

WORKING DRAFT

Frequently Asked Questions on the Continuing Competency Requirements for Licensure in California

1. Am I required to have continuing competency to renew my license?

As of November 6, 2009, all licensees must accumulate the required number of hours of continuing competency in each license renewal cycle pursuant to section 1399.91 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

2. When can I begin satisfying the continuing competency requirements?

Continuing competency hours must be earned during your renewal period. Your renewal period begins the day after your license expires or issue date and ends on your expiration date.

3. How many continuing competency hours are required?

As set forth in section 1399.91 CCR, licensees are required to complete hours as defined in the chart below:

Renewal Status	Renewal Payment Submitted	Hours Required
First Time License Renewals	Prior to Expiration Date	15 Hours*
First Time License Renewals	After Expiration Date	30 Hours*
<u>Valid/Delinquent/Inactive License Renewals</u>		30 Hours*

*For each renewal cycle a licensees continuing competency hours must include: two (2) hours in ethics, laws, and regulations and four (4) hours in life support for health care professionals pursuant to section 1399.93 CCR.

Pursuant to section 1399.90 CCR, "Hour" is the unit of measurement for continuing competency and, for courses, means at least 50 minutes of instruction. Pursuant to section 1399.91 CCR One "CEU" equals 10 hours of continuing competency for the PTBC's purposes.

4. What does Life Support for a Health Care Professionals mean?

Life support is the level of medical care which is used for patients with life threatening illness or injuries until the patient can be given full medical care. This level is often compared to Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Pursuant to section 1399.93(b) CCR Such training should be comparable to, or more advanced than, the American Heart Association's Basic Life Support Health Care Provider course.

5. Does the Basic Life Support for Health Care Professionals course need to be approved by a Recognized Approval Agency?

No. Pursuant to section 1399.93 (b), as long as the course is comparable to, or more advanced than, the American Heart Association's Basic Life Support Health Care Provider course.

6. Can I take an online course to fulfill my four hour requirement in life support for health care professionals?

Yes, as long as the course is comparable to, or more advanced than, the American Heart Association's Basic Life Support Health Care Provider course. To be comparable, the course must include a demonstration of **hands on** skills test with a certified instructor. Course participants are issued a wallet certification card to be used as proof of completion.

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38 7. **If the life support for health care professionals training is less than four (4) hours, will I still receive**
 39 **four (4) hours of credit or will I have to take another course that would fulfill this requirement?**

40 As long as the curriculum of the course you have taken is comparable to or exceeds the standards of the
 41 American Heart Association’s “Basic Life Support for Health Care Professionals”, you will be considered
 42 compliant. To be comparable, the course must include a demonstration of **hands on** skills test with a
 43 certified instructor. Course participants are issued a wallet certification card to be used as proof of
 44 completion.

45 8. ***What are the authorized pathways to obtain continuing competency hours?***

46 Pursuant to section [1399.94 CCR](#):

47 (A) Traditional pathways are those offered by an approved provider. There is no limit to the number of hours
 48 which may be accumulated through traditional pathways. The traditional pathways are:

- 49
 50 1) continuing education courses, including home and self-study courses, approved through an agency
 51 recognized by the board under the provisions of regulation section 1399.95; and
 52 2) college coursework from an accredited institution.

53
 54 (B) Alternate pathways are those offered by an entity other than an approved provider. Only those alternate
 55 pathways described in this section may be used to accumulate continuing competency hours. The number
 56 of alternate pathway hours that may be applied for a renewal cycle may not exceed any cap noted below.
 57 Hours may be granted only in accordance with the conversion formula for each alternate pathway noted
 58 below.
 59

ALTERNATE PATHWAYS

	Description	Cap	Conversion
A)	Publishing a peer-reviewed journal article, case study or book chapter.	16 hours	5 hours per article, study or chapter
B)	Developing or presenting an approved college or continuing education course for the first time	16 hours	4 hours for each course
C)	Participating as a subject matter expert in the examination process for the Board, FSBPT or ABPTS	16 hours	6 hours per experience
D)	Serving on a Board-appointed task force	16 hours	6 hours per experience
E)	Performing in a role as a clinical instructor where the student's clinical experience is full time and lasts at least 4 weeks. Effective January 1, 2013, the clinical instructor must be credentialed by APTA or hold a substantially similar credential	12 hours	1 hour per week
F)	Attending a conference relating to the practice of Physical Therapy where proof of attendance is provided by the conference sponsor	8 hours	2 hours per conference
G)	Attending a conference by the FSBPT, APTA or a component thereof	8 hours	4 hours per conference
H)	Attending a Board Meeting	8 hours	2 hours per meeting
I)	<u>Completing an FSBPT Practice Review Tool</u>	<u>6 hours</u>	<u>6 hours per experience</u>
J)	<u>Successfully passing one of the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties' certified specialist examinations, including re-certification examinations</u>	<u>6 hours</u>	<u>6 hours per examination</u>
K)	<u>Completing training as an expert consultant for the Board.</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6 hours per</u>

