EMS

Guidance for the Awarding of Continuing Education in Virginia

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Office of Emergency Medical Services

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Purpose

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

CE Monitoring & Submission Policies

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.

Owing to issues with CE submissions by Virginia Education Coordinators (e.g. falsification of records, missing records, etc.) and due an increase in requests from the National Registry verifications (audits) of provider CE Reports, 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.

Exception for Auxiliary Programs

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.

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.

This document will cover the following topics:

- Expectations for the submission of routine continuing education
- The awarding of continuing education (CE) for:
  - "comparable credit" for (CE) earned outside of a Virginia approved program.
  - college/university transcripts presented by students.

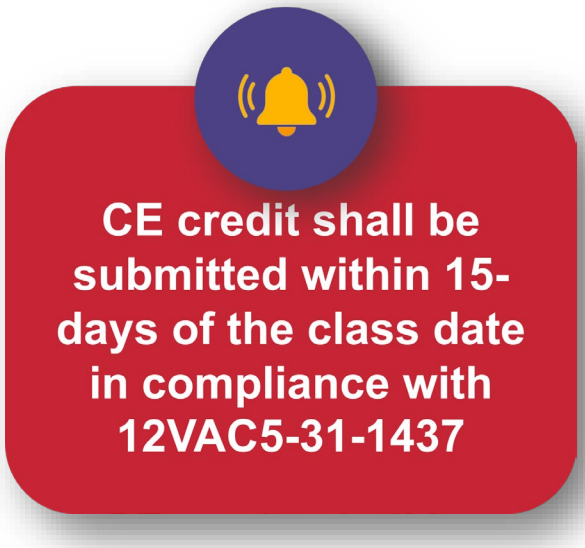
  - certificates presented by EMS Providers using a Virginia approved 3rd Party CE Vendor.
  - "teaching hours" toward their Education Coordinator recertification.
- How you can monitor your own compliance as it pertains to the Virginia EMS Regulation 12VAC5-31-1437.
- A review of the Virginia EMS Rules 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 requirements for submission of continuing education (CE) records:
  - in a format approved by the Office,
  - within 15 days of the student's attendance.

Record Submission Formats

There one (1) approved format which is electronic submission of CE records making use of the OEMS CE Scanner Application.

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.
  - 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 issued.



Submission of Continuing Education Records

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.

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.

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

The Virginia Office of EMS does not permit Virginia-certified EMS Education Coordinators to award continuing education (CE) credit based on college or university transcripts presented by students.



Any Virginia-certified EMS provider seeking continuing education credit for college or university coursework should be directed to the Virginia Office of EMS ACE Division for transcript review.

Individuals seeking continuing education (CE) credit for college or university coursework should follow the process outlined below. Official transcripts must be submitted directly to the Virginia Office of EMS from the institution's approved electronic transcript vendor (such as Parchment, PeopleSoft Campus Solutions, Ellucian Banner, or a similar service). Transcripts submitted by the provider or through any other method cannot be accepted for review.Submit your transcript request directly to your college or university transcript vendor.

1. For recipient use "ACE Division Director".
2. Have the transcripts sent directly to ACE.support@vdh.virginia.gov.
3. The Virginia Office of EMS will contact you once your transcripts are received.

Education Coordinators should not evaluate transcripts or assign CE hours based on coursework. All transcript reviews and CE determinations are conducted by the Virginia Office of EMS ACE Division.

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 accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Prehospital Continuing Education (CAPCE) and are under an MOU which requires that they handle the electronic processing and reporting of all CE earned on their system. Vendors are also 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
- CareeerCert
- Distance CE
- FlightBridgeED
- FOAMFrat
- Lexipol EMS 1 Academy
- Prodigy
- TargetSolutions
- VectorSolutions

If an EMS provider inquires about CE for a class from an online CE vendor NOT CURRENTLY APPROVED by Virginia, please reach out to ACE.support@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.
    - Definition of "Taught" - 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 award 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.

- Login to your Virginia EMS Portal account.
- Click on the My Courses active tile.
- Click on “Late CE Submissions Report”
- View the report generated by the Virginia EMS Portal which will list late submissions by course number, further broken down by EMS provider number.

Additional information displayed on the report will list the class date, scan date and the number of days overdue.



Key Virginia EMS Regulations Pertaining to CE

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.

Key Continuing Education Related EMS 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).

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.

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:

Category 1 (required) are topic areas that are required as part of the recertification criteria.

Category 2 (approved) are topic areas that support EMS activities.

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.

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:

- In courses offered by the Office of EMS accredited programs, or
- in BLS continuing education programs.

- 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:

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.