



## **Massage Therapy Licensure FAQ's:**

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### **1. Who must become licensed to practice massage—and when?**

When the Alaska State Legislature passed HB 328 in the fall of 2014 it adopted requirements for licensing both new and practicing massage therapists in Alaska, including education and exam requirements. The new law went into effect on July 1, 2015. Anyone who is not on the exemption list must be licensed before they practice massage in Alaska.

### **2. What about Native healers, Rolfers, and others who are exempt from licensing but may be performing massage-related techniques?**

Please read this list to see whether your practice fully falls under one or more of these exemptions. Illegal activity in conjunction with the delivery of massage services remains a crime under Alaska law and will continue to be prosecuted. The exemption list can be found in statutes and regulations at:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofMassageTherapists.aspx>

**AS 08.61.080. Exceptions to application of chapter.** This chapter does not apply to a

- (1) person licensed in the state under a statute outside this chapter who performs massage therapy within the scope of practice for which the person's license was issued;
- (2) person who, while acting in an official capacity as an employee of the United States government, performs massage therapy;
- (3) person who is licensed, registered, or certified in another state, territory, the District of Columbia, or a foreign country while the person is temporarily
  - (A) practicing massage therapy in this state in connection with teaching a course related to massage therapy; or
  - (B) consulting with a person licensed under this chapter;
- (4) student enrolled in an approved massage school or course of study who is completing a clinical requirement for graduation under the general supervision of a person licensed under this chapter if the student is clearly identified as a student while performing massage therapy services on members of the public and is not compensated for the massage therapy services;
- (5) person only performing massage therapy on members of the person's family;
- (6) person only performing techniques that do not involve contact with the body of another person;
- (7) person only performing techniques that involve resting the hands on the surface of the body of another person without delivering pressure to or manipulating the person's soft tissues;
- (8) person only performing services such as herbal body wraps, skin exfoliation treatments, or the topical application of products to the skin for beautification purposes when the services do not involve direct manipulation of the soft tissues of the body;
- (9) person only performing massage therapy for the athletic department of an institution maintained by public funds of the state or a political subdivision of the state or only practicing massage therapy for the

athletic department of a school or college approved by the board using recognized national professional standards;

(10) person engaged only in the practice of structural integration for restoring postural balance and functional ease by integrating the body in gravity using a system of fascial manipulation and awareness who has graduated from a program or is a current member of an organization recognized by the International Association of Structural Integrators, including the Rolf Institute of Structural Integration;

(11) person using only light touch, words, and directed movement to deepen awareness of existing patterns of movement in the body as well as to suggest new possibilities of movement or to affect the energy systems;

(12) person performing only the traditional practices of Native American traditional healers;

(13) person practicing only the manipulation of the soft tissues of the hands, feet, or ears and not holding out to be a massage therapist.

### **3. How do I get a license?**

Applications can be found on the board's website at:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofMassageTherapists/ApplicationsForms.aspx>

#### **There are 2 ways to apply for licensure:**

1. Credentials:

- ✓ You must have a current (active), unrestricted license in good standing in another state or country that allows you to practice massage therapy.
- ✓ The state or country that you are licensed in must have licensing requirements that are substantially equal to or greater than Alaska.

2. Examination:

- ✓ You completed a course of study of at least 500\* hours of in-class supervised instruction and clinical work from a board approved massage school or board approved apprenticeship program\*\*.
- ✓ You have passed a national exam (NCBTMB or MBLEX)
- ✓ Complete at least 4 hours\*\*\* of bloodborne pathogens/universal precautions safety training in the 2 years preceding your application date.

#### **AND**

- ✓ Submit a FD-258 fingerprint card and pass a state and national criminal history record check
- ✓ Have a current CPR certification
- ✓ Submit the application and fees

\* Education requirements will increase to 625 hours on 7/1/2019

\*\* At this time the board has not yet approved an apprenticeship program. Applicants who would like to apply by apprenticeship should submit program information for approval on a case-by-case basis.

