hours in the Commonwealth.

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This document will cover the following topics:

- How the Office of EMS expects routine continuing education (CE) to be reported.
- How to award “comparable credit” for continuing education (CE) earned outside of a Virginia approved program.
- How to award CE for college/university transcripts presented by students.

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- How to award CE for certificates presented by EMS Providers using a Virginia approved 3rd Party CE Vendor.
 - How Education Coordinators should award CE for “teaching hours” toward their Education Coordinator recertification.
 - How you can monitor your own compliance as it pertains to the Virginia EMS Regulation **12VAC5-31-1437**.
 - A review of the Virginia EMS Rules and Regulations on awarding of CE in Virginia.

How the Office of EMS Expects Routine Continuing Education (CE) to be Reported

Virginia certified Education Coordinators are required by regulation to submit continuing education (CE) records in a format approved by the Office of EMS within 15 days of the student's attendance.

There are currently two approved formats:

1. Continuing education bubble cards (being phased out during Spring 2021), and
2. Electronic submission of CE records making use of the CE Scanner Application.

All Education Coordinators are encouraged to make use of the electronic means of submission of CE as it is quick, efficient and the program helps reduce CE errors.

- Education Coordinators shall ensure that appropriate documentation of the awarding of CE is maintained on file per the Virginia EMS Rules and Regulations and the Training Program Administration Manual (TPAM). Appropriate documentation includes, but may not be limited to:
 - A roster (TR-06) must be completed for all credit awarded.
 - OEMS discourages the use of “pre-populated” CE rosters where the student only needs to sign the roster.

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- The Division of Regulation and Compliance has found that it is very easy for friends or partners to sign the roster for their colleague who could not make it to class.
 - A list of course number(s) and topics for the CE was issued.
 - CE credit shall be submitted within 15-days of the class date in compliance with **12VAC5-31-1437 - Continuing education record submission**. Education Coordinators can verify that their CE files have been received by the Office of EMS through their Virginia EMS Portal account.
 - Please do not hold CE submission for the full 15 days as allowed by regulations, especially toward the end of the month. Providers across the Commonwealth are relying on you to submit their CE records in a timely manner in order to recertify.
 - Practically speaking, it would be best if CE records were submitted the day the course took place.
 - If submission cannot be accomplished on the day the course was taken, please ensure the CE is scanned and uploaded to the Office as soon as possible after the class took place. Please make sure you adjust the “Class Date” in the CE Scanner Application to accurately reflect the day the course was held.
 - The number of hours of CE reported on any given day for a provider should not exceed the number of clock hours in that day.

How to Award Comparable Credit for Continuing Education (CE) Earned Outside of Virginia

Virginia certified Education Coordinators are given the autonomy to award continuing education credit for courses taken outside of Virginia by Virginia certified providers. This autonomy comes with responsibilities on the part of Education Coordinator.

Virginia **DOES NOT** however require that Education Coordinators award such credit. It is a personal decision on the part of the educator as to whether they wish to take on this responsibility.

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- First and foremost, the Education Coordinator shall ensure that appropriate documentation of the awarding of comparable credit is maintained on file. Appropriate documentation includes, but may not be limited to:
 - Any e-mail messages transmitted or received between the EC and the provider pertaining to this subject.
 - A roster (TR-06) must be completed for all credit awarded.
 - A list of course number(s) and topics for which CE was issued must be maintained.
 - A copy of the certificate issued by the trainer/conference/out-of-state educator must be maintained.
 - A copy of the conference or training event catalog with course descriptions must be maintained.
 - CE credit shall be submitted within 15-days of the final decision to award credit in compliance with **12VAC5-31-1437 - Continuing education record submission.**

How to Award CE for College/University Transcripts Presented by Students

The Office of EMS **DOES NOT** permit Virginia certified Education Coordinators to award credit for college/university transcripts presented by students.

Any Virginia certified EMS provider approaching you inquiring about the awarding of CE credit for college transcripts should immediately be referred to Debbie Akers (deborah.t.akers@vdh.virginia.gov).

- These individuals need to send an e-mail to Debbie requesting information as to whether their college transcripts can be considered for awarding of CE in Virginia.
- The provider will have to provide the Office of EMS with a sealed college transcript which will be reviewed by the ACE Division for the awarding of CE.

How to Award CE for Certificates Presented by EMS Providers Using a Virginia Approved 3rd Party CE Vendor

The Office of EMS **DOES NOT** permit Virginia certified Education Coordinators to award credit for certificates presented by Virginia EMS providers using a Virginia approved 3rd Party CE Vendor.

Any Virginia certified EMS provider approaching you inquiring about the awarding of CE credit for a certificate awarded to them by a Virginia approved 3rd Party CE Vendor should be directed to contact the vendor's Customer Service number to resolve their CE credit issue.

All Virginia approved 3rd Party CE Vendors are under an MOU which requires that they handle the electronic processing and reporting of all CE earned on their system. Further, these vendors are required to have a Customer Service Department which can handle direct inquiries from Virginia EMS providers.

