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## **Guidelines for Authorized Emergency Medical Services Continuing Education Providers**

County of San Diego  
Health & Human Services Agency  
Emergency Medical Services Branch  
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## CE PROVIDERSHIP

Any individual, partnership, corporation, association, organized health care system, governmental agency, educational institution, or other organization which has the resources to provide continuing education (CE) in accordance with the guidelines established by the County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services (EMS) may apply for and receive designation as an Authorized Provider of Prehospital Continuing Education (CE).

Such authorization allows the Provider to offer continuing education opportunities for EMT-Basics (EMT-B), Paramedic and Mobile Intensive Care Nurses (MICNs) which are recognized for the purpose of EMT-B recertification, Paramedic relicensure and continuing accreditation, and for MICN re-authorization (in San Diego County), or re-establishing lapsed certification, authorization, or licensure.

A Provider must comply with all San Diego County policies, procedures and guidelines regarding continuing education, and must apply for and maintain status as an Authorized Provider with the County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services in order to provide approved CE credits.

The Provider must complete the authorization process prior to offering any course for CE credit. EMS requires at least 4 weeks to process an application for authorization as a CE Provider. Incomplete applications and renewals will not be processed until all information is received.

The application shall indicate for which level(s) of care the applicant is intending approval. These levels are: Basic Life Support (BLS, i.e. EMT-Bs), and/or Advanced Life Support (ALS, i.e. Paramedics and MICNs).

The fee to be authorized as a continuing education Provider is four hundred (\$400.00) dollars per authorization period (4 years). San Diego County Base Hospitals are exempt from these fees. This fee includes authorization to provide approved CE credits to prehospital personnel ONLY within the level of the local EMS agency's approval. Providers may upgrade the level of approval from "BLS" to "ALS" upon satisfactory demonstration and documentation of resources

required for ALS education. Provider authorization may be granted for a period not to exceed four (4) years.

After receipt of application and fees, and review of documentation and credentials, EMS will notify the applicant of its decision regarding the authorization or re-authorization of the applicant as an Authorized CE Provider, and the approval level. Once authorized, the Provider may offer an unlimited number of continuing education activities for CE credit during the authorization period within the approved level(s).

Provider authorization may be suspended or revoked at any time by EMS for failure of the Provider to adhere to the guidelines in this manual or the policies of the Division. Any decision of EMS regarding suspension or revocation of a Provider's authorization status is final. There will be no refund of fees in the event that a Provider is not authorized or re-authorized, or an authorization is revoked or suspended.

When two or more Providers co-sponsor a course, one Provider must be designated as the specific Provider responsible for compliance with all County requirements.

Each authorized Provider must immediately notify County of San Diego EMS of:

1. Any change in name, address or telephone number of the authorized agency or Program Director
2. Any change in name of the person designated as Clinical Director, and
3. Any proposed change in the level of continuing education activities (BLS vs. ALS) provided.

Provider authorization is non-transferable.

## **COURSE CONTENT**

The content of all approved continuing education activities for prehospital personnel must be:

1. relevant to the practice of prehospital care; and,
2. related to the scientific knowledge or technical skills required for prehospital; or be,
3. related to direct and/or indirect prehospital patient/client care.

Furthermore, each CE activity must remain relevant to the level(s) of the participant(s), that is, topics presented must specifically address the scope and practice of the CE participant(s) to whom CE credits are being awarded.

Learning experiences are expected to enhance the knowledge of, or reinforce basic training for, the EMT-B, Paramedic, or MICN at a level above that required for initial certification/ accreditation/ licensure/ authorization. Courses must be designed for individuals already familiar with the basic concepts of prehospital care; courses designed for "beginning" students (i.e. a basic EMT-B course) may not be approved for CE credit.

An Authorized Provider for CE credit may offer home study or individual study programs. Such courses must be approved by the Provider's Program Director, who is responsible to ensure that the objectives of the program have been met, that the number of hours awarded is consistent with the participant's effort, that course content is appropriate, and that evaluations are completed by all participants receiving CE credit. EMS notes that the allowance of Home Study courses may provide a significant opportunity for abuse, and will scrutinize this policy regularly. An individual may not use the same home study course for CE credit more than once during a 2-year licensure/certification cycle.

