



LICENSURE AND THE APPLICATION PROCESS



RESPIRATORY
CARE BOARD
OF CALIFORNIA

THE APPLICATION TO LICENSURE PROCESS

This booklet explains how to apply for a Respiratory Care Practitioner (RCP) license with the Respiratory Care Board of California (RCB). It outlines the eligibility requirements, application steps, and what you can expect throughout the licensing process.



REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE

To qualify for licensure, you must meet the following requirements:



EDUCATION

- Graduate from a respiratory care program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC); and
- Earn an associate degree (or higher) from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.



NBRC EXAMINATION/CREDENTIAL

You must obtain the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) credential issued by the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC). The NBRC is an independent, private organization and is not affiliated with the Respiratory Care Board (RCB).

The NBRC administers the national examinations used to assess competency for Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCPs) throughout the United States and offers two primary credentials: the Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) and the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT)



IMPORTANT

Holding a CRT or RRT credential alone does not authorize you to practice respiratory care in California.

Note: If you earned your CRT credential before January 1, 2015, you are not required to obtain the RRT credential.



LAW AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS COURSE

All applicants must complete an RCB approved Law and Professional Ethics course prior to licensure. The course covers professional responsibilities, patient protection, reporting obligations, and conduct that may result in disciplinary action.

Approved providers:

- California Society for Respiratory Care (CSRC)
- American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC)

Only one course is required.



FINGERPRINTING AND BACKGROUND CHECK

All applicants must complete **fingerprinting** for state and federal background checks through the California Department of Justice (CA DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

If a criminal history is reported, it will be reviewed by RCB's Enforcement Unit.

A criminal conviction does not automatically disqualify an applicant. Each case is reviewed individually. In many cases, licensure may not be denied if:

- The conviction has been dismissed, or
- The conviction is more than seven years old

Exceptions may apply for serious offenses or crimes requiring registration.

For more information on how criminal history is reviewed, please visit https://rcb.ca.gov/applicants/prior_criminal_history.shtml.

California Residents

California residents must complete fingerprinting via Live Scan. Live Scan electronically transmits fingerprints to CA DOJ and FBI for processing.

Applicants are encouraged to complete Live Scan before submitting their online application to help avoid delays, but it may also be done afterward.

Bring the RCB Live Scan Form to your appointment.

Live Scan locations: <https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/locations>

Applicants should contact the provider to confirm appointment requirements and payment methods.

Applicants Outside California

Out of state applicants must submit two sets of ink rolled fingerprints on fingerprint cards.

Cards are available through local law enforcement or fingerprinting services. Applicants may also request cards from RCB.

After submitting your online application, mail the completed fingerprint



WHEN YOU CAN APPLY

You may apply for licensure up to 90 days before completing your respiratory care program or any time after meeting all requirements. Applicants are encouraged to apply early, especially if there has been prior criminal history as this will allow RCB's enforcement staff to begin its process early and delay application review later.

You do not need to wait for transcripts, NBRC credentials, or fingerprint results before applying. However, your license cannot be issued until all required documents have been received and verified.

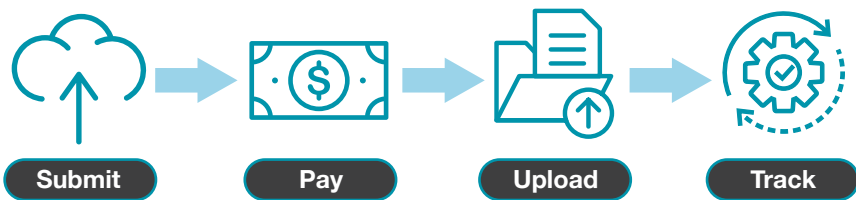
If you apply within 90 days of graduation, a Program Director Certification must be submitted with your application.

HOW TO APPLY

All applicants must apply online through BreEZe at www.breeze.ca.gov.

Through BreEZe you will:

- **Submit your application.**
- **Pay the application fee.** Applications that do not include a fee are not processed until payment is received. If your program is paying the application fee on your behalf, please complete your portion of the application before the payment is submitted.
- **Upload required documents.** A complete application should include a completed application, the 2x2 passport photo, a copy of the completed Live Scan Form, and a Program Director Certification, if applicable.
- **Track your application status.** You will be asked to provide personal, educational, and professional history information.



APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS



Completed Application

Submit through your BreEZe account. See the Online Initial Application Step by Step Instructions on RCB's website for help. The instructions can be found at www.rcb.ca.gov/applicants/forms/initial_application_user_guide.pdf



Passport Style Photo

Upload a 2" x 2" photo taken within the past 60 days. Group or cropped photos are not accepted.



Application Fee

The fee is \$300.

Out of state applicants submitting fingerprint cards must also pay an additional \$49 fingerprint processing fee.

If a third party will pay the fee, you may add an Authorized Representative in BreEZe. Remove access once your license is issued.



Law and Professional Ethics Course Certificate

Upload the certificate verifying course completion.



Program Director Certification (if applicable)

This is required if you will complete your program within 90 days.



License/Certification Verifications (if applicable)

You must report and request verification for any health related license, certification, or registration you currently hold or have ever held in any state.

Examples include:

- RCP licenses (other states)
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
- Medical Assistant (MA)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)/Paramedic
- Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)/Registered Nurses (RN)
- Any other health related credential

Issuing agencies must send verification directly to RCB. Electronic verifications may be emailed to rcbinfo@dca.ca.gov.



Live Scan Form (if applicable)

California applicants may upload the completed RCB Live Scan form, but fingerprinting must still be completed at a Live Scan site.



Official Transcripts

Your official transcript(s) must verify:

1. Completion of an approved respiratory care program.
2. Awarding of an associate degree or higher.

If program completion and degree were earned at different institutions, transcripts from each must be submitted. Transcripts may be sent:

- Directly by the school.
- Electronically by the school.
- Through vendors such as Parchment or National Student Clearinghouse.

Electronic transcripts may be sent to rcbtranscripts@dca.ca.gov.



NBRC Credential

RCB must receive verification of your NBRC credential.

- **California new graduates:** The NBRC typically sends results directly to RCB.
- **All others:** You must request official credential verification through the NBRC Practitioner Portal.

AFTER YOU APPLY

RCB will review your application within 10 business days.

Check your application status in BreZE by:

1. Logging into your account.
2. Locating your pending application.
3. Selecting “Details.”

Any missing items will be listed under “Deficiencies.” You can check your BreZE account throughout the application processing period to confirm that deficiencies have been cleared.

If RCB requests additional documents, submit them through a separate “Attachment” application in BreZE. Documents cannot be added to an already submitted application.

Once all requirements are met, your RCP license will be issued.





IMPORTANT

Passing NBRC exams or holding a CRT or RRT credential does not authorize you to practice in California.

WORK PERMITS (OPTIONAL)

To qualify for an RCP Applicant Work Permit, you must:

- Have submitted a complete licensure application.
- Hold a CRT credential from the NBRC.
- Have secured employment in California.

Work permits are for individuals who have completed their education but are still completing examination requirements.

Permit holders must work under direct supervision of a California licensed RCP. Permits are employer specific and must be updated if you change employer.

Apply here:

https://rcb.ca.gov/applicants/work_permit.shtml

AFTER YOUR LICENSE IS ISSUED

Your initial license is valid for 13–24 months. For your first renewal only, you are required to complete 15 total hours of continuing education (CE).

- At least 7 hours must be directly related to Clinical Practice.
- At least 5 hours must be directly related to RCP Leadership.
- Up to 3 hours may be indirectly related to the clinical practice of respiratory care.
- A minimum of 7 hours must be earned through live courses or meetings.
- CE records and certificates must be kept for 4 years.

Following your first license you will be required to:

- Renew every 2 years.
- Complete 30 hours of CE per cycle.
- Complete a Law and Professional Ethics course every other renewal.

For more information regarding CE requirements, please visit:

<https://rcb.ca.gov/licensees/ce.shtml>

If your license expires, it may be renewed within 3 years. After 3 years, it is canceled and cannot be renewed.

EXPEDITED LICENSURE (IF APPLICABLE)

Expedited processing may be available for:

- Active duty military.
- Veterans.
- Military spouses/domestic partners.
- Refugees, asylees, or special immigrant visa holders.

Visit RCB's website for more details at:

<https://rcb.ca.gov/licensees/military.shtml>

Still have questions?

CONTACT US

Respiratory Care Board

3750 Rosin Court, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95834

Tel: (916) 999 2190 | Fax: (916) 263 7311

Website: www.rcb.ca.gov | Email: rcbinfo@dca.ca.gov

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