

EMT General Information

“Emergency Medical Services” (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 provides care on-scene with follow-up transport to a hospital. There are several different levels of care providers in EMS:

First Responder
EMT
AEMT (formerly EMT-II in CA)
EMT-P (paramedic)

A first responder has received advanced first-aid and CPR training. All firefighters, law enforcement officers and life guards must be trained to at least this level.

Emergency Medical Technician is the next level/position in the prehospital care environment; it is the first level tracked by our state government, and there are many state regulations, as well as local (county) policies and procedures, that must be met and followed. California’s EMT is equivalent to that required by the national standard.

EMT training is typically one semester in length, and all training programs must be approved by the local EMS agency. In Riverside County, there are 6 approved training programs: 4 of them are at community colleges, 1 is with ROP, and 1 is offered by a private company. 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.

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 US Forest Service, Parks and Recreation, etc. While California firefighters are only required by the state to be first responders, most city and county fire departments require their firefighters to be at least EMTs.

EMTs are required to recertify every two years and must show competency at the time of recertification through documented continuing education and skills verification.

EMT Certification

Simply passing an EMT training program does NOT make someone an EMT.

Upon completion of the training program *with an acceptable grade*, the EMT candidate is required to take and pass a certification exam. This is a national exam, much like those taken by nurses and other health care providers to be licensed. Once the candidate receives information that (s)he has passed the certifying exam, (s)he must come to the county EMS Agency office to apply for EMT certification. Application materials and fees are turned in to the local EMS (a county or regional) office. It is the 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.

Initial Certification

Reference Riverside County EMS Policy regarding EMT Certification (**Policy #3200 prior to 4/1/2012, Policy 1202 after 4/1/2012**) for complete information.

In order to become certified as an EMT in 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 (NR) certifying exam for EMT-Basic/EMT (EMT-B); EMT-B is equivalent to the California designation of EMT -- the NR 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 (REMS) 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 may either go on-line to the REMS website (www.rivcoems.org) or come in to our office and obtain an application for fingerprinting. ALL EMT candidates **will** be fingerprinted. (At the time of fingerprinting, a person must declare who the information will be sent to. A person who gets fingerprinted without using our EMS Agency form with the appropriate identification code number will not have his fingerprint information sent to us. Consequently, the person will have to be fingerprinted again, requiring a repeat fee). Fingerprints are done through the Livescan process and will cost approximately \$75. REMS does not do fingerprinting, but we can give you a list of agencies within Riverside and surrounding counties that do.

Once an individual has completed the Livescan process, proof of all the above (CPR card, certificates, and fingerprint application copy) must be presented to the EMS Agency office 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 issuant on military ID). Application **MUST** be done **IN PERSON**.

At the office, the applicant will complete and sign an EMT application and pay the required fee. It is possible to download the application from our website, but it **must** be printed in color. There are some questions on our application that ask about misdemeanor and felony convictions, and actions against any health 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 show up on the fingerprint information that we receive. 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.

Fees shall be paid in the following manner:

1. Cash, cashier’s check, or money order for \$75 (state fees) issued to: ***EMT Certification Fund.***
2. Cash, cashier’s check, or money order for \$25 (REMS fee) issued to: ***REMS***

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 ~ 2 – 3 weeks if the (*continued*)-- DOJ reports a clean background. Application fees are **NOT** refundable. If a person fails the background check or decides to withdraw his/her application, **fees will not be returned.**

Convictions that will cause certification to be denied include:

- **Absolute (forever) denial** to persons convicted of a sex crime requiring the person to register as a sex offender, or murder, murder for hire, attempted murder, or 2 or more felonies (ever)
- **Denial for at least 15 years** following a conviction of manslaughter, involuntary manslaughter
- **Denial for at least 10 years** following a conviction of any felony not mentioned above, or a misdemeanor conviction that was plea-bargained down from a felony charge (felony arraignment) within the last 10 years
- **Denial for 5 years** following a conviction on 2 or more misdemeanors relating to drugs (including paraphernalia, use, under the influence, transport, sale, possession) 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 for up to 7 years** following a conviction related to fraud, intentional dishonesty for personal gain (including passing bad checks, using phony credit cards, forgery, embezzlement)
- Currently on parole or probation for a felony
- Commission of a crime requiring registration pursuant to 11590 of the Health & Safety Code (certain drug offenses)

A singular drug or alcohol conviction (including DUI and wet reckless) within the previous five (5) years will require that you obtain a medical and psychiatric evaluation by a physician who is certified by the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) to validate you have no signs of impairment or addiction (approx. cost = \$400). A list of Riverside area physicians is available from the REMS office.