#### Instructors/Course Preparation Time

Instructors or speakers may be awarded credit for the portions of the course that they attend or present, just as a student participant would. The instructor who desires such credit should sign in and out of the course, submit some sort of course evaluation, or otherwise verify that the course objectives were met for the instructor. Any limitations, such as the number of times an individual may use credit for a specific course for re-certification within a certification cycle, apply to instructors also.

Additionally, course preparation time for an instructor may be awarded CE credit at the discretion of the CE Provider, but this must be accomplished in the framework of a separate course. The instructor requesting prep time credit should have developed personal goals and

objectives for the preparatory work, provided verification to the CE provider of the time actually spent in preparation for the course, provided some sort of evaluation to the CE provider as to the value of the prep work to the instructor.

#### ALS versus BLS

Providers must structure educational activities in accordance with the specific needs of the participants desiring credit. This includes providing challenging material in a framework where participants can explore issues for their own level. It is recognized that PARAMEDIC level education is inclusive of all EMT-B skills and procedures, however, the needs of BLS personnel may be specific to that level. If credit for a specific activity is awarded to EMT-B participants, the Providers of EMT-B CE must ensure that adequate attention is devoted to specific EMT-B issues. These activities must be provided in a setting and manner where an EMT-B can feel free to ask questions regarding BLS activities, review material that may seem "too basic" for ALS personnel, and is responsive to the needs of EMT-B providers.

Providers must specifically request and receive authorization from EMS to provide approved CE for each level of care (BLS and/or ALS), and must offer reduced CE credits at a course when some of the content is specifically outside the scope and practice of BLS care.

#### ACCEPTABLE COURSE CONTENT

These include but are not limited to:

1. Periodic training sessions or structured clinical experience in knowledge and skills (EMT-BASIC [B], PARAMEDIC [P], MICN [M]).
2. Organized field care audits of patient care records (B, P, M).
3. Applicable courses offered by accredited universities and colleges, including junior and community colleges.
4. Courses/training directly related to emergency medical care (burns, ACLS, etc. (B, P, M).
5. Structured clinical experience with instructional objectives to

review or expand the clinical expertise of the individual (not to exceed 50% of the required number of hours).

6. Courses/training in indirect patient care or medical operations: continuous quality improvement, diversity, grief support, medical management of HazMat, dispatch or rescue techniques (not to exceed 50% of the required number of hours).
7. Advanced topics in subject matter outside the scope of practice of the certified or licensed EMS personnel but directly relevant to emergency medical care
8. Media based or serial productions (e.g. films, videos, audiotape programs, magazine articles offered for CE credit, home study, computer simulations, or interactive computer modules), with at least 50% of courses being instructor based.
9. Precepting EMS students or EMS personnel as a hospital clinical preceptor as assigned by an EMS training program, an EMS service provider or a hospital approved according to Division 9 (Prehospital Emergency Medical Services). CE for Precepting can only be given for actual time spent precepting a student or EMS personnel, and must be issued by the EMS training program, EMS service provider or hospital that has an agreement or contract with the hospital clinical preceptor or with the preceptor's employer. CE hours awarded for precepting cannot exceed 50% of the required hours for recertification.
10. Precepting EMS students or EMS personnel as a field preceptor, as assigned by an EMS training program, or an EMS service provider approved according to Division 9. CE for precepting can only be given for actual time precepting a student and must be issued by the EMS training program, EMS service provider or hospital that has an agreement or contract with the field preceptor or with the preceptor's employer (not to exceed 50% of the required hours for certification).
11. During a certification or licensure cycle, an individual may receive credit, one time only, for service as an instructor for approved EMS training programs, except that the hours of

service shall not exceed 50% of the total CE hours required in a single certification or licensure cycle.

