



North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Candidate Handbook

Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT)

Paramedic

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General Information

The North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services (NC OEMS) is responsible for credentialing emergency service personnel in the state of North Carolina and has been administering credentialing examinations since 1974. NC OEMS oversees credentialing programs for four distinct areas: Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) and Paramedic. As a part of the credentialing process, applicants must pass a written examination.

The mission of the Office of Emergency Medical Services is to foster emergency medical systems, trauma systems, and credentialed EMS personnel to improve responses to emergencies and disasters which will result in higher quality emergency medical care being delivered to the residents and visitors of North Carolina.

Credentialed Individuals

EMS personnel who have been educated in approved programs, are credentialed by the OEMS, and are affiliated with an approved EMS system may administer lifesaving medications and perform acts to maintain or sustain an individual/s life as allowed by the North Carolina Medical Board.

Credentialed EMS personnel are eligible to function in the following practice settings in accordance with established protocols:

- (1) at the location of a physiological or psychological illness or injury including transportation to an appropriate treatment facility if required;
- (2) at public or community health facilities in conjunction with public and community health initiatives;
- (3) in hospitals and clinics;
- (4) in residences, facilities, or other locations as part of wellness or injury prevention initiatives within the community and the public health system; and
- (5) at mass gatherings or special events.

Eligibility

In order to be credentialed as an EMR, EMT, AEMT, or Paramedic, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- (1) Be at least 18 years of age. (Students who are 17 years of age are eligible to take EMR and EMT state exams; however NC OEMS will hold the credential until the individual turns 18.)
- (2) Successfully complete an approved educational program for their level of application. If the educational program was completed over one year prior to application, candidates must submit evidence of completion of continuing education (based on the educational objectives and approved by the OEMS) during the past year.
- (3) Successfully complete a scope of practice performance evaluation that uses performance measures based on the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective educational objectives. This evaluation may be included within the education program or may be conducted separately. If the evaluation was completed over one year prior to application, applicants must repeat the evaluation and submit evidence of successful completion during the previous year.

- (4) Successfully complete a written examination administered by the OEMS or a written examination approved by OEMS as equivalent to the examination administered by OEMS.
- (5) Undergo a criminal background history review. Information for the review will be collected during examination administration.

**** For all EMS personnel whose primary residence is outside North Carolina, individuals who have resided in North Carolina for 60 months or less, and individuals under investigation who may be subject to administrative enforcement action by the Department, the following must be collected:**

- Signed consent form for a criminal history check;
- Fingerprints on an SBI identification card or live scan electronic fingerprinting system at an agency approved by the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, State Bureau of Investigation;
- Criminal history from the Department of Justice, including any processing fees from the individual identified as required by the Department of Justice pursuant to G.S. 114-19.21 prior to conducting the criminal history background check.

Successful completion of initial provider courses and refresher courses allows a student to be eligible to test with the NC OEMS and the National Registry of EMTs at all levels. **Students will have ninety (90) days from their course graded date in the Continuum™ to take the examination.** If the 90-period expires before the candidate's first testing attempt, he/she must contact the educational institution's Program Director for approval to test.

Examination Registration

EMS students may register themselves through the Continuum™ website for the NC Office of EMS (NC OEMS) exams once successful course completion has been documented in the Continuum™ website (<https://continuum.emspic.org/login>). Students must establish an online Continuum™ profile prior to applying for an exam (see instructions below).

To create an online Continuum™ profile:

1. Go to <https://continuum.emspic.org/login>.
2. Select "Click here for the Public Access site."
3. Under "Please choose the state you wish to view," select "North Carolina" and click "Enter Public Continuum."
4. Click "Profile" (on left side of screen), click on "Register to Use Continuum" and fill in all the information that is required
5. Click "Save" (bottom right of screen).

The location, date, and time of the exam varies depending on the individual's specific selection. Currently, there is no cost for this exam.

