

# HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE EMTs

## GENERAL

Prehospital Emergency Medical Service (EMS) is the provision of medical care outside of and prior to receiving treatment by a physician or nurse practitioner in a hospital, clinic, or office. EMS personnel provide care on-scene and provide follow-up transport to a hospital. There are several different levels of care providers in EMS that are nationally recognized: Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Advanced EMT (AEMT), and Paramedic.

California views all firefighters, law enforcement officers, and lifeguards as “first responders” and requires they have a minimum of 21 hours of training in first aid and CPR. But the reality is that lifeguards, and especially firefighters, must receive many more hours of medical/rescue training to obtain and retain a job.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONDER (EMR)

California does not yet officially recognize the EMR level. Entry level into the EMS system in California is at the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level. However, many groups such as the American Red Cross (ARC) and the American Health and Safety Institute (ASHI) do offer EMR training programs for their personnel and the general public. Some larger employers may also require this training of their safety and disaster personnel.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (EMT)

EMT is the entry level of training into the official emergency medical services system in California, and as such is regulated by the state (CA Emergency Medical Services Authority – EMSA) and local EMS agencies (also called LEMSAs). Most LEMSAs are organized at the county level or are a joint organization between multiple counties.

Most EMTs work for an ambulance company or are employed by fire departments. Some work in hospital emergency rooms, doctors’ offices, amusement parks, or for other government agencies such as the CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation, US Forest Service, etc. While California firefighters are only required by the state to be EMRs, most city and county fire departments require their firefighters to be at least EMTs.

California’s EMT training meets the requirements of the National Education Standards for EMS, and as such, California trained EMTs are permitted to take the written and skills exams of the [National Registry of EMTs \(NREMT\)](#).

EMT training is typically one semester in length, and all training programs must be approved by their LEMSA. In Riverside County, there are eight approved training programs. Four of them are at community colleges, one is with ROP, and three are offered by private companies. Anyone can take EMT training, even if s/he does not want to become a certified EMT. However, if one chooses to become certified and employed as an EMT, there are certain steps after training that must be accomplished.

It was stated previously that persons taking EMT training in California are permitted to take the NREMT examinations. In fact, in order to be certified as an EMT in California, a person is *required* to take **and pass**

these exams. These are national exams, much like those taken by nurses and other health care providers to be licensed. The skills exam is given by the training program an individual completes. After successful completion of the training program and final skills exam, the course instructor will alert the NR that the student is eligible to take the written exam. Once a person receives information from the National Registry that (s)he has passed the written exam, (s)he can then apply to a LEMSA to obtain a state EMT certification. *An EMT cannot practice in California without first applying for and receiving a California certification.*

Application materials and fee requirements are obtained from and turned in to the LEMSA office. It is this local office which will assist with any questions, concerns, or problems. Most local offices will also issue the actual certification card. However, the card issued will be a STATE card. Once certified, a person is recognized as an EMT statewide. Only then can an individual call him/herself an EMT and be employed in that capacity. Please see the section "Certification" for more information about initial certification as an EMT by Riverside County.

EMTs are required to recertify every two years and must show competency at the time of recertification through documented continuing education and skills verification. Please see the sections "EMT Continuing Education" and "EMT Recertification" for more information about those topics and their requirements.

## **EMT CERTIFICATION**

If you choose to certify through/with the Riverside County EMS Agency (REMSA), you should read and become familiar with REMSA policy [#1202](#), EMT Certification.

In order to become certified as an EMT in/by Riverside County, a person must have completed the following:

1. Taken and passed an approved EMT training course. The program will give an official certificate to the student stating so.
2. Taken and passed the National Registry of EMTs (NREMT) certifying exam for EMT. The NREMT will send a congratulatory letter and certificate to those persons who successfully pass the exam.
3. Possess a current and valid CPR card at the 'professional rescuer' or 'healthcare provider' level. Riverside County EMS Agency (REMSA) will ONLY accept American Heart Association, American Red Cross, and American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI) CPR cards. All cards must have the information on them typed; handwritten cards are not accepted.

Upon completion of the above, an individual must complete our online application. There are questions on our application that ask about misdemeanor and felony convictions, and actions against any health care providers' license. Even if a conviction or disciplinary action happened a long time ago, it still needs to be listed on the application, as it will appear on the fingerprint information that we receive (see next paragraph). If it is not listed on the application, it will look as if the applicant is lying or attempting to hide something, and certification will be denied. There is no negotiating this denial. Excuses such as "It happened so long ago I forgot about it" or "I misread the application" will not be accepted. Period.