\*\*\*Bloodborne Pathogens/Universal Precautions requirement will decrease to 2 hours on 7/1/2019

### **4. Can I still apply by Transition?**

No. The deadline to apply by Transition ended on July 1, 2017 (12 AAC 79.120).

## 5. What is the application process? How long will it take to get my license?

It takes most people 2-3 months to receive their license\*. Applications have many contributors besides the person submitting it. In addition to the portion you submit, the licensing examiner must also receive your transcript and exam scores (if applying by Examination) OR your license verification (if applying by Credentials) directly from the institution or organization. These items cannot be accepted from the applicant. Also, your fingerprints must be sent out to the Department of Public Safety to generate your background reports.

Here is an idea of what this process looks like:

1. **Your mail in your application:** Alaska is BIG and Juneau can be far away from where you are mailing your application from. It could take 5-7 business days for your application to arrive at the State Office Building.
2. **Your application arrives at the State Office Building:** The Licensing Examiner does not personally check the incoming mail or fax machine. All incoming mail goes to a mail room that sorts correspondence for the entire state! It can take up to 10 business days for mail to be sorted and sent to the correct department.
3. **Your application is delivered to the correct department:** All applications are processed in the order they are received. Licensing Examiners strive to do your initial application review within 10 business days. When your application has been reviewed, you will be sent an initial status update to your preferred method of contact that was indicated on your application. This status update will confirm that your application has been received and what documentation is needed for your file to be complete.
4. **Your file is complete:** once all your documents have been received, the Licensing Examiner will do a last review to make sure your file is complete. When this is verified, your application file will be sent to the Board of Massage Therapists for review and vote.
5. **Your file is sent to the board for review:** The Board of Massage Therapists reviews applications twice a month. Please allow them 10 business days to render their votes.
6. **The board votes on your application:** There are four possible outcomes to this process:
  - a. **Your license is approved!** You will receive a status update letting you know the good news and that your license is active as of that day. A hard copy will be mailed to your address within 5 business days.
  - b. **Your license is approved pending...** This means the board needs to see additional information in order to make a decision. You will be notified of this outcome by your preferred method of contact. Once you have submitted the requested information, the board will reconsider your application.
  - c. **Your application is “tabled” ...** This means that the board could not reach a majority vote. Your application review will be put on hold until the next scheduled board meeting. You will be notified of this outcome by your preferred method of contact.
  - d. **Your license is denied.** The board decided by a majority vote to deny your license in compliance with a statute from AS 08. You will be given the option to appeal if you choose. You will be notified of this outcome by certified mail.

\*If your file needs to be sent to Investigations for further review this time estimate is not applicable. Files sent to Investigations will be put on hold until clearance is has been received. You will be notified by your preferred method of contact by the Licensing Examiner if this happens and you will be contacted by the board’s investigator for follow-up.

## 6. What are the board-approved schools or credentialing organizations?

The Board of Massage Therapists has not approved specific schools.

AS 08.61.100 defines “approved massage school” as a massage therapy school or program that has:

- an authorization to operate from the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education <https://acpsecure.alaska.gov/> or a similar entity in another state or
- is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency.

As of August 2, 2018, the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education has approved 3 schools in Alaska: Alaska Career College, Alaska Institute of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture, and Massage Therapy, and Alaska Academy of Advanced Cosmetology. For an updated list, please visit the ACPE website at <https://acpsecure.alaska.gov/>.

## 7. What are the board-approved exams?

On June 15, 2015, The Board of Massage Therapists approved the following exams:

- Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (MBLEX) <https://www.fsmtb.org/mblex/>
- National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCETMB/NCETM) <https://www.massage-exam.com/ncetmb.php>

## 8. I have completed a massage program but it was less than the required hours, can I still apply?

In the meeting on March 8-9, 2018, the Board of Massage Therapists drafted regulations to define what massage curriculum should consist of to be considered for licensure in Alaska. This would allow someone who has deficiencies in education be allowed to complete the rest of their hours (with board approval) to be considered for licensure.

