



Virginia Department of Health

Office of Licensure and Certification

Hospice Licensure Survey Checklist

Requirements and Instructions for Initial Hospice Licensing

This checklist has been developed to provide applicants with the information necessary to obtain a license to operate a hospice program. For an initial license, an on-site survey must be conducted by the Licensing staff of the Virginia Department of Health. It is the responsibility of the applicant to be prepared and to provide all necessary assistance to the surveyor. Failure to provide appropriate and timely assistance will result in denial of the license and reapplication and payment of the licensing fee.

Step I

Thoroughly read and familiarized yourself with the *Rules and Regulations for the Licensure of Hospice* (12VAC5-391). Copies of the *Rules and Regulations* can be downloaded from the Internet at:
<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/OLC/Laws/index.htm>.

All policies and procedures contained in the regulation, all employee personnel and client medical record forms must be developed and ready for surveyor review. This checklist can assist with identifying the necessary items needed for initial licensure.

Step II

Once employee personnel and client medical record forms and the policies and procedures have been completed, the applicant can submit:

1. A completed application and \$500 fee
2. A written statement of the applicant's knowledge or experience in operating a hospice program
3. The proposed organizational chart
4. A copy of the program's emergency preparedness plan (12VAC5-391-160)
5. A listing of governing body members and meeting minutes (12VAC5-391-170)
6. Evidence of indemnity coverage (12VAC5-391-220)
7. A copy of the business plan, the working budget and balance sheet
8. The program's client rights policies and procedures (12VAC5-391-240); and
9. The job description, qualifications and specific responsibilities of the Administrator, the nursing director, and the financial manager.

to:

Hospice Licensure
Office of Licensure and Certification
Virginia Department of Health
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 401
Henrico, Virginia 23233

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Pursuant to §32.1-162.3, a nonrefundable license fee of \$500 is charged for each license application. Payment may be check, money order or certified check made payable to: The Virginia Department of Health. The law prohibits a license from being issued if the fee has not been paid. Therefore, no license is issued until the check has cleared the bank.

Step III

Upon receipt of the completed application and fee, the applicant will be notified of the next available pre-licensure conference. These conferences are not mandatory; however, applicants are encouraged to attend. The primary reason applicants are denied licensure is because they fail to comply with the instructions contained in this guideline and the licensure regulations. These are minimal requirements; failure to comply will result in additional preparation time. Therefore, it is recommended that applicants fully prepare for the initial survey.

Step III

The applicant is notified of the time and date of the initial survey. Failure to be fully prepared will result in cancellation of the initial survey. Should that occur, the license is denied and the applicant cannot reapply for 120 days.

Policy/Procedures and Forms Checklist

To ensure compliance with the *Rules and Regulations for the Licensure of Hospice* (12VAC5-391) and to prepare for the initial survey, new providers are advised to have the following items ready for review prior to the on-site arrival of the surveyor.

NOTE: Replication of the cited regulation does not satisfy the intent of this checklist or the applicable regulation.

I. Administrative policies and procedures – including, but not limited to:

- The existence of the premises where the agency will operate (i.e., lease agreement or ownership documentation)
- The geographic service areas (localities) to be served by the program
- Contract services (12VAC5-391-230)
- Billing practices and financial resources (12VAC5-391-200)
- Infection control (12VAC5-391-270)
- The annual quality improvement program (12VAC5-391-260)

II. Client care policies and procedures – including but not limited to:

- Scope of service and applicable service policies
 - Skilled care
 - Personal care
 - Therapy services

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Pharmacy services

- Client rights (12VAC5-391-240)
- Client complaint policy (12VAC5-391-250)
- Admission and discharge (12VAC5-391-190)
- Coordination of care with other community services or home care agencies, including applicable

sample forms

- On-call services
- Copies of all client record forms, including but not limited to: (i) admission, (ii) client medical history, (iii) initial needs assessment, (iv) plan of care, and (v) medication sheets.