Deadlines

Applications for an initial personnel credential are automatically created through Continuum™. Once the individual has been graded as passed by the education program, the student may register for an open OEMS regional examination. Students will have ninety (90) days from their course graded date in Continuum™ to take the examination. Information regarding the current exam schedule may be located by logging into Continuum™, opening the “Education” section, and selecting “Scheduled Exams.” Once the student has accessed the “Scheduled Exams” tab, he or she may then search for open exams by county, exam code, exam type, and region of the state.

Examination Information

NC OEMS credentialing test items are written by subject matter experts and reviewed by credentialed EMS personnel to determine difficulty level and appropriateness for inclusion on the examination. The examinations are designed to assess the knowledge of candidates across all areas of an EMS educational program.

Currently, the NC OEMS administers paper/pencil-based examinations. NC OEMS will be moving to computer-based testing (CBT) in the future.

Examination	Length	Duration
Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)	50 multiple-choice questions	1.5 hours
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	100 multiple-choice questions	2 hours
Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT)	100 multiple-choice questions	2 hours
Paramedic	100 multiple-choice questions	2 hours

Fees

Currently, there is no charge associated with the examination.

Examination Day

You must bring a current photo identification with signature to the test site. Acceptable forms of identification include driver’s licenses, passports, military identification cards, alien registration cards, and government-issued identification cards. Unacceptable forms of identification include gym memberships, warehouse memberships, school identification cards, credit cards, and identification with signature only (no photo). The name listed on the photo identification must match the name on the Continuum™ examination roster. (If not, government-issued documentation of the name change must be presented at the test site.)

Examination rules

1. **No materials or personal items such as books, papers, purses, calculators, computers, backpacks, book bags, or briefcases may be carried into an examination area. Specifically, no communication devices such as cellular telephones, radios, or pagers may be taken into the**

examination area. All such items must be left in the car or in the holding area. Any items left in the holding area will be the responsibility of the individual and not OEMS. Any personal items observed in the examination room after the examination begins will be subject to confiscation by the exam proctor or the Regional Specialist.

Individuals may bring writing utensils if desired. Otherwise, ones will be provided.

2. No talking, eating, drinking, or using tobacco products will be allowed during the examination. Smoking breaks will not be allowed.

Requesting Special Testing Accommodations

Candidates with documented visual, physical, hearing, or learning disabilities that would prevent them from taking an examination under standard conditions may request special testing accommodations and arrangements.

Reasonable accommodations provide candidates with disabilities a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in the essential functions being measured by the examination. Reasonable accommodations are decided based on the individual's specific request, disability, documentation submitted, and appropriateness of the request. Reasonable accommodations do not include steps that fundamentally alter the purpose or nature of the examination.

Requirements for requesting an examination accommodation

The Application for Examination Accommodations must be completed in its entirety and submitted a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled examination date.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for accommodations and will be returned to the candidate for correction/revision. Failure to complete the application in its entirety and submit it to NC OEMS will delay the agency's ability to determine whether to grant an accommodation.

1. Candidates seeking an examination accommodation must submit a completed request, including all supplemental documentation, a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled examination date.
2. Candidates seeking an examination accommodation under the ADA must present adequate documentation demonstrating that his/her condition substantially limits one or more major life activities.
3. Candidates with disabilities who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meet the eligibility requirements for credentialing at the level of the request examination are eligible for accommodations.
4. Requested accommodations must be reasonable and appropriate for the documented disability and may not fundamentally alter the examination's ability to assess the essential functions of pre-hospital care, which the written examination is designed to measure. Accommodations provided are limited by exam site restrictions and exam security procedures.

5. Documentation demonstrating the current level of functioning of a candidate must be no older than two (2) years to help ensure accommodations are based on assessment of the disability's current impact on the candidate's ability to complete the examination.
6. Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses of the specific disabilities and/or making recommendations for appropriate accommodations must be qualified to do so (e.g. licensed clinical professional or individual qualified to administer appropriate disability assessment testing).
7. Each candidate's circumstances are unique and a case-by-case approach to review the documentation will be utilized.
8. All documentation in support of a request accommodation will be kept in confidence and will be disclosed to NC OEMS staff and consultants only to the extent necessary to evaluate the accommodation. No information concerning an accommodation request will be released to third parties without written permission from the candidate.