This curriculum breakdown is in the beginning stages of regulations and would not go into effect until it is completed (best estimates is summer of 2019).

If you would like to be kept up to date on this regulations project, send your name, email or mailing address, and occupational area of interest to:  
[RegulationsAndPublicComment@alaska.gov](mailto:RegulationsAndPublicComment@alaska.gov)

## 9. What do my application fees pay for?

### \$200 application fee

Used directly to process your applications. Applications and supporting documents will not be reviewed without it. Is **non-refundable** once an initial status update has been sent.

### \$290 licensing fee:

Used directly to issue your license. A license cannot be issued until it is received. In most cases, the licensing fee can be requested to be refunded as long as a license has not been issued.

### \$60 fingerprint processing fee:

Used directly for the processing of your fingerprint card to generate background check reports. Is **non-refundable** once your fingerprints have been mailed to the Department of Public Safety.

Some additional information about what your fees are used for are:

- The Division must create, publish, and manage licensing application forms and fees, which entail adherence to the state’s recordkeeping, security, payment, and refund policies and procedures.
- Requirement of licensees to meet professional fitness standards, which are evaluated by the license examiner and referred to the agency’s investigative unit, if necessary for further review.
- Enforcement of disciplinary sanctions available to the agency if a licensee violates the state licensing statutes or regulations or individual practices athletic training without a license. Because state law requires all costs of a licensing program to be borne by the licensees of that program (AS 08.01.065), any investigative, attorney, or appeal expenses of the state will be recovered in the licensing fee.
- AS 08.61 defers to the board to adopt necessary regulations for management of the licensing program. This requires board and investigator travel, legal support, and other resources the board and division need to comply with the expectations of law. The Alaska Administrative Code prescribes the requirements for public notice and adoption of agency regulations—the cost of which is borne by the licensing program.
- The law required fingerprinting upon initial licensure, as well as upon renewal of licensure every 6 years (as of 7/1/2019). The Department of Public Safety sets fees and processes fingerprints to obtain a report of criminal justice information under AS 12.62 and a national criminal history record check under AS 12.62.400. This process is more comprehensive than a state background check, so it requires additional cost and time. **The FBI does not permit reuse of fingerprints or the resulting background checks.**

For more information about the Massage Therapists Board financial breakdown, please review the Legislative report at the following link:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/AnnualPerformanceReports.aspx>

## **10. My license application is in process; may I start work?**

No, no one may practice as a massage therapist in the state of Alaska without a current/unrestricted license.

## **11. If a massage therapist is denied a license and appeals the decision, can they practice in the meantime?**

No, no one may practice as a Massage Therapist in the State of Alaska without a current/unrestricted license.

## **12. What do I need to do to renew my license?**

All massage therapy licenses expire on September 30 of **odd** number years. It is not determined by when you were issued your license.

Renewal Application can be found on the board’s website at:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofMassageTherapists/ApplicationsForms.aspx>

### **To renew your license:**

- ✓ Fill out the renewal application and pay the licensing fee (if your license was issued on or before September 30<sup>th</sup> of **even** numbered years you will pay \$290. If your license was issued on or after October 1<sup>st</sup> of **even** numbered years then your fee is \$145)

- ✓ Indicate on your application that you have a current CPR/1<sup>st</sup> Aid certificate
- ✓ Indicate on your application that you have completed the required amount of continuing education for the previous licensing period (For the 9/30/17 renewal you need to have completed 6 continuing education credits. For the 9/30/2019 renewal you will need to complete 16 continuing education credits).
- ✓ Submit a set of fingerprints (DPS is not allowed to keep your fingerprints on file, therefore a new set is required at each renewal) with the \$60.00 processing fee

### **13. If my license has lapsed, can I still renew it?**

If you did not renew your license by September 30, 2017 your license is currently lapsed. This means you are not legally allowed to work as a massage therapist in Alaska unless you get it reinstated.