Applicants with positive backgrounds will be asked to supply additional materials in the form of court documents (aka "case prints") and possibly the arresting officer's report (AOR). We also require the applicant to write a "personal narrative" (an explanation in his/her own words about what happened). It is important that as much information as possible is given in this document; two or three sentences will not be sufficient. Composing one's thoughts and writing this narrative prior to completing the application is best so that all the facts and dates are included and correct.

Additionally, applicants need to be fingerprinted. It does not matter if an applicant has been fingerprinted in the past; ALL EMT candidates must be fingerprinted using our [REMSA fingerprint form](#). (At the time of fingerprinting, a person must declare who the information will be sent to. A person who gets fingerprinted without using our REMSA form with the appropriate identification code number will not have his/her fingerprint information sent to us. Consequently, the person will have to be fingerprinted again, requiring a repeat fee.) Fingerprints are obtained through the Livescan process and average cost is \$60-\$70. REMSA does not provide fingerprinting; a list of agencies within Riverside and surrounding counties that provide [fingerprinting services](#) is available at our office, or by going to the California Attorney General's website, [www.oag.ca.gov/fingerprints](http://www.oag.ca.gov/fingerprints). DO NOT USE the application form provided on this government website; you MUST use the form provided here on our website.

There are certain convictions that will prevent or delay a person from obtaining an EMT certification. These include the list below, which is taken from the CA State Health and Safety Code §1798.200, and which are, therefore, applicable statewide:

**Absolute (forever) denial:** conviction of a sex crime requiring the person to register as a sex offender, murder, murder for hire, attempted murder, or 2 or more felonies (ever)

**Denial for at least 15 years:** following a conviction of manslaughter or involuntary manslaughter

**Denial for at least 10 years:** following a conviction of any felony not mentioned above, and certain misdemeanor convictions that were plea-bargained down from felony charges (felony arraignment)

**Denial for 5 years:** following convictions on 2 or more misdemeanors relating to drugs (including possession, use, paraphernalia, under the influence, transport, sale); or 2 or more misdemeanors relating to force, violence, threat, or intimidation; or any singular theft of any kind (including petty theft and shoplifting)

**Denial until status change:** being on parole or probation for any felony

**Denial likely:** following a conviction within the past 7 years related to fraud or intentional dishonesty for personal gain (including passing bad checks, using phony or someone else's credit cards, forgery, embezzlement); commission of a crime requiring registration pursuant to 11590 of the Health & Safety Code (certain drug offenses); being currently on parole

A singular drug or alcohol conviction (including DUI, wet reckless, drunk and disorderly) within the previous five (5) years will be grounds for denial until the applicant obtains a medical and psychiatric evaluation from a physician who is certified by the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) to validate s/he has no signs of impairment or addiction (approx. cost = \$350). A list of Southern California area physicians is available from the REMSA office.

If these or any other convictions are in an applicant's background, it is best for him/her to call REMSA and speak with certification personnel. Applicants with positive backgrounds will be asked to supply additional materials in the form of court documents (aka "[case prints](#)") and possibly the arresting officer's report ([AOR](#)). We also require a "[personal narrative](#)" -- an explanation in his/her own words about what happened. It is important that as much information as possible is given in this document, as we want to understand what happened from YOUR perspective. Composing one's thoughts and writing this narrative prior to completing the application is best so that all the facts and dates are included and correct.

Failing to admit to prior circumstances is unwise. Falsely answering any question on the application is considered by regulations to be fraud, and EMT certification will automatically be denied.

Once an individual has completed the Livescan process, proof of all the above (CPR card, certificates, proof

of fingerprinting and application) must be submitted through the online application system to REMSA along with a current and valid official picture ID. Acceptable IDs include a state-issued driver's license or ID card, a passport, or a military ID (applicant must be primary issuer on military ID). **Applications MUST be done online.**

There is a cost to apply for EMT certification. Currently, those fees are:

- \$75 state application fee
- \$25 REMSA processing fee

Payment is completed online via credit/debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover. The credit card used MUST be in the name of the applicant. Application fees are NOT refundable.

Once we have received all the required materials from the applicant and notification from the Dept. of Justice (DOJ) that the background check was passed, the individual will be sent a wallet-sized certification card with a state ID number and logo on it. Processing time takes approximately 2-3 weeks if the DOJ reports a clean background. If a person fails the background check or decides to withdraw his/her application, fees will not be returned.