III. Personnel policies and procedures – including, but not limited to:

- Employment application
- Standards of conduct
- Employee and contractor orientation policy
- Screening employees for TB, alcohol abuse and drug usage
- In-service training policy and records of curriculum
- Employee annual performance evaluation
- Personnel records, content, access, storage, retention policy
- Competency evaluation processes
- Job descriptions of home attendant staff, including criminal record check (12VAC5-391-210)
- Copies of all personnel record forms, including, but not limited to: (i) application, (ii) license or certification verification, (iii) competency evaluation, and (iv) reference checks or verification of previous employment and professional licensure/certification, if applicable
 - Personnel records for: (i) administrator, (ii) nursing director, and (iii) two complete personnel records for each service/discipline offered

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Frequently Asked Questions: Initial Licensure

Question: Is my business required to have a hospice license?

Answer: Businesses offering a coordinated program of home and inpatient care to terminally ill patients and their families to meet the physical, psychological, social, spiritual and other special needs that are experienced during the final stages of illness, dying and bereavement are required by law to obtain a license prior to offering services.

Hospice programs include the following:

- Nursing services
- Counseling services
- Medical social services
- Physician services
- Physical, occupational, respiratory, or speech therapy
- Home attendant services
- Medical appliances and supplies

Question: How long does it take to get licensed?

Answer: It can take up to 60 days from the date the initial application is received by the Hospice provider to receive a license. The applicant cannot provide services until receipt of the license.

The process includes the following steps:

- Initial application and fee is received
- The application is reviewed for completeness; incomplete applications are returned
- Applicant is notified of the next available licensure pre-conference session
- A licensure pre-conference is conducted
- Applicant is notified of the intended initial survey
- Initial survey/inspection is conducted
- Surveyor prepares a deficiency report based on deficiencies identified during the survey/inspection
- Applicant has 15 days to correct any cited deficiencies and submit an acceptable Plan of Correction
- The Plan of Correction is reviewed and approved; if unacceptable the applicant is notified
- A license is issued

Question: What is the cost of hospice licensure?

Answer: The licensure fee, which must accompany the application, is \$500 per year and is nonrefundable. Checks, money orders or certified checks are accepted. At this time, it is not possible to pay on-line.

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Question: How much funding should I have to start a hospice program?

Answer: There is no standard amount that could be used as a funding start point as each program will be different. It is recommended that applicants contact a CPA and prepare a business plan. Resources for beginning a small business are available on the OLC web site at:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/OLC/Laws/index.htm>

NOTE: The revenue from Medicare or Medicaid does not begin until the program completes the federal certification process, which can only occur after the program has been licensed by the state, and can take 5 to 6 months or longer. Therefore, relying on Medicare or Medicaid revenue during the first months as a licensed program is not feasible.

Question: What is the required personnel to start a hospice program?

Answer: There are four administrative positions required to start a hospice program: (i) an administrator, (ii) an alternate administrator, (iii) a nursing director, and (iv) a financial manager. The administrator and nursing director may be the same individual if appropriately qualified.

Question: What are the required qualifications for the administrator and alternate administrator?

Answer: The requirements for administrator and alternate administrator are located in section 12VAC5-391-180 of the *Rules and Regulations for the Licensure of Hospice*.

Question: Is it necessary to have a distinct financial operation? What are the qualifications for the financial manager?

Answer: Yes, Even with the availability of computerized bookkeeping or financial management programs, the program needs to have an individual responsible for financial operations. There are no educational or experience requirements for this position. The individual needs to clear the criminal background checks as required by law. Any of the other required positions listed above may also serve as the financial manager, if they are appropriately qualified.

Question: Does my emergency preparedness plan need to be reviewed before my program can be licensed?

Answer: Yes, The emergency preparedness plan must be developed prior to the initial survey and must accompany the initial application and required fee.