Candidates must submit documentation from a professional qualified to assess and diagnose the specific presenting disability. The documentation must include a comprehensive evaluation with objective evidence demonstrating the existence of a disability which substantially limits one or more major life activities. The name, title, and professional credential of the qualified professional must be clearly stated in the documentation. Documentation must be submitted on official letterhead, typed, dated, and signed. The professional diagnosis **must** include:

- a) A current, valid, professionally recognized diagnosis of the candidate's disability (ex: pursuant to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM: Most current version)) by an appropriately qualified expert with copies of and reported scores from professionally recognized diagnostic tests, where applicable.
- b) Documentation that clearly identifies the nature and extent of the functional limitations that exist as a result of the diagnosed disability.
- c) Sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the functional limitation substantially limits the individual in performing one or more major life activity.
- d) Specific information about the significance of the impact the disability has on the candidate in the testing environment.
- e) Specific recommendations for accommodations (e.g., extended testing time).
- f) An explanation of why each accommodation is recommended and why it is necessary to alleviate the impact of the disability in taking the North Carolina EMS credentialing examination.

The NC OEMS reserves the right to request additional information at any time from the candidate requesting accommodations for the state EMS credentialing examination.

Examination Results

Examination scores are posted in the Continuum™ password-secure website through an individual's login account. The scores are typically posted within seven to ten (7-10) business days from the exam date. Those candidates who pass the exam will be able to access their North Carolina EMS Credential once the individual has satisfied the criminal background requirements. Because the candidate has met the criteria, a breakdown of results is not necessary, as it may be viewed within Continuum™.

Beginning February 1, 2017 the North Carolina Office of EMS moved to an electronic EMS Credential that may be accessed and printed from the individual's profile in Continuum™. Hardcopies of credentials and results will no longer be mailed. **DO NOT CALL THE OFFICE of EMS.** OEMS staff cannot release examination results over the telephone. Candidates may check the status of their results by logging in to their Continuum™ profile. **Please understand that an examination status of “Pass” does not mean that the individual has been issued a credential. All candidates must undergo a criminal background check that has been initiated by the North Carolina Office of EMS prior to receiving a credential.**

Examination challenge and review

Any applicant who questions the accuracy of the cognitive examination results may request that his/her examination be reviewed by the North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services. Requests must be made in writing within thirty (30) days of the notification of examination result and must be accompanied by a specific reason for the review. The review will include only those items relevant to the specific allegation. The review will be conducted by the North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services Education Workgroup. Once the review is completed, a written response addressing the concern(s) will be forwarded to the candidate requesting the review.

Retaking the Examination

Applicants who fail to meet entry-level competency may access their examination results through Continuum™. By viewing their examination results, the applicant can identify areas where remediation may be needed as the applicant prepares for the next examination attempt.

The examination results will indicate the applicant's score in each content area. Should an applicant score below 70% in an area, then this would signify that the applicant was below the desired entry-level competency in that area. Applicants who scored above the 70% in an area can be confident they have sufficient knowledge in that area. While the applicant should review the material in all areas, the failure to review content the applicant scored above 70% on could result in failing the examination again. The use of examination study guides to prepare to do the job of an EMT is not helpful and could result in detrimental patient care issues that could have otherwise been averted by studying the expectations and tasks of an EMT.

Applicants who are unsuccessful on their first attempt to pass the written credentialing examination will be permitted to retake the examination twice within nine (9) months without having to undergo additional education. Students who do not successfully complete the exam within three (3) attempts or nine (9) months from completion of the initial EMS education program will need to complete an NC OEMS-approved refresher course. Applicants who successfully complete the refresher course will be granted an additional three (3) attempts to pass the examination within the following nine (9) month period. Following six (6) unsuccessful testing attempts (or the expiration of the 18-month period), candidates will be required to complete an initial EMS education program before testing again.

