Licensure and the Application Process

RESPIRATORY CARE BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

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Education

What are the minimum education requirements for licensure?

- Graduation from a CoARC-approved program
- An Associate Degree

What happens after I graduate?

- Request that your college's admissions and records office send your official transcript(s) to the Respiratory Care Board (Board).
- Make sure that your transcripts show that you were awarded an Associate Degree.

Examination

All applicants must take and pass the Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) Examination. The examination is currently administered by the National Board of Respiratory Care (NBRC) via a contractural agreement with the Board.

How do I apply for the examination?

Applicants schedule their examinations directly with NBRC. You can file online at **www.nbrc.org**, or you may submit an application to their office in Olathe, Kansas.

The Examination Process:

- Currently, the CRT Examination is administered via computer at 10 locations throughout California: Sacramento, Los Angeles/Glendale, Los Angeles/Stanton, San Francisco, Fresno, Santa Maria, San Jose, Chino, Irvine, and San Diego.
- Results of the examination are provided the same day.
- The NBRC electronically submits the examination scores to the Board on a weekly basis.

REMEMBER: Passing the examination and receiving the CRT credential does not constitute licensure. You must possess a valid work permit or license issued by the Board to practice respiratory care in the State of California.

Filing an Application for Licensure

Where can I obtain an application packet?

Your school's program director may have a supply. If not, you can contact the Board at (866) 375-0386. You can also visit the Board's Web site at **www.rcb.ca.gov**, and click on the "For Applicants" tab, and download an application and all required forms.

Applications can be filed as early as to 90 days before graduation. The Board encourages students to send in their applications as early as possible (but not more than 90 days) to allow time to process the applications. Early filing helps to ensure that you can be issued a work permit prior to graduation.

REMEMBER:
Before you turn in your application packet, make sure that you **complete all the forms and include the application fee!** Incomplete packets will be returned to you and will delay the process of your application!

REMEMBER:
You are signing your application under penalty of perjury! If you are unsure whether or not to disclose something in your history on your application, call the Board's Enforcement Unit at **(866) 375-0386**. Most of the time, you will be advised to disclose the information rather than have it seem that you are withholding information. See the In-House Review/Penalty Determination section at the back of this booklet for detailed information.

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

All applicants are subject to background checks. The Board requires each applicant to submit fingerprints for State and Federal processing. For most applicants, the background check requirement is satisfied upon receipt of fingerprint clearances from the California Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. If an applicant discloses a criminal history on his or her application, or if a "rap sheet" is received in response to the fingerprint submission, the applicant's file will be forwarded to the Board's Enforcement Unit.

Enforcement Referrals

If your application is referred to the Board's Enforcement Unit, you will be asked to provide certified copies of:

- Court documents and police reports.
- Documentation that proves compliance with current probation or that probation has been successfully completed.
- Documentation that proves evidence of rehabilitation. (the rehabilitation may be in the form of voluntary and/or court-ordered programs (AA, NA, etc.).

If these records have been destroyed, the Board requires a certified copy of a signed statement on agency letterhead (of the agency from which you are requesting documents) attesting to the destruction of the records.

Work Permits

- Work permits allow applicants to work **under the direct supervision** of a licensed Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP).
- "Under direct supervision" means assigned to a licensed RCP who is on duty and **immediately available** in the assigned patient care area.
- Any person working with a permit shall identify him-herself as a "Respiratory Care Practitioner Applicant."

A work permit will be issued for a period of 90 days. These permits will generally be issued within 10 days from the time the Board receives:

- A completed application; and
- The required fingerprint clearance (if criminal, disciplinary, or substance abuse exists, the Enforcement Unit must determine that a work permit may be issued);
- Verification of graduation or certification of upcoming graduation by the school's program director.

Work permits are issued for a 90-day period to allow applicants sufficient time to take their examinations and request their official transcripts be sent to the Board. The 90-day period may be used by applicants with criminal backgrounds to request and submit certified

documents so that applications can be approved prior to graduation.

REMEMBER: Work permits are not extended except in extremely rare situations. Work permits may be rescinded if the Board receives information that you failed your examination, or receives information indicating that you have a criminal history that you failed to disclose on your application.

Ethics Course Requirement

All applicants must successfully complete a three-hour, Board-approved Law and Professional Ethics Course prior to licensure.

The course covers the following subject areas:

- Obligations of licensed RCPs to patients under their care;
- Acts that jeopardize licensure and licensure status; and
- Responsibilities of RCPs to report illegal activities occurring in the workplace.

