

CHAPTER 3
PHARMACY TECHNICIANS

[Prior to 9/4/02, see 657—Ch 22]

657—3.1(155A) Definitions. For the purposes of this chapter, the following definitions shall apply:

“*Board*” means the Iowa board of pharmacy.

“*Cashier*” means a person whose duties within the pharmacy are limited to accessing finished, packaged prescription orders and processing payments for and delivering such orders to the patient or the patient’s representative.

“*Certified pharmacy technician*” or “*certified technician*” means an individual who holds a valid current national certification and who has registered with the board as a certified pharmacy technician. The term includes an individual registered with the board who voluntarily acquired certification as provided in subrule 3.5(2).

“*Delivery*” means the transport and conveyance of a finished, securely packaged prescription order to the patient or the patient’s caregiver.

“*Nationally accredited program*” means a program and examination for the certification of pharmacy technicians that is accredited by the NCCA.

“*NCCA*” means the National Commission for Certifying Agencies.

“*Nuclear pharmacy technician*” means a person who is employed in Iowa by a licensed nuclear pharmacy under the responsibility of an Iowa-licensed qualified nuclear pharmacist to assist in the technical functions of the practice of pharmacy pursuant to 657—Chapter 16.

“*Pharmacy technician*” or “*technician*” means a person who is employed in Iowa by a licensed pharmacy under the responsibility of an Iowa-licensed pharmacist to assist in the technical functions of the practice of pharmacy, as provided in rules 3.22(155A) through 3.24(155A).

“*Pharmacy technician certification*” or “*national certification*” means a certificate issued by a national pharmacy technician certification authority accredited by the NCCA attesting that the technician has successfully completed the requirements of the certification program. The term includes evidence of renewal of the national certification. “National certification,” as that term relates to a nuclear pharmacy technician working exclusively in an Iowa-licensed nuclear pharmacy, shall be as defined in rule 657—16.2(155A).

“*Pharmacy technician trainee*” or “*technician trainee*” means an individual who is in training to become a pharmacy technician and who is in the process of acquiring national certification as a pharmacy technician as provided in rule 3.5(155A).

“*Pharmacy technician training*” or “*technician training*” means education or experience acquired for the purpose of qualifying for and preparing for national certification.

“*Supervising pharmacist*” means an Iowa-licensed pharmacist who is on duty in an Iowa-licensed pharmacy and who is responsible for the actions of a pharmacy technician or other supportive personnel.

“*Supportive personnel*” means a person, other than a licensed pharmacist, a registered pharmacist-intern, or a registered pharmacy technician, who may perform nontechnical duties assigned by the pharmacist under the pharmacist’s supervision, including delivery, billing, cashier, and clerical functions.

657—3.2(155A) Purpose of registration. A registration program for pharmacy technicians is established for the purposes of determining the competency of a pharmacy technician or of an applicant for registration as a pharmacy technician, a certified technician, or a pharmacy technician trainee and for the purposes of identification, tracking, and disciplinary action for violations of federal or state pharmacy or drug laws or regulations.

657—3.3(155A) Registration required. Any person employed in Iowa as a pharmacy technician, except a pharmacist-intern whose pharmacist-intern registration is in good standing with the board, shall obtain and maintain during such employment a current registration as a pharmacy technician,

certified pharmacy technician, or pharmacy technician trainee pursuant to these rules. An individual accepting employment as a pharmacy technician or technician trainee in Iowa who fails to register as a pharmacy technician, certified technician, or technician trainee as provided by these rules may be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

3.3(1) *Licensed health care provider.* Except as provided in this rule, a licensed health care provider whose registration or license is in good standing with and not subject to current disciplinary sanctions or practice restrictions imposed by the licensee's professional licensing board and who assists in the technical functions of the practice of pharmacy shall be required to register as a pharmacy technician, certified technician, or technician trainee pursuant to these rules.

3.3(2) *Original application required.* Any person not currently registered with the board as a pharmacy technician or certified technician shall complete an application for registration within 30 days of accepting employment in an Iowa pharmacy as a pharmacy technician. Such application shall be received in the board office before the expiration of this 30-day period.

3.3(3) *Technician training.* A person who is enrolled in a college-based or American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)-accredited technician training program shall obtain a pharmacy technician trainee registration prior to beginning on-site practical experience. A person who is employed in a pharmacy and who is receiving pharmacy technician training through work experience shall obtain a pharmacy technician trainee registration within 30 days of the commencement of pharmacy technician training.