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Description	Cap	Conversion
	<u>hours</u>	<u>training</u>
L) <u>Successfully passing the Board's California Law Examination</u>	<u>2</u> <u>hours</u>	<u>2 hours per</u> <u>examination</u>

60 **FSBPT:** Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy; **ABPTS:** American Board of Physical Therapy
61 Specialists

62 **: Starting 01/01/2013 the clinical instructor must be credentialed by the APTA or a similar certifying body

63 **9. How do I notify the PTBC that I have met the continuing competency requirements and how long do**
64 **I retain my continuing competency documents?**

65 Pursuant to section [1399.97](#) CCR, licensees will **NOT** mail continuing competency certificates or
66 documentation with their license renewals. The PTBC will conduct random audits and may request copies
67 of your records as part of that process. The licensee is required to keep records with regard to continuing
68 competency for which credit is claimed for 5 years after the completion of the course/activity. These
69 records shall reflect the title of the course/activity, the date it was taken or completed and the record of
70 participation. Copies of these records should be forwarded to the Board **ONLY** upon request.

71 **10. What are the criteria to become a Recognized Continuing Competency Approving Agency?**

72 Pursuant to section [1399.95](#) CCR, the PTBC will only approve agencies that will approve providers offering
73 continuing competency courses.

74 The following is the criteria an agency must adhere to in order to qualify as an Approval Agency recognized
75 by the Board to approve providers offering continuing competency courses.

- 76 1. An approval agency must have the capacity to evaluate each course offered by a provider in
77 accordance with section [1399.96](#) CCR and shall conduct audits of at least 10% of its approved
78 providers' courses to ensure compliance with this article.
- 79 2. An approval agency must have a procedure for periodic review of courses to ensure content quality
80 and currency.
- 81 3. An approval agency must have a procedure in place to respond to complaints.
- 82 4. Approval agencies shall provide services to all persons or entities without unlawful discrimination.
- 83 5. An approval agency that also offers continuing education courses directly to a licensee shall have a
84 means to avoid a conflict of interest between its functions as a provider and its functions as an
85 approval agency.
- 86 6. Upon written confirmation from the Board that the approval agency has been recognized, the approval
87 agency may advertise that it has been recognized by the Board.

88 The Board may require the approval agency to submit records demonstrating its compliance with this
89 article.

90 **11. How do I become an Approved Provider to offer continuing competency courses?**

91 Do not contact the PTBC to apply for an approval as a provider. All providers must be approved by a Board
92 recognized approval agency pursuant to section [1399.95](#) CCR.

93 The standards for qualifying as an approved provider are outlined in section [1399.96](#) CCR.

94 Do not contact the PTBC to apply for an approval as a provider. The PTBC will post the approval agencies
95 on the PTBC's web site as agencies are approved. You will need to contact the agencies directly to apply
96 to become an approved provider.

97 **12. How do I find out if the course I am taking is approved?**

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Pursuant to sections [1399.95](#) and [1399.96](#) CCR, the course must be offered by a provider that has been approved by a [Recognized Continuing Competency Approving Agency](#). This course would then be appropriate as continuing competency activity. Contact the appropriate Approval Agency to verify approval of the course.

13. Can I contact the Board to verify whether the course I am interested in taking is an approved continuing competency course for license renewal?

No. The Board cannot verify whether the course meets the content standards set forth in section [1399.92](#) CCR. Approval agencies recognized by the Board make this determination.

14. If I take a college course from an accredited institution, for a quarter or a semester, will I get one (1) hour per class unit or one (1) hour per 50 minutes of class instruction or lab time?

If the course is related to either the professional practice of physical therapy or patient/client management set forth in section [1399.92](#) CCR, you will receive one hour of credit for every 50 minutes to 1 hour of instruction or lab time pursuant to section [1399.90\(g\)](#) CCR. Example: A course meets 2 hours a week for 10 weeks = 20 hours of continuing competency.

15. Are the required two (2) hours in ethics, laws and regulations and the four (4) hours in life support for health care professionals in addition to the required 30 hours of continuing competency?

No, pursuant to section [1399.93](#) CCR these requirements are part of the total 30 hours.

16. May a college course be counted as a traditional pathway course, e.g. Medical Spanish?

This depends on whether the course meets the content standards as stated in section [1399.92](#) CCR. Specific to the example given: Medical Spanish would relate to professional development and therefore would be counted.