**EXAMPLES OF COURSES THAT ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE:**

1. Courses which focus upon self-improvement, personal growth, changes in attitudes, self-therapy, self-awareness, weight loss, or yoga.
2. Economic courses for personal financial gain (personal finance management).
3. Parenting, or other programs that are designed for lay people.
4. Liberal arts courses in music, art, philosophy, and other subjects not directly related to prehospital care.
5. Workplace orientation programs designed to familiarize employees with the policies and procedures of a specific employer.
6. Courses, which do not address the specific needs, role, or certification level(s) of its participants
7. EMT-B Defibrillation Skills Demonstrations are not eligible for CE credit *UNLESS* the CE provider presents the demonstration experience within the approved framework described in these Guidelines (educational material presented, with objectives, evaluation, etc.).
8. Occupational courses not related to the care of patients (e.g. Safety on the fire line)

**INSTRUCTIONAL  
OBJECTIVES**

Instructional objectives are to be developed for all CE activities, stated in behavioral terms. The objectives must denote measurable attributes observable in the student completing the program. The objectives explain to the student what proficiency the student should be able to demonstrate at the completion of the course / presentation. Objectives must be consistent with the scope and practice of those receiving CE credit.

**DETERMINING THE  
HOURS OF CE CREDIT  
TO BE AWARDED**

The course content must be current and designed to include recent developments in the subject being taught.

Providers determine the amount of CE credit to be awarded for the courses they offer. This determination will be made according to the following criteria:

1. CE credit will be approved only for the time the student is actively involved in the CE activity at a level appropriate for the participant. This includes time the enrollee is:
  - a. listening to presentations,
  - b. observing demonstrations,
  - c. participating in discussions,
  - d. practicing a skill or observing others practicing a skill,
  - e. taking a pre-test or post-test
  - f. completing course evaluations
2. CE credit will not be allowed for
  - a. lunch periods,
  - b. time lost because the presentation begins later than scheduled,
  - c. time scheduled but not utilized (out early),
  - d. time utilized for the EMT-B recertification written or skills exams.
3. Course offerings must be at least one (1) hour in length to be considered for CE credit. After one (1) hour, Providers may award CE credits in half hour (0.5) hour increments. Please note that the EMS Authority has defined an hour (for CE

## **COURSE EVALUATIONS**

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS**

purposes) as 50 minutes to include a reasonable break.

4. Course participants who leave a course presentation early may receive partial credit for attending the course (minimum 1 hour), at the discretion of the Course Coordinator, based on the amount of time the participant was in attendance and the extent to which the participant has completed course objectives. (The individual **MUST** complete a course evaluation for the part of the activity the participant attended to receive any CE credit)

**A COURSE EVALUATION MUST BE COMPLETED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS REQUESTING CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT** after successfully completing the program.

It is expected that the Provider will review course evaluations and make appropriate modifications to maintain and upgrade the quality of course offerings.

At a minimum, the following aspects should be measured:

1. The extent to which the course met the stated instructional objectives.
2. The adequacy of the instructor's mastery of the subject.
3. The use of appropriate teaching methods and tools.
4. The applicability of the information or material to the participant's level.
5. The applicability of new information.

Each Authorized Provider shall designate a **Program Director**, a clinical director and instructors who shall ensure that all course offerings are consistent with these guidelines and the policies and procedures developed by the Emergency Medical Services Branch.

The same person can fill both of these positions as long as they fit all of the criteria.

The **Program Director** will be someone who is qualified by education and experience in methods materials and evaluation of instruction, which shall be documented by **at least forty hours** in teaching methodology: Listed below are courses that meet the required instruction in teaching methodology:

1. Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing, Education, or other health sciences field, OR
2. California State Fire Marshal Fire Instructor 1A and 1B OR
3. National Fire Academy: "Fire Service Instructional Methodology" course OR

Training program that meets the US Department of Transportation/National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 2002 Guidelines for Educating EMS Instructors, such as the MS Educator Course of the National Association of EMS Educators.

#### **CE PROGRAM DIRECTOR DUTIES**

The duties of the **Program Director** shall include but not be limited to:

1. Administering the CE Program and ensuring adherence to state regulations and established local policy
2. Approving course, class, or activities including instructional objectives, and assigning CEH to any CE program which the CE provider sponsors; approving all methods of evaluation

*Requirement 1 (above) may be waived for Base Hospital providers of CE*

#### **CE PROGRAM CLINICAL DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS**

- Each CE Provider shall have an approved **Clinical Director** who is
- 1) currently licensed and/or certified as a Physician, Registered Nurse, or EMT-Paramedic or Physician Assistant in the State of California,
  - 2) Have a minimum of two (2) years of academic, administrative or clinical experience in emergency medicine or EMS care within the last five (5) years

#### **CE PROGRAM CLINICAL DIRECTOR DUTIES**

The duties of the **Clinical Director** shall include but not be limited to, monitoring all clinical and field activities approved for CE credit, approving the instructor(s), and monitoring the overall quality of the

EMS content of the program.