EMT Recertification (already certified through Riverside County)

Reference Riverside County EMS Policy (**Policy #3210 prior to 4/1/2012, Policy 1203 after 4/1/2012**) for complete information.

State regulations require that EMTs obtain a minimum of 24 hours of approved EMS continuing education (CE) or 24 hours of an approved EMT Refresher course to be eligible for recertification. If recertifying by CE, at least 50% of the CE hours (12) must be obtained through a traditional classroom format. However, the amount of CE hours increases if you have let your certification lapse (see below). Additionally, all re-certification candidates must submit proof of skills competency, using the Skills Competency Verification form, EMSA-SCV (08/10), found on the State EMSA's website, www.emsa.ca.gov. (All agencies qualified to perform the Skills Competency Verification have this form already).

If you were formerly certified through REMS, but have let your certification lapse over a year, or if you are one of the "old-timers" who has never been fingerprinted by REMS, you will be required to obtain a Livescan set of fingerprints and submit them for background review to the state's Dept. of Justice (DOJ) and the FBI. This costs approximately \$75. Make sure you obtain a REMS fingerprinting form either from

our office or by downloading three copies from our website. At the time of fingerprinting, a person must declare who the information will be sent to. A person who gets fingerprinted without our EMS Agency form and code # will not have his fingerprint information sent to us. Consequently, the person will need to be re-printed and re-pay all fees.) Fingerprints taken at/for another EMS Agency or purpose are not acceptable.

If you are currently certified and have not expired, or hold a certification through REMS expired less than six (6) months

In order to recertify as an EMT in Riverside County, a person must submit the following:

- 1 – a completed and signed EMT application. It is possible to download our application from this website, but it must be printed in color.
- 2 – proof of completion of 24 hours of approved EMS CE using REMS form EMS-062, Statement of Continuing Education, OR an approved EMT Refresher certificate of completion. CE or Refresher must be less than 2 years old at time of recertification, and must be completed during an EMT's certification cycle (on-time applicants).
- 3 – an **original** Skills Competency Verification form, EMSA-SCV (08/10), with appropriate signature(s), completed within the last two (2) years.
- 4 – a current and valid CPR card at the 'professional rescuer' or 'healthcare provider' level. Riverside County EMS Agency (REMS) will ONLY accept American Heart Association, American Red Cross, or American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI) CPR cards. All cards must have the information on them typed; handwritten cards are **not** accepted.
- 5 – 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 (must be primary issuant).
- 6 – submit receipt showing Livescan obtained, if required (see above)
- 7 – payment of fees in the following manner --

If no Livescan was required (REMS has your current DOJ information on file):

1. Cash, cashier's check or money order for \$37 (for state fees) issued to:
EMT Certification Fund
2. Cash, cashier's check, or money order for \$25 issued to **REMS**. However, if you are expired there is an additional \$10 late fee for a total of \$35 to REMS.

If you were required to Livescan:

the state fee increases to \$75 - made out in the same manner as above, and
REMS fees remain as above

If recertifying by mail, do not send cash.

EMS fees are not refundable. Therefore, prior to renewal, review the "causes for denial" discussed in the section for Initial Certification.

Application may be done in person or can be mailed. If mailed, #1, #2, and #3 MUST be the original REMS/EMSA forms. Refresher course completion certificates should be photocopied, with the original being retained by the applicant. Cards in #4 and #5 must be photocopied front AND back, and copies must be clear enough to easily discern ALL information and clearly identify the individual on the photo ID. Do NOT fax. Faxed copies are rarely 'clean' enough to be acceptable.

