Certification Scheme - Paramedic

Policy No.:	81.13
Version No:	7
Effective Date:	August 20, 2025

Intent

This policy specifies the certification scheme for the Nationally Registered Paramedic (NRP) certification, including scope of certification, job and task description, required competence, required abilities, prerequisites, and applicable code of conduct.

Scope

This certification scheme applies to Nationally Registered Paramedic (NRP) candidates and certificants.

Definitions

NRP – Nationally Registered Paramedic

Certification – National Registry verification that an individual possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities (competencies) to do a job as defined by the requirements of the certification scheme.

Recertification – The renewal or maintenance of certification in which stated requirements are met.

Policy

Scope of Certification

This certification is aligned with the NRP role as defined by the current National EMS Scope of Practice Model (NHTSA, 2021) which states:

> The paramedic is a health professional whose primary focus is to respond to, assess, and triage emergent, urgent, and non-urgent requests for medical care, apply basic and advanced knowledge and skills necessary to determine patient physiologic, psychological, and psychosocial needs, administer medications, interpret and use diagnostic findings to implement treatment, provide complex patient care, and facilitate referrals and/or access to a higher level of care when the needs of the patient exceeds the capability level of the paramedic. Paramedics often serve as a patient care team member in a hospital or other health care setting to the full extent of their education, certification, licensure, and credentialing. Paramedics may work in community settings where they take on additional responsibilities monitoring and evaluating the needs of at-risk patients, as well as intervening to mitigate conditions that could lead to poor outcomes. Paramedics help educate patients and the public in the prevention and/or management of medical, health, psychological, and safety issues (p. 21).

Job and Task Description

This certification is aligned with the NRP role as defined by the current National EMS Scope of Practice Model (NHTSA, 2021). This document describes the NRP role as:

- "Function as part of a comprehensive EMS response, community, health, or public safety system with advanced clinical protocols and medical oversight.
- Perform interventions with the basic and advanced equipment typically found on an ambulance, including diagnostic equipment approved by an agency medical director.
- May provide specialized interfacility care during transport.
- Are an important link in the continuum of health care" (p.22).

The National Registry conducts a practice analysis every 4 to 6 years in accordance with the *National Registry Practice Analysis Policy.* The latest National Registry Practice Analysis identifies the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities for the profession.

Required Competence

The National Registry paramedic certification is designed to verify entry-level competency for paramedics.

Required Abilities

The National Registry requires the validation of abilities as a prerequisite to national Paramedic certification by a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Program (CAAHEP) accredited EMS Program. Psychomotor skills must be demonstrated according to criteria set by the Committee on Accreditation for the EMS Professions (CoAEMSP) Recommended Student Minimum Competency Matrix.

Code of Conduct

The *National Registry Code of Conduct* applies to all National Registry candidates and certificants.

Requirement of Accredited Program

All candidates for National EMS Certification at the Paramedic level whose Paramedic program began on or after January 1, 2013, must have successfully completed Paramedic education from an accredited program sponsored by CAAHEP or one who held a valid Letter of Review (LOR) issued by CoAEMSP.

Prerequisites to Certification:

EMS Program Course Completion within 2 years:

1. Current National Registry certification (NREMT) or state license at the EMT level or higher.
2. Successful completion of a CAAHEP-accredited Paramedic program (or a program that has been issued a CoAEMSP "Letter of Review") that meets or exceeds the National Emergency Medical Services Education Standards for Paramedic (NHTSA, 2021).
3. All Paramedic candidates who started their Paramedic education program on or after August 1, 2016, are required to complete a Paramedic Psychomotor Competency Portfolio. After January 1, 2023,

candidates are required to meet CoAEMSP Recommended Student Minimum Competency (SMC) Matrix.
4. Submission of a completed application with verification from a CAAHEP Accredited Paramedic course completion by the EMS Program Director including applicable payment.
5. Successful completion of the National Registry Paramedic certification examination.
    a. Results are valid 24 months.

