

M A S S A C H U S E T T S
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENT MANUAL

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 13, 2015 **AUTHORIZATION:** M. Kass, Director

TITLE: Transition Requirements for EMT-Intermediates and ALS-Intermediate Licensed Ambulance Services

SUPERSEDES: July 1, 2013

Purpose:

Under the EMS System regulations, 105 CMR 170.000, the term “EMT-Intermediate” is being replaced by “Advanced EMT.” In addition, while the EMS System regulations define three levels of ambulance service licensure – Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Critical Care Transport (CCT), in some sub-regulatory policies (administrative requirements, advisories, Statewide Treatment Protocols) and in the ambulance service licensure processes, services licensed at the ALS level are specifically referred to and licensed at the ALS-Paramedic or “ALS-Intermediate level,” and the individual providers at this care level called “EMT-Intermediates.”

The “Advanced EMT” is the level of EMS personnel that has effectively replaced the mid-level “EMT-Intermediate” under the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) National EMS Scope of Practice Model (National Scope), and as used in NHTSA’s National EMS Education Standards. Massachusetts is adopting both the new National Scope as well as the National EMS Education Standards. Under these new standards, the Advanced EMT has a broader array of skills in his or her scope of practice, and, in conjunction with an ambulance service licensed at the ALS-Advanced or Paramedic level, can provide patients a different level of care than the EMT-Intermediate can.

It is important to note that OEMS is still maintaining a mid-level EMT certification category. The national standard for this mid-level EMT certification will now be “Advanced EMT,” to which the “EMT-Intermediate” level of certification will transition. That transition will proceed over the next few years, and be complete by 2017. At that point, there will be no more “EMT-Intermediates” and those holding this mid-level EMT certification will be “Advanced EMTs.” For purposes other than clinical scope of practice and certification process, the terms are synonymous and meant to denote the mid-level EMT certification category. We anticipate cities and towns, in their collective bargaining agreements and in their civil service categories, will simply update the term “EMT-Intermediate” to “Advanced EMT” in time for the 2017 end date for the transition, but in the meantime, will construe the terms as identical for these purposes.

Timeline for Transition:

A. Effective April 1, 2013: No certification of any new EMT-Intermediates and no licensure of any new ALS-Intermediate ambulance services. Department-accredited EMS training institutions stopped offering EMT-Intermediate initial training courses as of January 1, 2013. The Department of Public Health’s Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) has stopped issuing initial EMT-Intermediate certification to individuals applying for such certification based on either certification as an EMT-Intermediate in another state, or National Registry of EMT (NREMT) certification as an EMT-Intermediate. The NREMT stopped certifying new EMT-Intermediates as of March 31, 2013. Current Massachusetts EMT-Intermediates will continue to be certified as EMT-Intermediates pursuant to section C., below, to afford adequate time to transition to Advanced EMTs

B. Effective July 1, 2013: Massachusetts certification of out-of-state Advanced EMTs and EMTs with NREMT Advanced EMT certification: OEMS will begin certifying those who hold an Advanced EMT license or certification from another state, or who hold NREMT Advanced EMT certification, as Massachusetts Advanced EMTs. However, these Advanced EMTs will function in Massachusetts as EMT-Basics until there are Statewide Treatment Protocols for Advanced EMTs. (See D., below)

C. By March 31, 2016/March 31, 2017, depending on certification cycle: Current Massachusetts EMT-Intermediates will transition to new certification level. Currently certified Massachusetts EMT-Intermediates

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who wish to continue their advanced level certification must transition to Advanced EMT (AEMT) by March 31, 2016, if their current certification expires 4/1/2014. Of this group of EMT-Intermediates whose current certification expires 4/1/2014, those who will be within one year of retirement from their EMS-related position as of 4/1/2014 and will no longer be seeking EMT certification may apply for a one-time, one-year extension of their EMT-Intermediate certification. These EMT-Intermediates' certification would expire March 31, 2017. Currently certified EMT-Intermediates whose certification expires 4/1/2015 and who wish to continue their advanced level certification must transition to AEMT by March 31, 2017. Currently certified EMT-Intermediates who do not transition to AEMT by the transition deadline will be issued Massachusetts EMT-Basic certification when applying for recertification after their deadline, provided all other requirements are met.