#### **To reinstate your license:**

- ✓ Fill out the renewal application and pay the licensing fee (if your license was issued on or before September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 you will pay \$290. If your license was issued on or after October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 then your fee is \$145).
- ✓ Submit proof that you have a current CPR/1<sup>st</sup> Aid certificate
- ✓ Submit proof that you have completed your 6 hours of continuing education between the dates of July 1, 2015 and September 30, 2017 from a board approved school or program, board approved and accredited institution of higher education, or professional organization that serves the massage profession (12 AAC 79.210)
- ✓ Submit a set of fingerprints (DPS is not allowed to keep your fingerprints on file, therefore a new set is required at each renewal) with the \$60.00 processing fee

**After all the documents and fees have been received, your reinstatement application will go to the board for review. The board reviews applications twice a month. Please allow them 10 business days to render a decision.**

### **14. What are the continuing education (CE) requirements?**

#### For the 2015-2017 licensing period

Licensees must have completed 6 CE between July 1, 2015 and September 30, 2017

#### For the 2017-2019 licensing period

Licensees must complete 16 CE between September 30, 2017 and September 30, 2019.

Licenses that have been issued more than 90 days but less than 12 months as of September 30th of odd numbered years will not be required to complete any continuing education (12 AAC 79.210).

**\*Continuing education used to satisfy a consent agreement stemming from an audit or renewal will not count towards the 2017-2019 licensing period requirement\***

### **15. What if I don't meet my audit or reinstatement requirements? Do I lose my license?**

Licensees who cannot meet their audit or reinstatement requirements will have the option of entering into a consent agreement with the state of Alaska.

A consent agreement is a legal contract which will stipulate that the licensee will be subject to mandatory audits for two licensing periods, pay a fine based on each continuing education hour they are deficient, make up any continuing education they are missing, and have a disciplinary action on their record.

## **16. I have been notified that my application file has been sent to Investigations...what is that?**

Investigations reviews and investigates complaints concerning violations of the Statutes and Regulations that govern Professional and Business Licensing. Investigations include fraud, malpractice, negligence, misconduct, ethics, and noncompliance of various licensing provisions. You may find more information about them at: <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/Investigations.aspx>

You may have received a notification that your file has been sent to Investigations, it was probably for one of the following reasons:

- You answered “yes” to one of the Professional Fitness Questions on your application.
- You neglected to disclose a criminal charge or conviction as outlined in your application.
- You neglected to disclose that you had any disciplinary action relating to any professional licensing or license denial.
- You neglected to disclose any discipline relating to an ethics violation, professional standards, or sexual misconduct.
- You falsified information or documentation in relation to your application.

## **17. What is the definition of moral turpitude?**

12 AAC 79.910 provides the definition of moral turpitude:

- (1) homicide;
- (2) manslaughter;
- (3) assault
- (4) stalking;
- (5) kidnapping;
- (6) sexual assault;
- (7) sexual abuse of a minor;
- (8) unlawful exploitation of a minor, including possession or distribution of child pornography;
- (9) indecent exposure;
- (10) unlawful distribution or possession for distribution of a controlled substance;
- (11) prostitution;
- (12) sex trafficking
- (13) murder;
- (14) human trafficking;
- (15) criminal sexual conduct;
- (16) incest;
- (17) robbery;
- (18) extortion;
- (19) forgery;
- (20) theft;
- (21) endangering the welfare of a child;
- (22) endangering the welfare of a vulnerable adult;
- (23) reckless endangerment.

## **18. How does the board determine fines and/or disciplinary action?**

The board takes disciplinary measures very seriously and will use all of the resources available before implementing fines, reprimands, or penalties. You can find the board's disciplinary matrices and fine schedule at:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofMassageTherapists/DisciplinaryMatrices.aspx>

## **19. What do I do if I know that someone is practicing without a license?**

If you see or hear about someone practicing without a license or practicing outside of their scope of practice, please contact Investigations by filling out a Request for Contact Form located at: <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/Investigations.aspx> or calling 907-269-8174.