Credential Renewal

The credential is valid for four (4) years.

Affiliated EMS providers

EMRs, EMTs, AEMTs, and Paramedic applicants affiliated with an EMS system can renew their credentials by presenting documentation to the EMS system CE Coordinator, EMS System Training Officer, and/or approved educational institution responsible for providing the education for that specific EMS system. This method will ensure the individual is renewed through the local EMS system, which grants the individual the rights to practice within that EMS system or locale.

In the event that an EMS system CE Coordinator, EMS System Training Officer, and/or approved educational institution responsible for providing the education for that specific EMS system denies an individual's right to renew, then the individual may contact the respective OEMS Regional Office to request renewal of his/her EMS credential. Any individual that is renewed through the OEMS Regional Office is not guaranteed to remain in good standing or allowed to function within the EMS system. The individual will need to notify the EMS system CE Coordinator, EMS system Training Officer, and/or approved educational institution of the renewal through the OEMS, which may provide the individual an avenue to ensure the individual can remain in good standing and retain his/her ability to function within the EMS system.

Non-affiliated EMS providers

EMRs, EMTs, AEMTs, and Paramedic applicants not affiliated with an EMS system can renew their credentials by presenting documentation to the approved educational institution the individual obtained their continuing education from, or individuals may contact their respective OEMS Regional Office to request renewal of their EMS credential. Any individual requesting renewal of their EMS Credential through the respective OEMS Regional Office will be required to submit all documentation (CE certificates, course rosters, transcripts, etc.) for review by the OEMS Educational Specialist. Once the OEMS Educational Specialist has received and reviewed the individuals supporting documentation, the individual will be advised of the determination regarding the renewal of his/her EMS credential. In the event the individual does not meet the renewal requirements, the individual will be advised of the hours, topics, and any additional items that are needed to assist the individual in renewing his/her EMS credential.

Renewal of a personnel EMS credential must be received in the OEMS Regional Office serving the individual no earlier than ninety (90) calendar days, but at least thirty (30) calendar days, before the credential expires.

Appendix A: Exam Preparation Tips

How to Study

The North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services encourages candidates to prepare for the examination by using available resources.

Create your study plan and review methods well in advance of the examination. Think about the study method that is best for you (e.g., individual review, study group, class) and the types of materials that are most helpful (e.g., textbooks, audio or video programs, outlines, memory aids). It may also be helpful to use materials given to you during training activities related to your work.

Managing Test Anxiety

A little anxiety regarding test taking can be helpful because it stimulates and motivates you to perform at your best; however, severe anxiety can hinder test performance. If you know that you frequently experience severe test anxiety, consider preparing yourself for the examination by developing coping mechanisms to make your tension work for you.

Before the day of the examination, visualize and rehearse the testing situation. Imagine yourself taking the examination with a positive attitude and focused, calm behavior.

Take measures to reduce your stress during the examination. Use deep-breathing techniques, and be sure to stretch your muscles periodically. Such exercises can reduce both physical and mental stress. If necessary, take a few minutes to imagine a calm, pleasant scene, and repeat positive phrases.

Do not let the comments or behavior of testing personnel or other examinees make you anxious. Examinees who finish more quickly than you may not perform any better than you. Everyone works at his/her own speed. Some of the best test performers routinely use the total allocated time. Remember that (a) there is no limit to the number of examinees who can receive passing scores, (b) there is no bonus for completing the examination early, and (c) you are not competing with anyone else to pass the exam.

Eating well, avoiding too much alcohol, and maintaining a regular sleep pattern for several days before the examination will help you to be physically prepared. Also, on the day before you take the test, collect all the supplies you will need and choose comfortable clothing. Knowing that you are prepared for the test will help to reduce your anxiety.

Finally, your best method for controlling your anxiety is to feel prepared for the test. Designing a study plan well in advance will help you to be successful.

Tips for Taking the Examination

- Budget your time well. You will want to complete more than half of the exam in less than half the allotted time. This is so you will have extra time after completing the full examination to review questions you either skipped or marked for review. Also, allow time so that every hour you can take a minute or so to relax your eyes and stretch your neck and hand muscles.
- Read each question carefully, focusing on what is being asked.