Once we have received all the required materials, we will process the certification, and send a new state-issued wallet-sized certification card. Processing time varies, especially if you were required to obtain a Livescan. If you fail to complete the application process or decide against recertifying after submitting, **fees will not be returned.**

If you were certified by Riverside EMS but your card has expired six (6) months or more (oops!):

In order to recertify as an EMT in Riverside County, a person must submit the following:

- 1 – a completed and signed EMT application. It is possible to download our application from this website, but it must be printed in color.
- 2 – proof of completion of a variable amount of CEs depending upon how long ago the applicant's certification expired. A written certification exam may need to be passed. It is best to read policy the EMT Recertification policy (Policy #3210 prior to 4/1/12, #1203 after 4/1/12), and then contact our office with your questions. CE or Refresher must be less than 2 years old at time of recertification.
- 3 – an **original** Skills Competency Verification form, EMSA-SCV (08/10), with appropriate signature(s), completed within the previous two (2) years.
- 4 – a current and valid CPR card at the 'professional rescuer' or 'healthcare provider' level. Riverside County EMS Agency (REMS) will ONLY accept American Heart Association, American Red Cross, or American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI) CPR cards. All cards must have the information on them typed; handwritten cards are **not** accepted.
- 5 – 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 (must be primary issuer).
- 6 – if certification is expired one (1) year or more, or you have never been fingerprinted for REMS, you must be fingerprinted for our office and submit a receipt showing you have completed a Livescan for our Agency. (Refer to the second paragraph under "EMT Recertification")
- 7 – payment of fees in the following manner --

If no Livescan was required (because you had previously livescanned for REMS, and your EMS certification is expired for less than one year):

Cash, cashier's check or money order for \$37 (for state fees) issued to:

EMT Certification Fund

Cash, cashier's check, or money order issued to **REMS** for \$35
(standard fee \$25 + \$10 late fee)

If you were required to Livescan:

the state fee increases to \$75 – made out in the same manner as above

REMS fees remain as above

If recertifying by mail, do not send cash.

Fees are NOT refundable. Therefore, prior to renewal, review the "causes for denial" discussed in the section for Initial Certification. Application materials for re-certification may be submitted in person or may be mailed. If mailed, #1, #2, and #3 MUST be the original REMS/EMSA forms with "live" signatures. Refresher Course completion certificates should be photocopied, with the original being retained by the applicant. Cards in #4 and #5 must be photocopied front AND back, and copies must be clear enough to easily discern ALL information and clearly identify the individual on the photo ID. Do NOT fax. Faxed copies are rarely 'clean' enough to be acceptable.

Once we have received all the required materials, we will process the certification, and send a new state-issued wallet-sized certification card. Processing time varies, especially if you were required to obtain a Livescan. If you fail to complete the application process or decide against recertifying after submitting, **fees will not be returned.**

EMT Recertification – New to Riverside County

As an EMT currently certified or formerly certified through another California certifying entity wishing to now recertify through REMS, you would follow the processes outlined above for REMS-based certifications based on your certification status (current, expired less than 6 months, expired six months or more). The only differences are that

Livescan fingerprinting is required and you must pay the higher state certification fee (\$75), and application must be done IN PERSON.

Reference Riverside County EMS Policy (Policy #3210 prior to 4/1/12, #1203 after 4/1/12), EMT Recertification for additional information. Out-of-state applicants should reference current REMS Policy “EMT Certification” (Policy #3200 prior to 4/1/12, #1202 after 4/1/12), for additional information.

Out-of State Applicants

California’s EMT is roughly equivalent to the National Registry designation of EMT-B (basic). All out-of-state (OOS) applicants are required to submit proof of a current, valid certification, either from their state EMS agency or from the National Registry, if that is their state’s recognized certification. They are also required to submit proof that their training met the minimum standards as defined by the National Education Standards for EMTs. All OOS applicants are required to be fingerprinted.