Certification brings with it certain responsibilities and requirements. REMSA policy [1202](#), EMT Certification, explains those responsibilities as well as delineating the expectations of practicing EMT within Riverside County.

## **EMT RECERTIFICATION**

Once EMT certification is obtained, it must be renewed every 2 years. It is not required to renew through the same Local EMS Agency (LEMSA) with whom an EMT did his/her initial certification. However, should a change in LEMSA be needed or desired, fingerprinting will again need to be done (for the new LEMSA's records), and the state renewal fee will be the same as it was initially: \$75.

To renew a certification, the EMT is required to have

1. completed either a Refresher class (through a training program) or a minimum of 24 hours of EMS continuing education
2. an original signed and dated Skills Competency Verification (SCV) form
3. a "healthcare provider" or "professional rescuer" CPR card that expires at least 30 days after the EMT's current certification expires
4. a completed and signed electronic renewal application with all necessary attachments

EMTs seeking to renew their EMT certification with Riverside County EMS Agency (REMSA) should review our policy [#1203](#) - EMT Recertification, for complete and detailed information, but need to know and do the following:

1. Successfully completing continuing education or a Refresher course does NOT mean that person is recertified as an EMT, only that s/he has successfully completed the training needed to *apply* for EMT recertification.
2. Application for recertification must be done BEFORE the current expiration date is reached. It does not matter that CE or Refresher requirements were completed a month or two prior to the current certification expiration date. If a *completed* application packet is not with REMSA prior to the EMT's expiration date, then that EMT has expired and can no longer work in an EMT capacity, regardless of the amount of CE or when it was taken.

3. Application for EMT recertification **MUST** be done by the individual. The school/training program that offered the Refresher class does not do it, nor do the CE providers. What the training program *does* do is give the EMS Agency a class roster showing who passed their Refresher class and who did not. Programs are permitted to take up to *2 weeks* to submit this paperwork.
4. Application for EMT certification must be done **ONLINE**.
5. In order to renew an EMT certification through the REMSA office, the renewing applicant *must include*:
  - a. a completed and electronically-signed application, with all appropriate attachments included
  - b. a *current valid* picture ID. This can be a driver's license, military ID, or passport. Computer generated temporary licenses or license extensions from the DMV are **NOT** acceptable. A copy of both the **front and back** of the ID is required (only the inside cover of a passport is necessary).
  - c. a *current valid* CPR card. We will only accept American Heart, Red Cross, or ASHI CPR cards that have personal information *typed* on them. The course taken must be, at minimum, defined as meeting the "professional rescuer" or "healthcare provider" level. No other CPR classes meet the requirement. A copy of both the **front and back** of the card is required.
  - d. an *original* Skills Competency Verification signature page ([SCV form](#)).
  - e. Continuing Education (CE) courses that must be logged on the "Continuing Education" form that the online system will send to the applicant after the application is submitted.
    - i. demonstrating at least 24 hours of EMS CE
    - OR**
    - ii. complete a 24 hour EMT Refresher course (which is also logged on the CE form)
    - iii. Reference REMSA policy [#1301](#) - Continuing Education for EMS Personnel, to learn more about CE options and requirements.
  - f. a form of payment. Current fees are as follows:
    - i. REMSA processing fee.....\$25
    - ii. State recertification fee .....\$37
    - iii. State recertification fee if changing LEMSAs, new to REMSA .....\$75
6. Payment is completed online via credit/debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover. The credit card used **MUST** be in the name of the applicant. Application fees are **NOT** refundable.
7. For the person renewing his/her EMT certification but who is new to Riverside County, the submission of fingerprints and subsequent background check is mandatory. Completion of fingerprinting must be accomplished prior to submitting renewal materials. Please reference the fingerprinting requirements/ process under the **EMT Certification** section, should you choose this option. Fingerprinting is an additional cost, paid at the place and time prints are taken. Average cost is \$60-\$70.
8. If the current certification is with REMSA and the EMT completes the online application with all the necessary attachments, the certification card can usually be issued within a few days. Renewal applications with required fingerprints can take up to **30 days**, *after* we receive all the required information and materials. Depending on the results of the fingerprints, additional documents may be required (see below).
9. PLEASE NOTE: Applicants with new or previously undeclared misdemeanor or felony convictions **OR** with prior licensure actions (probation, suspension, revocation) need to answer the background questions on the application appropriately. Falsely answering any question on the application is

considered by regulations to be ***fraud***; the certification will automatically be denied, and the applicant could be charged with a misdemeanor. Applicants with positive backgrounds will be asked to supply additional materials in the form of court documents (aka "[case prints](#)") and possibly the arresting officer's report ([AOR](#)). We also require a "[personal narrative](#)" -- an explanation in his/her own words about what happened. It is important that as much information as possible is given in this document; two or three sentences will not be sufficient. Composing one's thoughts and writing this narrative prior to completing the application is best so that all the facts and dates are included and correct.