- Read all options before selecting your answer. Always select the best choice.
- Do not overanalyze or try to “read into” a question. Questions are not written to be tricky. Do not assume additional information beyond what is given in the test question. All information necessary to answer the question will be given in the text of the question or scenario.
- Test questions are based upon an accepted knowledge base as outlined in the test content outline. Choose options that you know to be correct in any setting, not just your place of employment.
- If there are questions including the words “not,” “except,” or “least,” answer with particular care because you will be looking for the exception. These questions involve a reversal of your usual thought patterns.
- Pay close attention to key words such as “best,” “most,” “primary,” or “usually.” These words indicate that other options may at times be correct, but given the wording or situation in the test question, you must judge which option is the best.
- Skip difficult questions and come back to them later. Questions on the test are not ordered by difficulty (i.e., they do not go from easiest to hardest). Also, content areas (the domains) and topics are addressed randomly in questions throughout the test.
- When guessing, use the process of elimination. Treat each option as a true or false statement, and eliminate those that you would not select. Narrow your choices and then make your best educated guess.
- Answer every question even if you have to guess. There is no penalty for guessing. Go through the entire test, answering the questions you believe you know and skipping the ones you do not. Leave time at the end of the testing period to go back to the questions you skipped or want to review. If you are running out of time, leave a minute or so at the end to complete all of the blank questions randomly. Remember, you have a 25% probability of answering a question correctly by chance alone, so don’t miss any!
- If reading English is difficult for you because English is not your primary language, maximize your time by reading and answering all the shorter questions first. After completing all of the short questions, go back and attempt to answer the longer questions.

Appendix B: Credentialing and Research Privacy Policy

Credentialing and Research Policy

The North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services provides the primary credentialing service for EMS Technicians in North Carolina. We collect and receive personal information during the credentialing process. We use this information in order to evaluate candidate's ability, to collect payment services if applicable, to provide information about individual's credentialing status, and to conduct research. Providing personal data is voluntary, but necessary if you wish to receive a credential. We will handle and treat all personal information collected and received by us in connection with application, examination administration, and credential in the manner outlined in this Privacy Policy.

- **Personal Information Collected.** The personal data that we collect or receive in registering an applicant ("you") for credential services will include your: name, address, email address, phone/fax numbers, social security number, credit/debit card information if applicable, date of birth, employment information, previous examination history, education information, and disciplinary actions (including, but not limited to, revocations and suspensions). For applicant verification and identification purposes, we may collect all or part of the information on a government-issued identification number. When a credentialing examination is administered to you, we may collect and score your exam responses and then derive a score and generate a report about your professional certification examination results and will report that information through Continuum™.
- **Aggregation of Non-Person-Specific Data.** We may statistically aggregate in non-person-specific form exam performance and other information collected during the certification. Such aggregated non-person-specific information may be used for quality control/improvement, operations management, and security to enhance, develop or improve the credentialing processes, testing services, examinations and related products and services. By applying for credential through us, you give your consent for us to use this non-person-specific aggregated data as outlined above.
- **Mailings and Contact.** We may use your email and/or postal address to send you information about your credential status and other information that may be of interest to you professionally. We may also contact you regarding participation in research projects that are deemed to be of value to the professional community. You may opt out of receiving information from the North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services at any time by notifying us in writing.
- **Transfer of Information to Licensing Agencies.** By applying for credentials through us, you give your consent for your personal information (with the exception of your debit/credit card information, if applicable) to be transmitted by the North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Service to state EMS licensing agencies. Licensing agencies require this personal data so that they may issue state licenses to practice.
- **Transfer of Information to Educational Institutions.** By applying for credentials through us, you give your consent for your personal information (with the exception of your debit/credit card information, if applicable) to be transmitted by the North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services to your educational institution and/or educational program accreditation agency. Such information may be used for quality control/improvement, operations management, security and marketing purposes and to enhance, develop or improve the educational processes.
- **Other Transfer of Information.** In addition to the above circumstances, we may disclose personally identifiable information about you in the following situations: (a) in response to a subpoena, court order or legal process, to the extent permitted and required by law; (b) to protect your security or the security of other persons, consistent with applicable law; (c) for

investigation of possible misconduct; or (d) legitimate research purposes. By applying for a North Carolina EMS Credential, you give your consent for your personal information to be transmitted in the situations outlined above.

