

Frequently Asked Questions

Question:

Can I upgrade at the time of renewal?

Answer:

Yes, but there are no shortcuts.

Each renewal application should be accompanied by eighteen (18) hours of continuing education that have been approved by the Arkansas Department of Health. Of these hours only six (6) of the hours can be from online or home study courses, the rest of the hours must to be from in-person classes.

An applicant applying to be a Master Massage Therapist will need to have been an active and practicing licensee for not less than two (2) years and be able to show 250 hours of practical experience. Additionally when applying they will have to show at least one hundred and twenty five (125) hours of continuing education. (Repeated classes are not allowed)

An applicant applying to be a Massage Therapy Instructor will need to have been an active and practicing licensee for not less than three (3) years and be able to show 250 hours of practical experience. Additionally when applying they will have to show at least two hundred and fifty (250) hours of continuing education. (Repeated classes are not allowed)

Question:

If I take an Arkansas approved class, but it's out of state, will I get Arkansas credit for that class?

Answer:

Yes.

Question:

Are there any out-of-state continuing education courses that will be accepted and go towards my renewal?

Answer:

Courses that are approved by the NCBTMB and taught in other states or classes that are approved by another state massage office or board are acceptable. If a licensee encounters an out of state class or one in another country that does not meet this criteria, but they believe it falls into the scope of practice as stated in Article one of the Rules and Regulations for Massage Therapy, they should contact the Arkansas Department of Health, Massage Therapy Section to have the class reviewed and approved before enrollment.

Question:

Do I have to do anything before I open a massage therapy spa, clinic or salon for clients?

Answer:

Yes you must first register your spa, clinic or salon with the Arkansas Department of Health Massage Therapy Section.

https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/MessageClinicRegistration4_16.pdf

Question:

Is there a fee when registering a massage therapy spa, clinic or salon?

Answer:

No there is not a fee for registration however if you are found to be conducting massage therapy services for compensation in a spa, clinic or salon without being registered with the Department penalties may apply.

Question:

Is it okay for me to start getting my continuing education for my next renewal?

Answer:

Continuing education hours must be taken between the issue date and expiration date of the licensure, so it really depends on each licensee's birthday and license status. Since carryover hours are no longer accepted, each applicant for renewal needs to make sure that they take the hours needed during their licensing period.

Question:

What is the policy on carryover hours? Are there any?

Answer:

No carryover hours.

Question:

Can complaints be anonymously filed?

Answer:

Yes. Please go to <http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/massage-therapy-complaint-form> to file a complaint using our online complaint form.

Question:

I am moving to Arkansas from another state where I hold a license to practice massage therapy. Can I transfer my license? Is there reciprocity? How do I get an Arkansas license?

Answer:

There isn't a transfer option, applicants coming from other states have to apply for licensure. Here's the application for licensure and instructions:

http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/InstrAppForLic_4_12_16.pdf

Question:

Can I work in Arkansas with just my national certification from NCBTMB?

Answer:

No. You need an Arkansas license to advertise or practice massage therapy.

Here's the application for licensure and instruction:

https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/Out-of-State_licensure_application_11.17.pdf

Question:

Why do I need an Arkansas license as a massage therapist if I have a national license?

Answer:

Your national certification from NCBTMB is a voluntary certification, and not a license. Licenses are issued by government entities and provide licensed professionals with specific authority (e.g. use of a protected title and/or a specific scope of practice). In Arkansas, a state license is required to advertise or practice massage therapy.

Question:

How many hours of continuing education are needed to keep an active license current?

Answer:

Each renewal for licenses shall be accompanied by proof of no fewer than eighteen (18) hours of continuing education that have been approved by the Arkansas Department of Health. Of these hours only six (6) of the hours can be from online or home study courses, the rest of the hours must to be from in-person classes.

Question:

What is the procedure for being placed in Inactive Status? How long can my license be inactive?

Answer:

This is handled during the renewal process. To go inactive or stay inactive a licensee still needs to fill out the proper forms and pay the renewal fees. There are boxes on the forms to check to indicate the desire to go on inactive status. Once this is processed the licensee will get back an "Inactive Slip" instead of a license.

A licensee may choose to be on inactive status for two licensing periods in a row, or four (4) years. To do this they will need to continue filing renewal forms and paying all accompanying fees. At the end of this

time they will have to renew with ALL of the hours they would have needed for each renewal period or they may allow their license to expire.