3.3(4) *Registration number.* Each pharmacy technician, certified technician, and technician trainee registered with the board will be assigned a unique registration number.

657—3.4 Reserved.

657—3.5(155A) Certification of pharmacy technicians. Prior to July 1, 2010, the certification and recertification of pharmacy technicians shall be voluntary and not mandatory. Beginning July 1, 2010, the certification of pharmacy technicians shall be required as provided by this rule. National certification does not supplant the need for licensed pharmacist control over the performance of delegated functions, nor does national certification exempt the pharmacy technician from registration pursuant to these rules.

3.5(1) *Voluntary certification prior to July 1, 2010.* An individual who holds a valid current national certification from the Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ICPT) or the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) and who acquired such certification prior to July 1, 2010, shall be deemed to have met the requirement for national certification beginning July 1, 2010, provided the certification is maintained in current standing.

3.5(2) *Required certification effective July 1, 2010.* Beginning July 1, 2010, a pharmacy technician shall acquire national certification through any NCCA-accredited pharmacy technician certification program and examination, the successful completion of which fulfills the requirement for national certification. National certification of a nuclear pharmacy technician employed solely in the practice of nuclear pharmacy shall be pursuant to certification requirements identified in 657—Chapter 16.

3.5(3) *Pharmacy technician trainee.* Beginning July 1, 2009, a person who is in the process of acquiring national certification as a pharmacy technician shall register with the board as a pharmacy technician trainee. The registration shall be issued for a period of one year and shall not be renewed.

3.5(4) *Certified pharmacy technician.* Beginning July 1, 2010, all applicants for a new pharmacy technician registration, except as provided by subrule 3.5(3), and all applicants for renewal of a pharmacy technician registration shall provide proof of current national pharmacy technician certification and shall complete the application for certified pharmacy technician registration.

657—3.6 and 3.7 Reserved.

657—3.8(155A) Application form.

3.8(1) *Required information.* The application for a pharmacy technician registration, certified technician registration, or pharmacy technician trainee registration shall include the following:

- a. Information sufficient to identify the applicant including, but not limited to, name, address, date of birth, gender, and social security number;
- b. Educational background;
- c. Work experience;
- d. Current place or places of employment;
- e. Any other information deemed necessary by the board and as provided by this rule.

3.8(2) Declaration of current impairment or limitations. The applicant shall declare any current use of drugs, alcohol, or other chemical substances that in any way impairs or limits the applicant's ability to perform the duties of a pharmacy technician with reasonable skill and safety.

3.8(3) History of felony or misdemeanor crimes. The applicant shall declare any history of being charged, convicted, found guilty of, or entering a plea of guilty or no contest to a felony or misdemeanor crime (other than minor traffic violations with fines under \$100).

3.8(4) History of disciplinary actions. The applicant shall declare any history of disciplinary actions or practice restrictions imposed by a state health care professional or technician licensure or registration authority.

3.8(5) Additional information. The following additional information shall be required from an applicant for the specified registration.

a. *Technician trainee.* The applicant for technician trainee registration shall identify the source of technician training, the anticipated date of completion of training, and the anticipated date of national certification.

b. *Certified pharmacy technician.* The applicant for certified technician registration shall provide proof of current pharmacy technician certification. The applicant shall also identify all current pharmacy employers including pharmacy name, license number, address, and average hours worked per week.

c. *Licensed health care provider.* In addition to the additional information required by paragraph "a" or "b" as applicable, a licensed health care provider shall provide evidence that the licensee's professional license or registration is current and in good standing and is not subject to current disciplinary sanctions or practice restrictions imposed by the licensee's professional licensing authority.

3.8(6) Sworn signature. The applicant shall sign the application under penalty of perjury and shall submit the application to the board with the appropriate fees pursuant to rule 3.10(155A).

657—3.9(155A) Registration term and renewal. Prior to July 1, 2008, a pharmacy technician registration shall expire on the second last day of the birth month following initial registration, with the exception that a new pharmacy technician registration issued within the two months immediately preceding the applicant's birth month shall expire on the third last day of the birth month following initial registration. A pharmacy technician registration issued between July 1, 2008, and July 1, 2009, except as provided in subrule 3.9(1), shall expire no later than June 30, 2010. Registration shall not require continuing education for renewal.