- **Public Information.** Since a North Carolina EMS Credential is part of a health care credentialing process, and the public has the right to verify the qualifications of the individuals providing care, the North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services considers your credential status to be public information.
- **Testing Sites.** North Carolina EMS Credentialing examinations are administered through various testing sites, which may include Educational Institutions, EMS Agencies or locations conducive to in-person examinations. These sites may provide unrelated services and may collect and use personal data for other purposes under different terms and policies. If you have any questions or concerns about a testing site's collection or use of any of your personal information, please talk to the independent testing site directly. If you have unaddressed concerns about a testing site relating to credentialing, please contact us.
- **Information Access and Corrections.** To access and correct the personal information that we have collected under this policy, please contact us in writing. To protect your privacy and security, we will take reasonable steps to verify your identity before granting access or making alterations.
- **Research Data.** Data collected or analyzed for research purposes will be handled according to the protocol approved by the Institutional Review Board of the principal investigator for that project. Depending on the project, this may differ from this Privacy Policy.
- **Protection of Personal Information.** We use reasonable precautions to protect personal information from unauthorized use, access, disclosure, alteration or destruction. These precautions include appropriate physical, electronic and managerial procedures. We provide a secured transmission method for the electronic transmission of credit/debit card information if applicable.
- **Resolution of Concerns.** If you have questions or concerns about this Privacy Policy or how we have handled personal data, please contact us at (919) 855-3935.

Information from Children

This web site and our credentialing services are not directed to children or anyone under the age of sixteen (16). The North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services will not, through this web site or through its professional credentialing examination and administration process, knowingly collect, maintain or use any personally identifiable information about anyone under the age of sixteen (16).

Information Received from Internet Service Providers Through This Web Site

This web site receives information that is automatically generated by a user's Internet Service Provider (ISP). This information may include the IP address (a number automatically assigned to a computer by the ISP), the associated URLs, domain types, the browser type used to access our site, the country, state and telephone area code, the location of the ISP's servers, the pages of our site that the user views during the visit, any search terms entered on this site, and the user's web site address and email address. This information may be collected for system administration purposes, to gather broad demographic information and to monitor the level of activity on the site. The North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services does not link IP addresses to personally identifiable information; however, we reserve the right to link IP addresses and other information supplied by the ISP to personally identifiable information in order to protect the integrity of our system and for security purposes.

Cookies

Cookies are small text files that a web site transfers to your computer's browser. We use cookies to measure traffic patterns, personalize content and control security. The cookies we use supply non-personally identifiable information, but they may identify your computer, browser and Internet specifications.

Transmission of Information

The Internet is a global environment. By using this site and sending information to us electronically, you consent to trans-border and international transmission of any data that you may choose to supply us. Information transmissions to this site and emails sent to us may not be secure. Given the inherent operation and nature of the Internet, all Internet transmissions are done at the user's own risk.

Links to Other Sites

This site may contain links to other web sites on the Internet. The information practices of those web sites are not covered by this Privacy Policy, but by their own terms and policies, which you should read carefully. These other sites may send their cookies to users, collect data or solicit personal information. This Privacy Policy applies only to information collected or received in connection with certification and license testing. This Privacy Policy is not intended to apply to other web sites, or other types of information which may be subject to different privacy policies.

Changes to This Privacy Policy

We reserve the right to change the terms of this Privacy Policy from time to time by posting an updated Privacy Policy. We encourage you to review this Privacy Policy periodically for any changes or updates.

How to Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns about this Privacy Policy, please contact us at (919) 855-3935.