Any individual licensee who is not currently in practice and who wishes to place his or her license on the inactive list may remain on this list for a period not to exceed four (4) years without reexamination. After the time allowed, all inactive licensees shall meet current requirements for licensure and must successfully complete an examination recognized by the board before resuming the active practice of massage therapy. Any individual licensee who has been placed on the inactive list for fewer than four (4) years and who wishes to reactivate his or her license shall follow the procedures for license renewal, present satisfactory evidence of completion of continuing education hours for the inactive period, and pay all appropriate fees prior to resuming the active practice of massage therapy.

***If you are placed on inactive status, you must still renew your license. Before returning to active status, all continuing education hours for inactive years must be submitted.**

Question:

Can I use any type of lotion, oil or cream during a massage session?

Answer:

Yes however Massage therapists generally use lotions, oils or creams that are available without a prescription, with the exception of CBD Oil.

The use of any CBD oil by massage therapists cannot be endorsed by the Department, but we can state that we will not take any action against therapists who choose to use it. There are conflicting federal cases on whether hemp products containing trace amounts of THC fall within the definition under the federal controlled substances act. Also, it would be nearly impossible to police the use of CBD oils, since some are cannabis derived and some are hemp derived. Because the law is not clear regarding which oils are in violation of the uniform controlled substances act, we would advise all therapists that choose to use CBD oil to do so at their own risk, recognizing that such products could potentially be illegal.

Question:

Can Massage Therapist in Arkansas perform animal massage?

Answer:

The massage therapy laws and regulations do not specifically state that they apply only to humans, however, it is our conclusion that it is implied, specifically the references to draping and sexual misconduct.

Arkansas Code Ann. § 17-86-102(3)(c)(vii) defines massage therapy as “any hands-on bodywork techniques and procedures rising to the level of the techniques and procedures intended to be regulated under this chapter and *not covered under specific licensing laws of other boards.*”

It is our position that the massage of animals falls under the Arkansas Veterinary Medicine Practice Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 17-101-101, *et seq.* All questions regarding the requirement of a Veterinary license for animal massage must be presented to the Veterinary Board and cannot be answered by us.

In conclusion, we would not regulate animal massage in any way. There is no requirement for a person performing animal massage to have a massage therapist license nor is there anything in our law that prevents a licensed massage therapist from performing massage on animal. Accordingly, we would not take any action against a licensed therapist for performing massages on animals, unless our other laws

or regulations (such as sanitary violations, use of the title massage therapist, etc.) are violated while doing so.

Question:

Can I work on a temporary license if I am active duty or a military spouse before I am licensed in Arkansas?

Answer:

No, Arkansas Massage Therapy statute requires background checks for licensure, however your application will be moved to the top of the priority list when submitted.

Question:

Can I go directly to a Police station for my background check without applying for a license?

Answer:

No, you must first apply for licensure with the Arkansas Department of Health and turn in all required documentation. Once all of the completed paperwork is verified a packet of information and forms will be mailed to the address you indicated on your application. This packet will include the form for the state background check and the federal background check. Once an applicant has received this packet they should follow the enclosed instructions and go to a local police station to have their fingerprints taken.

Once all forms are filled out, fingerprints are professionally produced at a police station, and a check or money order has been made out to Arkansas State Police, then everything should be mailed back to the Arkansas Department of Health in the provided envelope. Employees at the Arkansas Department of Health will then review the forms for completeness. If there are errors or missing sections the packet will be returned to the applicant for corrections.

Question:

Is a national exam required for licensure?

Answer:

Yes. Applicants must take and pass the MBLEx examination or one of the NCBTMB tests before applying for licensure in Arkansas.

Question:

Is a criminal background check required for renewal?

Answer:

No. Background checks are required when applying for a license or upgrading to another level of licensure.

Question:

How much is a license?

Answer:

The application fee for licensure is \$180.00.

Question:

How often do I have to renew?

Answer:

Licensed massage therapists renew on the first day of the month, in the month preceding their birthday every two years. If they miss this date they can still renew up to the expiration date printed on their license. If a licensee misses the expiration date they must reapply for a new license.

Question:

Can I have a massage location in my home?

Answer:

Yes. A massage therapist can designate a portion of their own home as their massage clinic. When preparing a space for a home-based massage clinic it is important to remember that there cannot be a bed present in the room where business will take place. This home-based clinic must follow all of the normal rules and regulations for other clinics and business licensing requirements of their municipality.

Please Note: It is important that individuals register this location with the Arkansas Department of Health, Massage Therapy Section to allow regular inspections.