At the discretion of the local EMS Medical Director, a provider not meeting the above criteria may receive provisional approval for up to two years pending completion of the above specified requirements.

## **INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS**

**Instructors** who teach approved continuing education courses shall be currently licensed or certified in his/her area of expertise, or have evidence of specialized training which may include but is not limited to:

1. A certificate of training or an advanced degree in a given subject area.
2. Have at least one (1) year of experience within the last two (2) years in the specialized area in which they are teaching.
3. Be knowledgeable, skillful and current in the subject matter of the course or activity.

## **CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE**

Providers must issue a tamper resistant document or certificate to each attendee to show that the individual has met the established criteria for successful completion of a course. A certificate documenting successful completion must contain the following information:

1. Name of participant.
2. Course title which should clearly indicate the topic(s) presented at the educational activity so that licensure/certification personnel can easily determine the eligibility of the course for re-credentialing purposes.
3. Provider name (as listed on the provider's application).
4. County of San Diego Authorized Provider number.
5. Date of course.
6. The number of CE credit hours awarded specific to the level(s) of the participants.

7. Signature of Program Director, or designee.
8. The following three statements MUST be printed on the certificate:
  - a. "This course has been approved for (number) of hours of continuing education by an approved California EMS CE Provider and was (check one) \_\_\_\_\_ instructor-based, \_\_\_\_\_ non-instructor based."
  - b. "This certificate must be retained by the certificate holder for a period of 4 years after the date of the course."
  - c. "County of San Diego California EMS CE Provider No. (37-XXXX)".

Certificates of completion must be issued to the participant within thirty (30) days after conclusion of the course. Duplicate certificates may be issued to a course participant at the discretion of the provider and after verification of course participation. Duplicate certificates must clearly show that the certificate is a duplicate.

## **PROVIDER RECORDS**

The Provider must maintain the following information for each course presented for a period of (at least) 4 years from the date of the completion of the course:

1. Course title, date(s) given, site, number of CE credits, comprehensive topical outline specific to the level(s) of course participants, and method of evaluating the participant, if appropriate, and
2. Curriculum vitae or resumes which address qualifications for all instructors, and
3. Attendance/sign in sheets documenting the name and signature of each attendee, and

4. Course evaluations from participants or summary of same.

Providers must maintain CE records in a secure environment, and are responsible for the security and integrity of records they maintain.

## **ADVERTISEMENT**

Any course offered by an Authorized Provider that is developed in accordance with these guidelines will be considered "approved" by the County of San Diego EMS for continuing education credit.

Providers are encouraged to advertise and promote their continuing education activities. Copies of all advertisements disseminated to the public shall be sent to San Diego County EMS prior to the beginning of the course. Information disseminated by Providers publicizing continuing education include the following:

1. "This course has been approved by the County of San Diego, EMS, Provider No. (XXX) for (X) hours of (ALS and/or BLS) continuing education credit."
2. A clear, concise description of the course content and/or objectives.
3. Provider name, as officially on file with the County of San Diego EMS.
4. Date, time, site of course.
5. Applicable registration process and fees.
6. Provider's policy on refunds in cases of non-attendance by the registrant or cancellation by the provider.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Potential providers of prehospital CE must apply to the County of San Diego EMS for designation as an Authorized Provider.

Applicants must:

1. Complete an Application for Designation as Authorized Provider of Prehospital Continuing Education in San Diego County (attachment A). The Course Coordinator, who will be responsible to ensure that all CE activities are in compliance with these guidelines, must sign the applicant. The Provider applicant must indicate the level(s) (BLS and/ or ALS) for which authorization is desired.
2. Submit the completed application, along with documentation (i.e. resume) that the Program Director meets requirements outlined in these guidelines, and fee to:

**PREHOSPITAL CONTINUING EDUCATION COORDINATOR  
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
6255 MISSION GORGE ROAD  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92120  
(619) 285-6429**

EMS will review and process the application, and notify the applicant of its decision within 4 weeks of receipt of all required documentation. This notification will be in writing, and will indicate the effective dates of the authorization period, the level approved by EMS ("BLS" or "ALS") and the Authorization Number assigned to the provider.