10. Once certified, the EMT is responsible for knowing and following all of REMSA's policies and procedures, including those that deal with maintaining certification and recertifying. A policy manual on CD is available for purchase or can be obtained online at our website: [www.rivcoems.org](http://www.rivcoems.org).

For questions about recertification, please read policy [#1203](#). If questions remain after reading this policy, or if more explanation/clarification about obtaining additional documents is needed, please call our office. REMSA staff are happy to answer certification questions and are not able to make accommodations for misinformation received outside of the Agency. Therefore, direct all certification inquiries to the REMSA office via the telephone number (951) 358-5029 or via email at [emsapps@rivco.org](mailto:emsapps@rivco.org).

## **EMT REINSTATEMENT**

Once an EMT's certification has expired, s/he can no longer recertify it, but must apply for reinstatement of the certification. The process is very similar to the recertification process explained above, but depending on how long the certification has been expired, additional fees, continuing education, and testing are required. It is important to read our policy on EMT Reinstatement, [#1203.5](#), to understand the specific requirements. Additionally, a review of our Continuing Education policy, [#1301](#), and our SCV policy [#1302](#) is warranted.

### For an expiration of 1 day up to, but less than, 6 months:

- a late fee of \$10 is added
- all continuing education, Refresher, SCV, and CPR training must have been started and completed within 2 years of the submitted complete application

### For an expiration of 6 months up to, but less than, 1 year:

- a late fee of \$10 is added
- an additional 12 hours of CE is added, for a total of 36 hours of education
- all continuing education, Refresher, SCV, and CPR training must have been started and completed within 2 years of the submitted complete application

### For an expiration of 1 year or more:

- a late fee of \$10 is added
- the State fee increases to \$75
- an additional 24 hours of CE is added, for a total of 48 hours of education
- all continuing education, Refresher, SCV, and CPR training, must have been started and completed within 2 years of the submitted complete application

- proof of successful passing of the National Registry written and skills exams within 2 years of the submitted complete application
- Livescan fingerprinting using the REMSA-specific form must be completed no earlier than 3 months prior to submitting a complete application

## **SKILLS COMPETENCY VERIFICATION (SCV)**

EMT regulations regarding recertification require that in addition to continuing education, recertification applicants are required to perform *Skills Competency Verification (SCV)* each time they recertify (i.e., every two years).

SCV is not testing – it is performing/practicing a skill until it can be demonstrated competently. Only designated individuals can verify and sign-off that an EMT has performed the skills properly. Most employers will have such qualified persons. SCV can be performed as part of an employer’s in-service training, it can be taken as a CE class, or it can be accomplished as part of a 24-hour Refresher class. All EMT Refresher courses offered by approved training programs in Riverside County include SCV sign-off as part of their class.

A renewing EMT who is currently not employed or whose employer does not offer SCV, can go to the education calendar on our website, [www.rivcoems.org](http://www.rivcoems.org), to find SCV sessions, and/or contact any EMT training program to learn their Refresher course schedule.

There are 10 different skill areas in which renewing EMTs need to show competency. They include:

- Medical patient assessment
- Trauma patient assessment
- Cardiac arrest management
- Airway management
- Oxygen administration
- Hemorrhage control & Shock management
- Spinal motion restriction
- Penetrating chest injury care
- Epinephrine & Narcan administration
- Childbirth & Neonatal Resuscitation

There is a special form created by the State EMS Authority, [EMSA – SCV \(01/17\)](#), which is required to be signed by SCV instructors as they verify competency in each skill. This form with signatures must be uploaded to the LEMSA as part of the recertification application packet. Please reference REMSA policy [#1302](#), Skills Competency Verification, to learn more about SCV.

## **EMT CERTIFICATION BY CHALLENGE**

State regulations allow a path for physicians, RNs, PAs, LVNs/LPNs, personnel who have completed military medic training, and those who have served in a prehospital emergency medical classification of the Armed Services of the United States which does not have formal recertification requirements, to challenge the EMT certification process without having to complete the standard training course. Please read policy [#1204](#), EMT Certification by Challenge, then contact the REMSA office for more information on this process.