17. Will attending a Board meeting or serving on a Board task force count towards the 2 hour ethics, laws and regulations competency hours as required in section [1399.93\(a\)](#) CCR?

No, however credit may be given as an alternate pathway pursuant to section [1399.94\(b\)](#) CCR, alternate pathway D or H.

18. If I take ethics, laws and regulations courses in excess of the two (2) hours required in section [1399.93\(a\)](#) CCR, may the excess hours be applied toward completing hours via the traditional pathway in section [1399.94\(a\)](#) CCR?

Yes.

19. How will I know if the course I take won't be rejected by the PTBC?

If the course is offered by an approved provider that has met the requirements in section [1399.96](#) CCR and has been recognized by an approval agency pursuant to section [1399.95](#) CCR it is safe to assume that the course will satisfy the continuing competency requirement ([click here](#) for a list of Recognized Approved Agencies)

20. Will the continuing competency courses that are not approved by an approval agency recognized by the Board but approved by another licensing Board or professional association satisfy my continuing competency requirement?

No. All courses must be taken through an approved provider who meets the standards set forth in section [1399.96](#) CCR and has been approved by a Board recognized approval agency pursuant to section [1399.95](#) CCR.

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- 156 **21. Will only specialty certification issued by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties'**
157 **(ABPTS) satisfy section J of the alternate pathway table in section [1399.94\(b\)](#) CCR, alternate**
158 **pathway (J)?**
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160 Currently the regulation only authorizes credit for specialty certifications issued from ABPTS.
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- 162 **22. If I attend a conference where an approved provider is also offering continuing competency**
163 **courses, do I receive credit for attending the conference AND for the course taken at the**
164 **conference?**
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166 Yes, you would receive credit for pathway F or G of the alternate pathway table in section [1399.94\(b\)](#) CCR
167 and hours through the traditional pathway.
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- 169 **23. Is there a fee for processing an application to become an approval agency to approve providers**
170 **offering continuing competency courses?**
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172 No, there is no fee.
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- 174 **24. Can I request to be placed on inactive status?**
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176 Yes, pursuant to section [1399.98](#) CCR, a licensee may be granted inactive status if, at the time of request
177 for inactive status, the license is current and not suspended, revoked, or otherwise punitively restricted by
178 the board. Such request can be made on your renewal form at the time of applying for the renewal of your
179 license.
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181 Please note, Inactive Status only exempts the licensee from the continuing competency requirement. All
182 other conditions of renewal still apply. i.e.; renewal form, criminal conviction disclosure and renewal fee.
183 The inactive status of any licensee does not deprive the board of its authority to institute or continue any
184 disciplinary or enforcement actions against a licensee. The licensee shall not engage in any activity for
185 which a license is required.
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- 187 **25. How can I restore an inactive license to active status?**
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189 Pursuant to section [1399.98](#) CCR, you shall:
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- 191 1. Complete the required number of continuing competency hours to that required for a single renewal
192 period of an active license within the last two years prior to applying to restore the license to active
193 status.
- 194 2. Complete the [Inactive to Active License Application](#) and the [Continuing Competency Activities and](#)
195 [Coursework Checklist](#).
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199 **26. Can I request an exemption from the continuing competency requirement for my current renewal**
200 **period?**
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202 Yes, pursuant to section [1399.99](#) CCR, you may request an exemption from the continuing competency
203 requirement at the time of applying for the renewal of your license. The request for exemption must be
204 requested in writing by completing the [Continuing Competency Exemption Application](#) and provide the
205 following information:
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- 208 1. Evidence that during the renewal period prior to the expiration of the license, the licensee was residing
209 in another country for one year or longer, reasonably preventing completion of the continuing
210 competency requirements; or
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- 212 2. Evidence that the licensee was absent from California because of military service for a period of one
213 year or longer during the renewal period, preventing completion of the continuing competency
214 requirements; or

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- 217 3. Evidence that the licensee should be exempt from the continuing competency requirements for
- 218 reasons of health or other good cause which include:
- 219 1) Total physical and/or mental disability for one (1) year or more during the renewal period and the
- 220 inability to work during this period has been verified by a licensed physician or surgeon or licensed
- 221 clinical psychologist; or
- 222
- 223 2) Total physical and/or mental disability for one (1) year or longer of an immediate family member for
- 224 whom the licensee had total responsibility, as verified by a licensed physician or surgeon or licensed
- 225 clinical psychologist.
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- 227 An exemption under this section shall not be granted for two consecutive renewal periods. In the event
- 228 a licensee cannot complete continuing competency requirements following an exemption, the licensee
- 229 may only renew the license in an inactive status.