3.9(1) Certified pharmacy technician registration. A certified pharmacy technician registration shall expire on the second last day of the birth month following initial registration, with the exception that a new certified pharmacy technician registration issued within the two months immediately preceding the applicant's birth month shall expire on the third last day of the birth month following initial registration.

3.9(2) Pharmacy technician trainee registration. Beginning July 1, 2009, a registration for a pharmacy technician who is in the process of acquiring national certification (technician trainee) shall expire on the last day of the registration month 12 months following the date of registration or 12 months following the date registration was required pursuant to subrule 3.3(3).

a. *National certification completed.* When the registered technician trainee completes national certification, and no later than the date of expiration of the technician trainee registration, the pharmacy technician trainee shall complete and submit an application for certified pharmacy technician registration. A successful application shall result in issuance of a new certified pharmacy technician registration as provided in subrule 3.9(1).

b. Voluntary cancellation of registration. A registered technician trainee who fails to complete national certification prior to expiration of the technician trainee registration shall notify the board that the pharmacy technician trainee registration should be canceled and that the individual has ceased practice as a pharmacy technician.

c. Failure to notify the board. If a pharmacy technician trainee fails to notify the board prior to the expiration date of the technician trainee registration regarding the individual's intentions as provided in paragraph "a" or "b," the technician trainee registration shall be canceled and the individual shall cease practice as a pharmacy technician.

657—3.10(155A) Registration fee. The following fees for initial registration and registration renewal shall apply to the specified registration applications filed within the following time frames. The appropriate fee shall be submitted with the registration application in the form of a personal check, certified check or cashier's check, or a money order payable to the Iowa Board of Pharmacy.

3.10(1) Registration prior to July 1, 2009. The fee for obtaining an initial technician registration, for obtaining an initial certified pharmacy technician registration, or for renewal of a technician or certified technician registration prior to July 1, 2009, shall be \$40 plus applicable surcharge pursuant to rule 657—30.8(155A).

3.10(2) Registration beginning July 1, 2009. The fee for obtaining an initial certified pharmacy technician registration or for biennial renewal of a certified pharmacy technician registration beginning July 1, 2009, shall be \$50 plus applicable surcharge pursuant to rule 657—30.8(155A).

3.10(3) Technician trainee registration beginning July 1, 2009. The fee for a one-year pharmacy technician trainee registration shall be \$20 plus applicable surcharge pursuant to rule 657—30.8(155A).

657—3.11(155A) Late applications and fees.

3.11(1) Initial registration. An application for initial registration that is not received within the applicable period specified in subrule 3.3(2) or 3.3(3) shall be delinquent, and the applicant shall be assessed a late payment fee. The late payment fee shall be equal to the amount of the fee for initial registration. A delinquent initial registration shall include payment of the initial registration fee, applicable surcharge pursuant to rule 657—30.8(155A), and late payment fee.

3.11(2) Registration renewal. A technician registration that is not renewed before its expiration date shall be delinquent, and the registrant shall not continue employment as a pharmacy technician until the registration is reactivated. An individual who continues employment as a pharmacy technician without a current registration, in addition to the pharmacy and the pharmacist in charge that allow the individual to continue practice as a pharmacy technician, may be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

a. A person who is required to renew a registration pursuant to these rules and who fails to renew the registration before the first day of the month following expiration shall pay the renewal fee, a penalty fee equal to the amount of the renewal fee, plus the applicable surcharge pursuant to rule 657—30.8(155A).

b. A person who is required to renew a registration pursuant to these rules and who fails to renew the registration before the first day of the second month following expiration shall pay the renewal fee, a penalty fee equal to the amount of the renewal fee, the applicable surcharge pursuant to rule 657—30.8(155A), plus an additional penalty fee of \$10 for each additional month, not to exceed three additional months, that the registration is delinquent. The maximum combined fee payment for reactivation of a delinquent registration shall not exceed an amount equal to twice the renewal fee plus \$30 plus the applicable surcharge pursuant to rule 657—30.8(155A).

657—3.12(155A) Registration certificates. The certificate of technician registration issued by the board to a pharmacy technician, certified pharmacy technician, or pharmacy technician trainee is the property of and shall be maintained by the registered technician. The certificate or a copy of the certificate shall be maintained in each pharmacy where the pharmacy technician, certified pharmacy technician, or pharmacy technician trainee works. Each pharmacy utilizing pharmacy technicians shall be responsible

for verifying that all technicians, certified technicians, and technician trainees working in the pharmacy are registered, and that technician registrations remain current and active.

