

Frequently Asked Questions

Licensure

How much is a license?

The application fee for licensure is \$180.00.

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?

Yes, there is reciprocity. [Here](#) is the application for licensure and instructions.

Is there reciprocity for massage therapy licenses if I am active duty or a military spouse before I am licensed in Arkansas?

Yes, there is reciprocity. [Here](#) is the application for licensure and instructions.

Is a national exam required for licensure?

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

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

No. You need an Arkansas license to advertise or practice massage therapy. [Here's](#) the application for licensure and instruction.

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

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.

Can students receive hours prior to receiving a student learning permit when enrolling in a massage therapy school?

No. Under Arkansas Code Chapter 86 – Massage Therapists (§§ 17 86 301 (a) (6). Registration required--Exemptions (a) It shall be unlawful: (6) For any massage therapy school or postsecondary massage therapy school to enroll any person in the massage therapy school or postsecondary school who does not hold a massage therapy learning permit issued by the department;

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

No, you must first apply for licensure with the Arkansas Department of Health and turn in all required documentation. Once all 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 the Department of Health (the Department will send this directly to the 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.

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

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 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.**

Renewals

How often do I have to renew?

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.

Is a criminal background check required for renewal?

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

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

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.

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

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 be from in-person classes.

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

Yes.

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

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.

Can I upgrade at the time of renewal?

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 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, an applicant 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)

Miscellaneous

Can I submit a complaint?

Yes. Please go to [here](#) to file a complaint using our online form.

Can I make public comments during the MTTAC/CTAC meeting?

Yes, however, the subject must be submitted in writing to the Section in advance of the meeting. Once approved you will be added to the agenda with a two (2) minute limit for your comment.

Practice

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

Yes, however Massage therapists generally use lotions, oils or creams that are available without a prescription, except for 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.

Can Massage Therapist in Arkansas perform animal massage?

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

Can I have a massage location in my home?

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.

Act 629 – Existing and New Establishments

Who is required to submit a new establishment registration application and all required documents?

Any entity is required to submit a new establishment registration application. An entity is anyone that owns and operates a massage therapy business that services clients for compensation and is responsible for any infractions should the establishment receive one during an inspection, including *without limitation*:

- Sole proprietors – Therapists that have a standalone business
 - Corporations, CEOs or CFOs of a corporation or majority owners in the corporation
 - Associations
 - General or limited partnerships
 - Limited liability companies
 - Therapists that own and operate massage therapy businesses that contract or rent rooms to licensed therapists
 - Therapists that rent a room or are contract laborers inside a cosmetology salon, body art establishment or any other business that is not the medical field.
 - Therapists that rent a room or are contract laborers inside of a medically owned business
 - Therapists that own and operate a mobile establishment
 - Therapist who are considered 1099
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Who is exempt from the application requirements for a new establishment and background check under Act 629?

- Therapists that are employees in a registered massage therapy establishment.
 - Therapists that are employees in a medically owned business.
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What application materials do I need for the establishment registration applications?

1. **A completed registration application furnished by the Department**
 2. **A list of all principals, and each principal's massage therapy license number, if applicable;**
 - a. **If requested by the Department, the applicant or massage therapy establishment registration holder must provide requested documentation to show each principal's interest in the entity.**
 3. **A list of all licensed massage therapists performing services in the entity**
 4. **A certificate of good standing from the Secretary of State, if applicable**
 - a. **Certificates of good standing only apply to corporations.**
 5. **A copy of a business license from the city or municipality, if applicable.**
 - a. **Business licenses only apply if the city or municipality where your business is located requires a license.**
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Who needs a background check for the operation of massage therapy establishments?

Individuals, licensed therapists or principals that are registering for the first time for a massage therapy establishment.

- Who is a principal?
 - **Principals are each owner, member, shareholder, partner, or other person with a financial interest in an entity applying for or holding a massage therapy establishment registration.**
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If I am an existing establishment, what do I need to do?

Existing establishments must submit:

1. **A completed registration application furnished by the Department**
2. **A list of all principals, and each principal's massage therapy license number, if applicable;**
 - a. **If requested by the Department, the applicant or massage therapy establishment registration holder must provide requested documentation to show each principal's interest in the entity.**
3. **A list of all licensed massage therapists performing services in the entity**
4. **A certificate of good standing from the Secretary of State, if applicable**
 - a. **Certificates of good standing only apply to corporations.**
5. **A copy of a business license from the city or municipality, if applicable.**
 - a. **Business licenses only apply if the city or municipality where your business is located requires a license.**

Individuals, licensed therapists or principals must also complete background checks. While there is no fee for coming into compliance with the Act, you will need to pay \$36.25 per background check. The money order or check must be made out to the Department of Health, and this money will go directly to the Arkansas State Police. However, if an individual, licensed therapist, or principal has received a background check within the last year, he or she will be exempt from the background check requirement, unless there has been a change in his or her criminal history.

What effect will this have on my renewal date if I'm an existing establishment?

It will not affect your renewal date. You are simply updating the Department of Health and officially registering with the Department to come into compliance with the Act

Do I need a background check when I renew my registration?

No. A background check is only required for initial registration.

Is there a fee when registering for a massage therapy establishment registration?

No. However, you will need to pay \$36.25 per background check. Make all money orders or checks out to the Arkansas Department of Health. This money will be sent directly to the Arkansas State Police.
