

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
HEALTH REGULATION AND LICENSING ADMINISTRATION**

BOARD OF MASSAGE THERAPY
AUTHORITY FOR GUIDANCE

June 1, 2020
DATE OF POLICY

20-001
POLICY NO.

POLICY STATEMENT

**SUSPENSION OF LIVE, CLASSROOM-SETTING REQUIREMENT
FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND CPR TRAINING
DURING THE COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY**

In light of the current public health emergency, the Board of Massage Therapy (Board) has adopted the following policy and offered this guidance related to the continuing education (CE) required to maintain a massage therapy license in the District. This guidance is in effect until January 31, 2021.

Section 7506.3 of Title 17 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) requires that, to qualify to renew a license expiring on January 31, 2021, District-licensed massage therapists must complete fourteen (14) hours of CE related to massage therapy practice during the two (2) years of the licensure term.¹ The required fourteen (14) hours of CE must include the following:

- 1) Three (3) hours of ethics;
- 2) Two (2) hours of LGBTQ;
- 3) Nine (9) hours of massage-related course work, six (6) of which must be hands-on, massage technique² course(s) completed in a live classroom setting; and

¹ It is important to note that on October 6, 2017 the massage therapy regulation was amended to increase the amount of continuing education required for the renewal of a license from twelve (12) to fourteen (14) hours, which became effective during the current licensure term (February 1, 2019 – January 31, 2021) and beyond.

² The required continuing education for massage therapists must contribute to the growth of professional competence in the practice of massage therapy. 17 DCMR § 7507.1. Numerous factors may contribute to a massage therapist's professional competence. For example, a massage therapist may complete a course on how to build a successful massage practice. Alternatively, a massage therapist may also complete a course aimed at self-care such as a meditation course. Likewise, a massage therapist may be interested in a course that addresses how to assist a client who suffers from PTSD to be more at ease and comfortable with massage touches. All such courses may be considered "massage-related." However, a massage technique course is one that involves a teaching, training, or learning specific to a massage technique or modality. Section 7599.1 of Title 17 of the DCMR defines massage technique as any touching or pressure with the intent of providing healing or therapeutic benefits through soft tissue manipulation and list examples of massage technique (such as Swedish Massage or Trigger Point Massage). The required massage-technique CE must involve teaching or training related to a specific massage technique or modality.

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- 4) At least ten percent (10%) – or 1.5 hours – of the total must be in public health priority topic(s) as identified in the notice available here
<https://dchealth.dc.gov/page/policy-statement-identifying-public-health-issues-continuing-education>

On March 11, 2020, the Mayor declared the state of public health emergency in the District due to the threat of COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor’s Order 2020-045. On March 24, 2020, non-essential businesses are ordered closed. Mayor’s Order 2020-053. A stay-at-home order was issued on March 30, 2020, prohibiting District residents from leaving their home except for certain specified essential businesses. Mayor’s Order 2020-054. Similar measures have also been adopted in all U.S. states and territories.

As a result of these emergency restrictions, it has become clear that licensees are facing the impossibility or at least difficulty in obtaining live, in-person CE in a classroom setting. The Board has therefore voted to suspend the live classroom setting requirement during this licensure term, which is ending on January 31, 2021.

Accordingly, the requirement of live, in-person, classroom setting CE pursuant to 17 DCMR § 7506.3(b) is suspended. Licensees seeking to renew the license on or before January 31, 2021 may complete the six (6) hours of massage-technique courses via remote, distance means such as webinars or pre-recorded classes. However, all other CE requirements remain. Therefore, a licensee seeking to renew a license expiring on January 31, 2021 must complete the following CE between February 1, 2019 and January 31, 2021:

- 1) Three (3) hours of ethics;
- 2) Two (2) hours of LGBTQ;
- 3) Nine (9) hours of massage-related course work, six (6) of which must be massage technique course(s); and
- 4) At least ten percent (10%) – or 1.5 hours – must be in public health priority topic(s).

Licensees may note that the list seems to include more than fourteen (14) hours. This is, however, not necessarily the case since some CE courses may satisfy more than one requirement. For example, one of the topics identified as public health priorities is ethics. Renewing licensees are already required to complete three (3) hours of ethics, which also will satisfy the requirement of 1.5 hours of public health topic.

The policy pertaining to live, classroom setting CE applies to applications to reinstate or reactivate a massage therapy license pursuant to 17 DCMR §§ 7506.4 and 7606.7.

An applicant seeking to reactivate a license or reinstate a license that has been expired for two (2) years or less also must complete fourteen (14) hours of CE as required of a renewing applicant, including all the specific mandated subjects as listed above. 17 DCMR §§ 7506.4 and 7506.7.

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An applicant for reinstatement whose license has been expired for between two (2) and five (5) years is required to have completed, during the two (2) years prior to applying, twenty-six (26) hours of CE, which must include:

- 1) Six (6) hours of ethics;
- 2) Two (2) hours of LGBTQ;
- 3) Eighteen (18) hours of massage-related CE, twelve (12) of which must be massage-technique; and
- 4) At least ten percent (10%) – or 3 hours³ – must be in public health priority subject(s).

17 DCMR § 7506.7.

Further, this policy also applies to the cardiac pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training required pursuant to 17 DCMR §§ 7512.1 and 7512.4. Accordingly, although the regulation requires that CPR training be completed in a live, classroom setting, that requirement is now suspended. Licensees and applicants may complete the CPR training in any manner, including online.

All inquiries pertaining to the practice of massage therapy, including the CE requirements, may be directed to the Board's Health Licensing Specialist, Ms. Thelma Ofosu-Mensah, at 202-478-5791 or thelma.ofosu-mensah@dc.gov.

³ Ten percent (10%) of twenty-six (26) is rounded up to three (3).