1. The transition training and examination process for EMT-Intermediate to Advanced EMT will begin as early as the fall of 2013.
2. OEMS is currently working with accredited training institutions that will provide the Intermediate-Advanced EMT transition courses. The gap between the 27-year-old EMT-I 1985 curriculum, the basis for EMT-Intermediate certification in Massachusetts, and the new AEMT educational standards, is quite large, and the course will need to incorporate all the new skills and the knowledge to support those skills.
3. EMT-Intermediates who complete the EMT-Intermediate to Advanced EMT transition course will need to take and pass an NREMT computer-based cognitive skills (written) exam, and will then receive NREMT certification as well as Massachusetts certification at the Advanced EMT level.
4. OEMS, working in collaboration with NREMT, will provide a one-time test "voucher" (or similar credit) to cover the cost of the NREMT exam for EMT-Intermediates wishing to make the transition to AEMT.
5. EMT-Intermediates will have five additional test attempts at their own cost, for a total of six attempts within a one-year period to pass the NREMT exam.
6. EMT-Intermediates who do not pass the AEMT exam in this period will be issued Massachusetts certification at the EMT-Basic level if all other conditions of certification are met.
7. For the EMT-Intermediate who takes and satisfactorily completes the Intermediate-Advanced EMT transition course, the courses will be awarded FULL credit and satisfy **all** continuing education requirements for recertification during the period in which they were taken. These EMT-Intermediates will not need to take any additional continuing education courses.
8. EMT-Intermediates who do not wish to transition to the AEMT level may recertify as Massachusetts EMTs-Basics (the national EMT level), which does not require any testing. As in the case of current EMT-Basics, they will need to complete the much less extensive EMT-Basic to EMT transition course and meet all other certification requirements.

D. Beginning no later than April 1, 2015, Advanced EMT Protocols, Service Licensure and care delivery in connection with a service: The Massachusetts Statewide Treatment Protocols will be updated to include protocols for treatment at the Advanced EMT level, in addition to the Intermediate level. Massachusetts certified Advanced EMTs may begin providing care, as further explained below. To qualify for licensure at this level, services will be required to have adequate Advanced EMT staff and carry medications and equipment as set out in Department administrative requirements.

Massachusetts certified EMT-Intermediates and Advanced EMTs will function in accordance with their certification level, their ambulance service's licensure level and authorization to practice of their service's affiliate hospital medical director, as follows:

- Advanced EMTs working at BLS-licensed services: Function as EMT-Basics.

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- Advanced EMTs working at ALS-Intermediate level services: If the Advanced EMT was previously certified in Massachusetts as an EMT-Intermediate, functions as an EMT-Intermediate until the service transitions to either Advanced EMT level or BLS level of licensure. If the Advanced EMT was not previously certified in Massachusetts as an EMT-Intermediate, functions as an EMT-Basic until the service transitions to Advanced EMT level.
- Advanced EMTs working at Paramedic level services: Function as an Advanced EMT, as long as service's affiliate hospital medical director agrees and grants authorization to practice.

E. Effective April 1, 2017: No more Protocols and Service Licensure at the Intermediate level; Phase-out of Massachusetts certified EMT-Intermediates complete: As of this date, the Statewide Treatment Protocols will be updated to delete all protocols at the Intermediate level. Ambulance services will no longer be licensed at the ALS-Intermediate level. Any ALS-Intermediate licensed ambulance services that have not transitioned to the ALS-Advanced level of licensure will become licensed at the BLS level. There will be no more Massachusetts certified EMT-Intermediates.