657—3.13(155A) Notifications to the board. A pharmacy technician, certified pharmacy technician, or technician trainee shall report to the board within ten days a change of the technician's name, address, or pharmacy employment status.

657—3.14 to 3.16 Reserved.

657—3.17(155A) Training and utilization of pharmacy technicians. All Iowa-licensed pharmacies utilizing pharmacy technicians shall develop, implement, and periodically review written policies and procedures for the training and utilization of pharmacy technicians appropriate to the practice of pharmacy. Pharmacy policies shall specify the frequency of review. Technician training shall be documented and maintained by the pharmacy for the duration of employment. Policies and procedures and documentation of technician training shall be available for inspection and copying by the board or an agent of the board.

657—3.18(147,155A) Identification of pharmacy technician.

3.18(1) Identification badge. A pharmacy technician shall wear a visible identification badge while on duty that clearly identifies the person as a pharmacy technician and that includes at least the technician's first name.

3.18(2) Misrepresentation prohibited. A pharmacy technician shall not represent himself or herself in any manner as a pharmacist or pharmacist-intern. A pharmacy technician shall not represent himself or herself in any manner as a certified pharmacy technician unless the technician has attained national pharmacy technician certification. A technician trainee shall not represent himself or herself in any manner as a certified pharmacy technician, as a pharmacist-intern, or as a pharmacist.

657—3.19 Reserved.

657—3.20(155A) Responsibility of supervising pharmacist. The ultimate responsibility for the actions of a pharmacy technician, a certified pharmacy technician, or a pharmacy technician trainee shall remain with the supervising pharmacist.

657—3.21(155A) Delegation of technical functions. A pharmacist may delegate technical dispensing functions to an appropriately trained and registered pharmacy technician, but only if the pharmacist is on site when delegated functions are performed, except as provided in 657—subrule 6.7(2) or 657—subrule 7.6(2), as appropriate, or as provided for telepharmacy in 657—Chapter 9. The pharmacist shall provide and document the final verification for the accuracy, validity, completeness, and appropriateness of the patient's prescription or medication order prior to the delivery of the medication to the patient or the patient's representative.

657—3.22(155A) Technical functions. At the discretion of the supervising pharmacist, technical functions which may be delegated to a pharmacy technician, a certified pharmacy technician, or a pharmacy technician trainee include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Performing packaging, manipulative, or repetitive tasks relating to the processing of a prescription or medication order in a licensed pharmacy.
2. Accepting prescription refill authorizations communicated to a pharmacy by a prescriber or by the prescriber's office.
3. Contacting prescribers to obtain prescription refill authorizations.
4. Collecting pertinent patient information.
5. Entering prescription and patient information into the pharmacy computer system.

6. Inspecting drug supplies provided and controlled by an Iowa-licensed pharmacy, including but not limited to drug supplies maintained in an ambulance or other emergency medical service vehicle, a long-term care facility, a hospital nursing unit, or a hospice facility.

657—3.23(155A) Tasks a pharmacy technician shall not perform. A pharmacy technician, a certified pharmacy technician, or a pharmacy technician trainee shall not:

1. Provide the final verification for the accuracy, validity, completeness, or appropriateness of a filled prescription or medication order;
2. Conduct prospective drug use review or evaluate a patient's medication record for purposes identified in rule 657—8.21(155A);
3. Provide patient counseling, consultation, or patient-specific drug information, tender an offer of patient counseling on behalf of a pharmacist, or accept a refusal of patient counseling from a patient or patient's agent;
4. Make decisions that require a pharmacist's professional judgment, such as interpreting prescription drug orders or applying information;
5. Transfer a prescription drug order to another pharmacy or receive the transfer of a prescription drug order from another pharmacy;
6. Delegate technical functions to supportive personnel.

657—3.24(155A) New prescription drug orders or medication orders. At the discretion of the supervising pharmacist, a pharmacy technician or a certified pharmacy technician may be allowed to accept new prescription drug orders or medication orders communicated to the pharmacy by a prescriber or by the prescriber's agent if the pharmacy technician or certified pharmacy technician has received appropriate training pursuant to the pharmacy's policies and procedures. The supervising pharmacist shall remain responsible for ensuring the accuracy, validity, and completeness of the information received by the pharmacy technician or certified technician. The pharmacist shall contact the prescriber to resolve any questions, inconsistencies, or other issues relating to the information received by the pharmacy technician or certified technician that involve a pharmacist's professional judgment.