**REVIEW OF  
PROVIDER  
COMPLIANCE WITH  
GUIDELINES**

County of San Diego EMS will periodically audit records, course documentation, instructor qualifications, and related activities of a Provider to monitor compliance with these guidelines. EMS may occasionally request copies of course documentation (course outlines, objectives, evaluations) for review in-house, and may schedule a site review at a mutually acceptable time and date. EMS will request the objectives and course outline developed for the first CE activity presented after the provider is initially authorized. It will be the responsibility of the Provider to clearly demonstrate that all educational activities are in compliance with these guidelines. If significant deficiencies are found during the review process, the

**REVOCA  
TION,  
DENIAL, OR  
SUSPENSION OF  
PROVIDER  
AUTHORIZATION**

Provider will be notified in writing of the deficiencies and the action(s) required to correct them.

Representatives of EMS shall be allowed to audit (for monitoring purposes only) any course offering intended for prehospital CE credit with no notice and for no fee.

If, upon review, educational opportunities are found NOT to have been in compliance with these guidelines, prehospital personnel taking the course in good faith will NOT be disallowed from utilizing those CE credits for re-certification purposes.

EMS may take action against a Provider or applicant for causes including, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Conviction of a felony or any offense substantially related to the activities of a Provider.
2. Failure to correct deficiencies within a reasonable length of time after receiving a written warning notice from EMS specifying deficiencies.
3. Any material misrepresentation of fact by an Authorized Provider of any information required to be submitted to EMS or maintained by the Provider.

EMS may take such action(s) as it deems appropriate on the Provider's authorization status after giving the Provider or applicant reasonable notice. Such actions may include (but are not limited to) denial of application, revocation of authorization, temporary suspension of authorization, and probation.

Providers whose authorization has been denied or revoked may re-apply to EMS after a period of 90 days.

**REVISIONS TO  
COUNTY GUIDELINES  
FOR AUTHORIZED  
PROVIDERS**

As the need arises, EMS may revise its Guidelines for Authorized Providers of Prehospital Continuing Education. Providers will be notified of these revisions at least 30 days prior to their implementation.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Authorized Providers

Those individuals, partnerships, corporations, associations, organizations, organized health care systems, educational institutions, or governmental agencies authorized by San Diego County Emergency Medical Services to offer continuing education for the purposes of EMT-B, Paramedic and MICN certification, licensure, accreditation, and authorization.

Content Relevant to Prehospital Practice

Educational content related to the development and maintenance of current competency in the delivery of prehospital care as specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9, and the County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services Policies and Procedures. Not all topics relevant to advanced life support topics are necessarily relevant to basic life support personnel. Providers may issue CE only for activities relevant to the level of the participant(s).

Continuing Education

Continuing education (CE) is a course, class, activity, or experience designed to be educational in nature, with learning objectives and performance evaluations for the purpose of providing EMS personnel with reinforcement of basic EMS training as well as knowledge to enhance individual and system proficiency in the practice of pre-hospital emergency medical care.

Continuing education credit

One continuing education hour (CEH) is any one of the following:

1. Every fifty minutes of approved classroom or skills laboratory activity.
2. Each hour of structured clinical experience when monitored by a preceptor.
3. Continuing Education courses shall not be approved for less than one hour of credit. For courses greater than one CEH, credit may be granted in no less than half hour increments. Ten CEHs will be awarded for each academic quarter unit or fifteen CEHs will be awarded for each academic semester unit for college courses in physical, social or behavioral sciences (e.g., anatomy, physiology, sociology, psychology). No more than eight (8) CE hours may be awarded for a 24 hour period.

Course	A systematic learning experience, at least one hour in length, which deals with and is designed for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and information in direct and indirect patient care.
EMS	The County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency, Emergency Medical Services Branch
Hour	50 minutes
Independent/Home Study Course	A continuing education course offered for individual study by an Approved Provider in accordance with these guidelines.