Current State-Licensed Paramedic Candidates:

1. Must have successfully completed a CAAHEP-accredited Paramedic program (or a program that has been issued a CoAEMSP "Letter of Review") that meets or exceeds the National Emergency Medical Services Education Standards for Paramedic (NHTSA, 2021), January 1, 2013, and after.
2. Submission of a current, active Paramedic state license, equivalent state-recognized EMS level, or higher-level state EMS license.
3. Submission of the required number of continuing education credits aligned with the current model of the National Component of the National Continued Competency Program (NCCP).
    a. The National Component for Paramedic is 30 continuing education credits. See NCCP model for specific criteria on content domain requirements.
        i. All education must have been completed within the last 2 years. Two-year course eligibility is based on the date of the last documented course.
    b. Continuing education credits must adhere to the National Registry Accepted Education and Documentation Policy, Standardized Course Credits Policy, and Academic Credit Policy which includes education that is CAPCE-accredited or accepted by a State EMS Office, or, if a college or U.S. university course, it must be from an accredited institution and related to EMS patient care.
4. Submission of a completed application with applicable payment.
5. Successful completion of the National Registry Paramedic certification examination.
    a. Results are valid 24 months.

Re-entry (lapsed National Registry and/or state EMS license):

1. Must have successfully completed a CAAHEP-accredited Paramedic program (or a program that has been issued a CoAEMSP "Letter of Review") that meets or exceeds the National Emergency Medical Services Education Standards for Paramedic (NHTSA, 2021), January 1, 2013, and after.
2. Submission of a lapsed state Paramedic license/certification if never nationally certified as a Paramedic
3. Submission of the required number of continuing education credits aligned with the current model of the NCCP consisting of National, Local, and Individual Components.
    a. The NCCP Model for Paramedic is 60 continuing education credits. See NCCP model for specific criteria on content domain requirements.
        i. All education must have been completed within the last 2 years. Two-year course eligibility is based on the date of the last documented course.
4. Continuing education credits must adhere to the National Registry Accepted Education and Documentation Policy, Standardized Course Credits Policy, and Academic Credit Policy which

includes education that is CAPCE-accredited or accepted by a State EMS Office, or, if a college or U.S. university course, it must be from an accredited institution and related to EMS patient care.

5. Submission of a completed application including applicable payment.
6. Successful completion of the National Registry Paramedic certification examination.
    a. Results are valid 24 months.
7. Verification of skills competency prior to the first expiration date.
    a. Skills verification must be completed by one of the following mechanisms between the date of issuance of national EMS certification and the first expiration date.
    b. If the candidate does not successfully demonstrate skills verification within the allocated timeframe, the candidate will not be allowed to recertify, and the certification will lapse.
    c. Approved skills competency verification must be completed by one of the following methods:
        i. If the candidate affiliates with a National Registry Agency and has their skills competency verified (third-party) by their Agency's medical director or training officer, this satisfies the requirement for re-entry.
        ii. A State EMS Office or State-Approved or CAAHEP Accredited Education Program.
        iii. Provide verification of their current, full, and unrestricted state license.
            1. With a current, full, and unrestricted state license to provide care, the candidate demonstrates minimum skills competency, as required by a state licensing body.

<u>Criteria for Initial Certification</u>

1. Documented completion of all prerequisites including certification examination.
2. Met eligibility requirements of the *Terms of Certification.*

<u>Certification Period</u>

1. The time period of certification for the NRP certification is two years.
2. Initial expiration dates are determined by the date the candidate successfully completes the entire national certification process. Paramedic candidates completing the national certification process between January 1 and June 30 will receive an expiration date of March 31 two years in the future. Individuals successfully completing the national certification process between July 1 and December 31 will receive an expiration date of March 31 three years in the future.
3. Recertification expiration dates are two years from the expiration date of the prior period.