657—3.25(155A) Delegation of nontechnical functions. A pharmacist may delegate nontechnical functions to supportive personnel only if the pharmacist is on site when delegated nontechnical functions are performed. A pharmacy technician shall not delegate technical functions to supportive personnel.

657—3.26 and 3.27 Reserved.

657—3.28(147,155A) Unethical conduct or practice. Violation by a pharmacy technician, certified pharmacy technician, or pharmacy technician trainee of any of the provisions of this rule shall constitute unethical conduct or practice and may be grounds for disciplinary action as provided in rule 3.30(155A).

3.28(1) Misrepresentative deeds. A pharmacy technician, certified technician, or technician trainee shall not make any statement tending to deceive, misrepresent, or mislead anyone, or be a party to or an accessory to any fraudulent or deceitful practice or transaction in pharmacy or in the operation or conduct of a pharmacy.

3.28(2) Confidentiality. In the absence of express written authorization from the patient or written order or direction of a court, except where the best interests of the patient require, a pharmacy technician, certified technician, or technician trainee shall not divulge or reveal to any person other than the patient or the patient's authorized representative, the prescriber or other licensed practitioner then caring for the patient, a licensed pharmacist, a person duly authorized by law to receive such information, or as otherwise provided in rule 657—8.16(124,155A), any of the following:

- a. A patient's name, address, social security number, or any information that could be used to identify a patient;
- b. The contents of any prescription drug order or medication order or the therapeutic effect thereof, or the nature of professional pharmaceutical services rendered to a patient;
- c. The nature, extent, or degree of illness suffered by any patient; or

d. Any medical information furnished by the prescriber or the patient.

3.28(3) Discrimination. It is unethical to unlawfully discriminate between patients or groups of patients for reasons of religion, race, creed, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, or disease state when providing pharmaceutical services.

3.28(4) Unethical conduct or behavior. A pharmacy technician, certified technician, or technician trainee shall not exhibit unethical behavior in connection with the technician's pharmacy employment. Unethical behavior shall include, but is not limited to, the following acts: verbal or physical abuse, coercion, intimidation, harassment, sexual advances, threats, degradation of character, indecent or obscene conduct, and theft.

657—3.29(155A) Denial of registration. The executive director or designee may deny an application for registration as a pharmacy technician, certified pharmacy technician, or pharmacy technician trainee for any violation of the laws of this state, another state, or the United States relating to prescription drugs, controlled substances, or nonprescription drugs or for any violation of Iowa Code chapter 124, 124A, 124B, 126, 147, 155A, or 205 or any rule of the board.

An individual whose application for registration as a pharmacy technician, certified pharmacy technician, or pharmacy technician trainee is denied pursuant to this rule may, within 30 days after issuance of the notice of denial, appeal to the board for reconsideration of the application.

657—3.30(155A) Discipline of pharmacy technicians.

3.30(1) Violations. The board may impose discipline for any violation of the laws of this state, another state, or the United States relating to prescription drugs, controlled substances, or nonprescription drugs, or for any violation of Iowa Code chapter 124, 124A, 124B, 126, 147, 155A, or 205 or any rule of the board.

3.30(2) Sanctions. The board may impose the following disciplinary sanctions:

- a.* Revocation of a pharmacy technician, certified pharmacy technician, or pharmacy technician trainee registration.
- b.* Suspension of a pharmacy technician, certified pharmacy technician, or pharmacy technician trainee registration until further order of the board or for a specified period.
- c.* Nonrenewal of a pharmacy technician or certified pharmacy technician registration.
- d.* Prohibition, permanently, until further order of the board, or for a specified period, from engaging in specified procedures, methods, or acts.
- e.* Probation.
- f.* The ordering of a physical or mental examination.
- g.* The imposition of civil penalties not to exceed \$25,000.
- h.* Issuance of a citation and warning.
- i.* Such other sanctions allowed by law as may be appropriate.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 147.72, 155A.23, 155A.33, and 155A.39 and Iowa Code Supplement sections 155A.6 and 155A.6A.

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