Applicants will be given information on how and where to obtain electronic fingerprints upon submission of application materials at the EMS Agency office. Fingerprinting is an additional fee of ~\$75 which is paid at the time of fingerprinting. Fingerprints should not be obtained before obtaining the correct forms either directly from the REMS office or from our website. (At the time of fingerprinting, a person must declare who the information will be sent to. A person who gets fingerprinted without our EMS Agency form and code # will not have his/her fingerprint information sent to us. Consequently, the person will need to be fingerprinted again, and incur the additional expense.) Fingerprints taken at/for another EMS Agency or purpose are not acceptable, as agencies are not permitted to share results with one another.

Out-of-state applicants follow those requirements as outlined in our Initial Certification policy. Processing time can take longer than that of an in-state applicant, as we must correspond with the out-of-state certifying entity.

EMT Challenge by Examination

Reference Riverside County Policy “EMT Certification by Challenge” (Policy #3220 prior to 4/1/12, #1204 after 4/1/12).

Persons who are currently licensed as physicians (MDs/DOs), registered nurses (RNs), licensed vocational nurses (LVNs), or physician assistants (PAs), OR those persons in the armed forces who have sufficient documented training or service in an EMS capacity within the previous two years, may be permitted to challenge EMT certification through written and skills testing only – an EMT training course is not required.

The written exam is scheduled through the National Registry. Skills testing can be accomplished through any of our approved training centers. The challenge examination may be taken only once. If failed, the individual must complete an EMT basic training course.

In addition to the documentation of training/service stated above, challenge-by-exam candidates must submit those same materials as required of initial application candidates – proof of successfully passing the exam, a current and valid CPR card, current and valid legal photo ID, fingerprints, etc.

Continuing Education – CE

Reference Riverside County EMS CE Policy (Policy #3100 prior to 4/1/12, or #1301 after 4/1/12) for additional information.

In California, EMTs are required to obtain 24 hours of current EMS education in order to recertify on-time. This may be obtained by attending multiple CE classes OR by attending a singular designated EMT Refresher class offered by an approved training center.

CEs obtained MUST be through an *approved EMS CE provider*, a qualifying college course, or have national CECBEMS approval. Courses approved by other professional bodies (BRN, CME, etc.) will not be accepted in lieu of EMS CE. Approved California EMS CE providers will/must/are required to advertise their approval number when they advertise their classes. Approved California EMS CE providers will have an approval number, XX – XXXX. Some counties add additional digits to the approval number to designate the class, XX – XXXX – XXX. Courses approved by CECBEMS will also advertise their approval number. Always look for the approval number and do not assume courses are approved if this number is not given. CEs **will not** be given after-the-fact to classes taken but not originally approved as CE, even though they may be EMS related.

CEs must have been taken within the two years prior to recertification (during the current certification period if the applicant has not lapsed).

Of the minimum 24 CE hours required for recertification, 50%, or at least 12 hours, must be obtained through an instructor-based learning format. Other options to obtain CEs include structured clinical time, structured teaching time, advanced topics (certain classes pertinent to EMS but not within EMT scope of practice – ex. EKGs, ACLS), and distance learning/media-based classes (including on-line, mail-order, take-home, and video formats). Field care audits taken through Riverside County CE providers qualify as instructor-based classes. **As of April 1, 2012, at least two-thirds (2/3) of the CE obtained must be medically-based.**

In order to obtain CEs, a person must not only attend the course or complete the packet, but must **PASS** the course exam AND complete a course evaluation. Once having done that, (s)he will be issued a course completion certificate which states his/her name, the name of the course, the date, and the provider's approval number. It is the individual EMT's responsibility to **keep all original certificates for at least 4 years**. Should an EMT be audited, these certificates will be proof of completion. Copies will not be accepted. Files kept by employers will not be accepted. Only original certificates will be considered valid.

In most instances, taking the same course twice will not be accepted. However, those nationally recognized courses such as CPR, PHTLS, BBP and certain other courses needed for employment and required to be taken every two years will be accepted for credit twice, *provided* they are taken from an approved EMS CE provider and with a respectable interval between them (ex. – 2 CPR courses taken 3 months apart will not be accepted for dual credit, but taken 18 months apart will be allowed).

We understand that the certification process can seem confusing and/or difficult, so please feel free to contact the EMS Agency for any additional questions/clarification needed by calling (951) 358-5029 Monday through Thursday (holidays excluded), from 8am-5pm.