Currently approved 3rd Party CE Vendors include:

- 24-7 EMS Now
- CentreLearn
- HealthStream
- CareerCert (formally known as Medic-CE)
- TargetSolutions

If an EMS provider inquires about CE for a class from an online CE vendor **NOT CURRENTLY APPROVED** by Virginia, please reach out to Chad Blosser (chad.blosser@vdh.virginia.gov) for clarification as to whether you can award CE for that specific vendor.

How Education Coordinators Should Award CE for “teaching hours” Toward their Education Coordinator Recertification

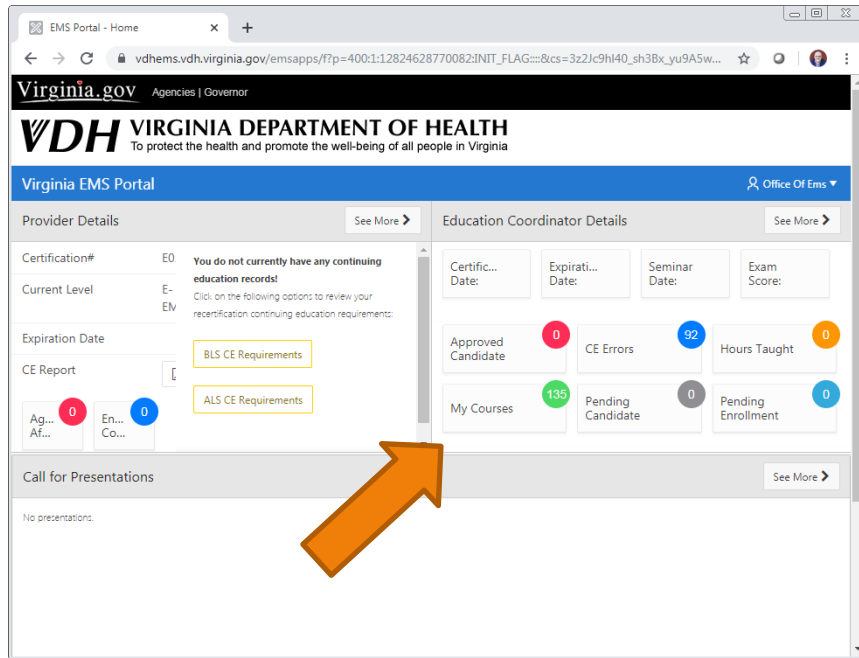
Virginia certified Education Coordinators are the only individuals permitted to “double dip” continuing education hours **IF** the following stipulations are met:

- The Education Coordinator seeking credit taught the class in question. If they taught the class, then the EC may award themselves credit for the class using their EMS provider certification barcode and their EC certification barcode.
 - “Taught” means that the EC was the primary instructor of the course.
- An EC is **NOT PERMITTED** to award instructor level (F6) hours to themselves if they were simply monitoring the class and there was another primary instructor.
- An EC is **PERMITTED** to award instructor level (F6) hours to other Education Coordinators who assist with didactic and/or skills labs. Credit should be awarded hour for hour of teaching. Please do not award more hours than the educator actually taught as a “thank you” for their help.
- Documentation is required for all CE awarded to include:
 - A roster (TR-06) must be completed for all credit awarded.
 - A list of course number(s) and topics for which CE was issued must be maintained.
- CE credit shall be submitted within 15-days of the class date in compliance with ***12VAC5-31-1437 - Continuing education record submission.***

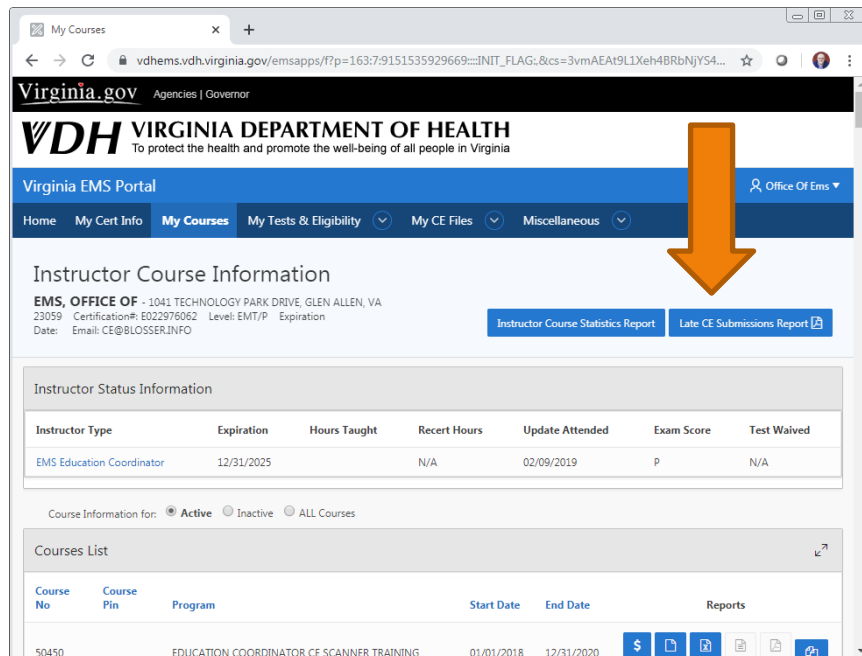
How You Can Monitor Your Own Compliance as it Pertains to the Virginia EMS Regulation 12VAC5-31-1437

Education Coordinators have the ability to pull up a report in the Virginia EMS Portal showing their compliance with 15-day rule. Please see the step-by-step directions for doing so below.