## **20. Must I also hold a business license in order to practice massage in Alaska?**

The current business licensing laws have not changed. If you are a business owner or independent contractor-operating in Alaska, you must still hold an active state business license.

You may apply for an Alaska business license at [www.businesslicense.alaska.gov](http://www.businesslicense.alaska.gov).

If you are an employee of a massage therapy business owned by someone else, a doctor's office, a chiropractic office, or similar, an Alaska business license is not necessary. Check with your municipality to see if a municipal business license is required in your area.

## **21. I am a Rolfer who WANTS a massage therapy license. Can I apply?**

The Board of Massage Therapists determined in their March 8-9, 2018 meeting that applicants who only have a Rolwing education do not qualify for a massage license because they do not receive the same education that a massage therapy school or program offers.

In the same meeting, the board started drafting a regulation to define what a massage curriculum education would consist of (by hours) to allow a pathway to licensure for those who find themselves in that situation. Please see the letter on the board's homepage entitled "Board Statement for Applicants with Structural Integration Education".

If you would like to be kept up to date on this regulations project, send your name, email or mailing address, and occupational area of interest to:  
[RegulationsAndPublicComment@alaska.gov](mailto:RegulationsAndPublicComment@alaska.gov)

## **22. Why can I NOT contact the Board directly?**

The board is appointed by the Governor and they fall under the Open Meeting Act. What this means to the public is that the board cannot have contact, discuss board business, and/or correspond with the public in any way.

If you need to get information to the board or have questions that you would like to have the board address, you can do one of 2 things:

1. Write an email to the Licensing Examiner and request that it be presented to the Board at its next regularly scheduled board meeting

2. Speak at a board meeting during the public comment period. You can call in or be present physically. The board's meeting agendas are always posted on their home page with the public comment time.

### **23. How do I attend a board meeting or teleconference?**

The meeting schedule is posted on the board's webpage under Board Meetings & Agendas and can be found at:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardofMassageTherapists/BoardMeetingsAgendas.aspx>

If you would like to attend a in- person meeting, it will be in one of two locations:

1. Juneau- State Office Building, 333 Willoughby Ave, 9<sup>th</sup> floor
2. Anchorage- Robert Atwood Building, 550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, see agenda for room

If you would like to call in to a teleconference, the call in information will be listed next to the date of the meeting or on the agenda.

Persons wishing to address the board should reference the agenda for the time allotted for Public Comment.

### **24. Why is the state regulating massage therapists?**

A coalition of massage therapists formed in 2013 to assess whether Alaska should license massage therapists. This coalition included the American Massage Therapy Association-Alaska Chapter (AMTA-AK), the Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals (ABMP), as well as chiropractors, Rolfers, reflexologists, physical therapists and many others. This coalition lobbied the Alaska State Legislature for licensure and state licensing legislation was passed in 2014. For more information about AMTA-AK or ABMP and why licensing has been a priority for these massage industry associations, please visit their respective websites: [www.akamta.com](http://www.akamta.com) and [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com).

### **25. Are there any conflict of interest rules for state board members?**

Ethical considerations and requirements for appointed board members are governed by the Alaska Executive Ethics Act. A wealth of information can be found on the Department of Law website and this information (among other key responsibilities) is included in the board member orientation manual:

Main Ethics Act Page: <http://www.law.alaska.gov/doclibrary/ethics.html>

Board Info: <http://www.law.alaska.gov/doclibrary/ethics/EthicsInfoBC.html>

Procedures: <http://www.law.alaska.gov/doclibrary/ethics/EthicsBC.html>

**Do you have a question that has not been answered? Please email:**  
[dawn.dulebohn@alaska.gov](mailto:dawn.dulebohn@alaska.gov)

**Would you like to be notified about proposed regulations?**

Send your name, email or mailing address, and occupational area of  
interest to:

[RegulationsAndPublicComment@alaska.gov](mailto:RegulationsAndPublicComment@alaska.gov)