Applicants must provide the Board with a copy of a Certificate of Completion verifying successful completion of the course prior to licensure.

Please visit the Board's Web site for links to the approved courses

Initial Licensure

Once the Board receives all the required documentation for licensure, including passing exam scores and certification that you have completed and passed the required ethics course, you will be sent a letter notifying you of your eligibility for licensure. You will be requested to submit the appropriate initial licensing fee.

Initial licenses are issued for a period of 6-17 months, depending on the issuing month of the license and the applicant's birth month. The fee is prorated at $8 per month and ranges from $48 to $136.

You should receive your license in 2-3 weeks after your fee is received by the Board.

After your initial license expires

- You must renew your license every two years to maintain an active status.
- You must complete 15 hours of continuing education (CE) to hold an active license. Your CE hours will be prorated the first time you renew depending on the number of months of your initial license.
- If you allow your license to expire, you will have three years from the expiration date to renew. If you do not renew, the license is cancelled and cannot be renewed or reinstated.

In-House Review / Penalty Determination

In order to promote cost effectiveness and ensure the availability of funds to prosecute high priority complaints, the Board adopted the following guidelines for staff in reviewing criminal history for applicants and licensees on February 22, 2002.

These are merely in-house guidelines and do not preclude the Board from imposing a different form of discipline. The goal of the in-house review program is to reduce the costs of the Board's enforcement function by providing for proposed discipline with a minimal amount of investigation, staff, attorney and judicial resources, while at the same time carrying out the mission of the Board.

Violation Types

- FRAUD (which can include welfare and other government fraud and misrepresentation and conspiracy to commit fraud);
- THEFT (which can include petty theft, receiving stolen property and trespass);
- ALCOHOL (which can include DUI, reckless driving, public intoxication and other use in violation of law);
- DRUGS (which can include illegal use, possession, and possession for sale);
- BODILY INJURY (which can include domestic violence, assault, battery, and attempted battery).

Only the above related offenses qualify for in-house review and determination of penalty as long as no other disqualifying factors or extenuating circumstances are present.

To qualify for in-house review and determination of penalty, the following criteria must be met for the particular offense or applicant:

1. Violations (with the exception of drug offense) must be misdemeanors.
2. A child must not be the victim of the offense.
3. The violation must not have occurred during employment as a health care worker.
4. Bodily injury resulting from the offense must not be to an unknowing victim, innocent bystander or defenseless person.
5. Bodily injury resulting from the offense must not have been the result of premeditation.
6. The offense must not have been extremely violent in nature, and must not have involved harassment or stalking.
7. Felony drug or alcohol offenses may qualify for in-house review and determination of penalty.

Where staff is in doubt as to the propriety of in-house review, the issues presented and the suggested discipline are to be addressed pursuant to previously established enforcement processes. Cases not qualified for this review will be reviewed individually and on a case-by-case basis for suggested discipline.

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Applicant Penalty Determination Guidelines

No.	Case Type	Proposed Resolution
A-1	One (1) violation older than two (2) years from the date the application is received - excluding drugs	Strong Warning Letter
A-2	Two (2) violations older than five (5) years from the date the application is received - excluding drugs	Strong Warning Letter
A-3	Any violation(s) that does not meet the qualifications in numbers A1-A2	Citation and Fine or Probation
A-4	Multiple violations that show patterned behavior and at least two (2) violations showing that patterned behavior must have occurred within three (3) years from the date that application for licensure is received	Denial
A-5	Perjury on any Respiratory Care Board form that conceals any violation or would in anyway benefit the applicant	Citation and Fine, Probation or Denial

A single incident or occurrence represents one violation.

License Penalty Determination Guidelines

No.	Case Type	Proposed Resolution
L-1	One (1) violation (within 7 years) - excluding drugs	Cite and Fine
L-2	One (1) violation for drug use/possession within seven (7) years	Probation (possible cite and fine)
L-3	Two (2) or more violations within seven (7) years	Probation or Revocation (possible cite and fine)
L-4	Multiple violations (generally 3 or more) that show patterned behavior and at least two (2) violations showing that patterned behavior must have occurred within the last five (5) years	Revocation (minimal possibility of probation)
L-5	Perjury on any Respiratory Care Board form that conceals any violation or would in anyway benefit the licensee	Citation and Fine $1,000 for first offense, $2,500 thereafter plus any other appropriate discipline

A single incident or occurrence represents one violation.

Still have questions?

Contact us!

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