1. Login to your Virginia EMS Portal account.
2. Click on the My Courses active tile.



1. Click on "Late CE Submissions Report"



1. View the report generated by the Virginia EMS Portal which will list late submissions by course number, further broken down by EMS provider number.
2. Additional information displayed on the report will list the class date, scan date and the number of days overdue.

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Late CE Card Submissions (> 15 Days) EMS132W

OFFICE OF EMS
1041 TECHNOLOGY PARK DRIV
GLEN ALLEN VA 23059

Course #	Providers	Cert #	Class Date	Scan Date	Days Overdue
81657	8	B011169001	12-SEP-2019	09-OCT-2019	12
		B032917101	12-SEP-2019	09-OCT-2019	12
		B050817107	12-SEP-2019	09-OCT-2019	12
		B081569001	12-SEP-2019	09-OCT-2019	12
		B122914301	12-SEP-2019	09-OCT-2019	12
		E102319902	12-SEP-2019	09-OCT-2019	12
		I010316502	12-SEP-2019	09-OCT-2019	12
		I092208901	12-SEP-2019	09-OCT-2019	12
81005	15	B010706702	15-MAY-2019	05-JUN-2019	6
		B011016101	15-MAY-2019	31-MAY-2019	1
		B032216101	15-MAY-2019	31-MAY-2019	1

50450 EDUCATION COORDINATOR CE SCANNER TRAINING 01/01/2018 12/31/2020

A Review of the Virginia EMS Rules and Regulations on Awarding of CE in Virginia

Definitions

"Continuing education" or "CE" means an instructional program that enhances a particular area of knowledge or skills beyond compulsory or required initial training.

"Course" means a basic or advanced life support training program leading to certification or award of continuing education credit hours.

Regulations

12VAC5-31-980. False application for license, permit, certificate, endorsement or designation.

EMS personnel may not obtain or aid another person in obtaining agency licensure, vehicle permitting, certification, endorsement or designation through fraud, deceit, forgery or deliberate misrepresentation or falsification of information.

12VAC5-31-990. False statements or submissions.

EMS personnel may not make false statements, misrepresentations, file false credentials or willfully conceal material information to the board, the department, or the Office of EMS regarding application for agency licensure, vehicle permitting, certification, endorsement or designation or in connection with an investigation conducted by the board, the department or the Office of EMS.

12VAC5-31-1000. Falsification of materials.

EMS personnel may not willfully alter or change the appearance or wording of any license, permit, certificate, endorsement, designation, prehospital patient care report, official agency documents, or any forms submitted to the Office of EMS.

12VAC5-31-1405. Documentation of continuing education (CE).

- A. Continuing education credit is only awarded to courses announced to the Office of EMS in a format as approved by the Office of EMS prior to the course being conducted and other programs approved by the Office of EMS for award of CE.
- B. Award of credit for attendance in a CE program shall be submitted in a format approved by the Office of EMS.

12VAC5-31-1419. Continuing education programs. The programs must utilize the approved format for the corresponding level of certification as designed by the Office of EMS:

1. Category 1 (required) are topic areas that are required as part of the recertification criteria.
2. Category 2 (approved) are topic areas that support EMS activities.
3. Category 3 are topic areas that are delivered through a multimedia format as approved by the Board of Health.

12VAC5-31-1423. Course announcement requirements.

1. BLS certification courses and continuing education programs that award Category 1 (required) continuing education credits shall be announced by an EMT instructor or EMS education coordinator. An EMT instructor or EMS education coordinator shall be present in the classroom at all times except:
 1. In courses offered by the Office of EMS accredited programs, or
 2. In BLS continuing education programs.
2. ALS certification courses and continuing education programs that award Category 1 (required) continuing education credits shall be announced by an ALS coordinator or EMS education coordinator.

12VAC5-31-1437. Continuing education record submission.

The course coordinator shall submit the CE records in a format approved by the Office of EMS within 15 days of the student's attendance.

12VAC5-31-1451. Course monitoring.

All programs and courses approved for issuance of certification or award of continuing education shall allow unannounced monitoring by the Office of EMS. Failure to comply with such course monitoring may result in the following disciplinary actions to include, but not be limited to:

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1. Revocation of the training program's course approval.
 2. Suspension or revocation of the training program's authority to award continuing education credits.
 3. Revocation of the enrolled student's eligibility for certification testing.
 4. Suspension or revocation of the EMS instructor, ALS-coordinator, or EMS educational coordinator.