<u>Criteria for Recertification</u>

1. Met the eligibility requirements of the *Terms of Certification*
2. Recertification can be accomplished by either continuing education or examination.
    a. *Recertification by Continuing Education Credits:* Complete 60 credits of approved continuing education after the initial certification date and before the expiration date of the certification. Continuing education credits must be accepted by the State EMS Office or accredited by CAPCE.
        i. The objectives of the current National Component of the NCCP must be met, consisting of at least 30 credits of approved continuing education. Ten percent of the content must be pediatric focused.

ii. At least 15 credits of state accepted or CAPCE accredited continuing education for the Local Component of the NCCP, meeting any State or Local requirements.
iii. At least 15 credits of state accepted or CAPCE accredited continuing education for the Individual Component of the NCCP.

b. *Recertification by Examination:* Successful completion of the National Registry NRP certification examination not more than one year before the current certification expiration date. Only one attempt at the examination is allowed. If a passing score is not achieved, continuing education can be used if completed within the certification period.

3. Completion of the recertification application and paid appropriate fees.
4. Verification of continued competency for skills and abilities by the local Medical Director and education verification by local Training Officer for active status certification.
    a. If verification cannot be provided, recertification is allowed as inactive. Verification of continued competency for skills and abilities by a local medical director is required to convert inactive status to active status.

Criteria for Suspending and Withdrawing Certification

The criteria for withdrawing and suspending certification are specified by the *Terms of Certification* and *Disciplinary Action* policies.

Criteria for Changing the Scope of Level of Certification

In the event of a significant change in the scope of the certification, the National Registry releases a Transition Policy to implement the change in scope, including the required assessments.

Certificants may request to drop to a lower-level certification. If they wish to regain the certification level, they will need to meet the appropriate prerequisites for certification (*See reference Request a Lower Certification Level policy*).

Rationale

The certification scheme is developed with an objective of providing assurance that a person who seeks or maintains national EMS certification meets specific requirements and demonstrated competency. Recognition of competence through the achievement of national certification leads to increased public confidence and protection of the public.

The certification practices of the National Registry are consistent with the ISO 17024:2012 standards and current National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) standards. The assessment and examination practices of the National Registry are consistent with the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, & NCEM, 2014) and National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) standards.

Related Policy and Procedures

Code of Conduct
Terms of Certification Policy
Disciplinary Action Policy
Request to Drop to a Lower Certification Level

References

Institute for Credentialing Excellence (I.C.E). (2021). *NCCA accreditation standards*.

- Standard 3: Education, Training, and Certification
- Standard 6: Information for Candidates
- Standard 7: Program Policies

International Organization for Standardization. (2012). *ISO/IEC 17024:2012: Conformity assessment - General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*.

- Standard 7: Records and information requirements
- Standard 8; Certification schemes
- Standard 9: Certification process requirements

American Educational Research Association., American Psychological Association., National Council on Measurement in Education., & Joint Committee on Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (U.S.). (2014). *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). (2021). *National Emergency Medical Services Education Standards*.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). August 2021. National EMS Scope of Practice Model 2019: Including Change Notices 1.0 and 2.0 (DOT HS 813 151). Washington, DC: US Department of Transportation.

Document History

2019-08-14	Created
2019-11-12	Approved by the National Registry Board of Directors for public comment (V1).
2020-04-15	Approved by the National Registry Board of Directors (v2)
2020-10-18	Revisions to Prerequisites with review by Certification Committee
2021-06-09	Approved by Board of Directors for public comment (v3)
2021-09-21	Ratified by National Registry Board of Directors in Special Meeting (v3)
2022-06-15	22-Resolution-06: Removal of DE Limits passed by Board of Directors. Ratified after 60-Day Public Comment period. Revision initiated (v4).
2023-01-13	Revision due to removal of distributive education limits (v4). Approval by Executive Director.
2024-04-26	Updated for Motion 24-04 Removal of BLS CPR requirements, Resolution 24-01 Re-entry and State Licensed Entry and 23-06 ALS Redesign Implementation (v5)
2024-06-11	Approved by Board of Directors (v5)
2024-9-04	Updated for Resolution 21-08 Fitness to Practice /Criminal Conviction Project (v6)
2024-09-25	Approved by Executive Director after Board Review (v6)
2025-06-18	Approved by Committee (v7)

2025-08-20 Ratified by Assessment Committee (v7)