

MASSAGE THERAPISTS

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CHAPTER 131

LICENSURE OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS

[Prior to 6/26/02, see 645—130.4(152C) and 645—130.6(152C)]

645—131.1(152C) Definitions. For purposes of these rules, the following definitions shall apply:

“*Active license*” means a license that is current and has not expired.

“*Board*” means the Iowa board of massage therapy.

“*Grace period*” means the 30-day period following expiration of a license when the license is still considered to be active. In order to renew a license during the grace period, a licensee is required to pay a late fee.

“*Inactive license*” means a license that has expired because it was not renewed by the end of the grace period. The category of “inactive license” may include licenses formerly known as lapsed, inactive, delinquent, closed, or retired.

“*Licensee*” means any person licensed to practice as a massage therapist in the state of Iowa.

“*License expiration date*” means the fifteenth day of the anniversary month every two years.

“*Licensure by endorsement*” means the issuance of an Iowa license to practice massage therapy to an applicant who is or has been licensed in another state.

“*Massage therapy*” means performance for compensation of massage, myotherapy, massotherapy, bodywork, bodywork therapy, or therapeutic massage including hydrotherapy, superficial hot and cold applications, vibration and topical applications, or other therapy which involves manipulation of the muscle and connective tissue of the body, excluding osseous tissue, to treat the muscle tonus system for the purpose of enhancing health, providing muscle relaxation, increasing range of motion, reducing stress, relieving pain, or improving circulation.

“*Reactivate*” or “*reactivation*” means the process as outlined in rule 645—131.14(17A,147,272C) by which an inactive license is restored to active status.

“*Reciprocal license*” means the issuance of an Iowa license to practice massage therapy to an applicant who is currently licensed in another state that has a mutual agreement with the Iowa board of massage therapy to license persons who have the same or similar qualifications to those required in Iowa.

“*Reinstatement*” means the process as outlined in 645—11.31(272C) by which a licensee who has had a license suspended or revoked or who has voluntarily surrendered a license may apply to have the license reinstated, with or without conditions. Once the license is reinstated, the licensee may apply for active status.

645—131.2(152C) Requirements for licensure. All persons acting or serving in the capacity of a massage therapist shall hold a massage therapist’s license issued by the board. The following criteria shall apply to licensure:

131.2(1) The applicant shall complete a board-approved application packet. Application forms may be obtained from the board’s website (www.idph.iowa.gov/licensure) or directly from the board office. All applications shall be sent to Board of Massage Therapy, Professional Licensure Division, Fifth Floor, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075.

131.2(2) The applicant shall complete the application form according to the instructions contained in the application. If the application is not completed according to the instructions, the application will not be reviewed by the board.

131.2(3) Each application shall be accompanied by the appropriate fees payable by check or money order to the Board of Massage Therapy. The fees are nonrefundable.

131.2(4) The applicant shall have official copies of academic transcripts sent directly from the board-approved school to the board of massage therapy. If a school has closed and is no longer operational, the board will accept an official transcript provided by the student.

131.2(5) The board may consider applications on a case-by-case basis which do not appear on their face to meet requirements if the requirements may be alternatively satisfied by demonstrated equivalency. The burden shall be on the applicant to document that the applicant's education and experience are substantially equivalent to the requirements which may be alternatively satisfied.

131.2(6) The applicant shall provide proof of passing any National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) examination or the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx). Proof of passing shall be sent directly from the testing service to the board of massage therapy. The applicant may submit a copy of the official notification from the testing service of the applicant's passing a board-approved examination. The copy of the applicant's official notification may be used by the board as proof of passage of a board-approved examination until the official proof of passage is received directly from the testing service. Submission of the applicant's copy of the official notification from the testing service shall not be allowed in lieu of the applicant's arranging for and the board's receiving the official record of proof of passage sent directly from the testing service. The examination score must be received from the testing service within 60 days of issuance of the license. The passing score on the written examination shall be the passing point criterion established by the national testing authority at the time the test was administered.

131.2(7) Licensees who were issued their licenses within six months prior to the renewal shall not be required to renew their licenses until the renewal month two years later.

131.2(8) Incomplete applications that have been on file in the board office for more than two years shall be considered invalid and shall be destroyed.

131.2(9) The applicant shall provide verification of license(s) from every state in which the applicant has been licensed as a massage therapist, sent directly from the state(s) to the board office.

[ARC 2778C, IAB 10/26/16, effective 11/30/16]

645—131.3(152C) Educational qualifications.

131.3(1) The applicant shall have graduated from a board-approved school that has a minimum of 500 hours of massage therapy education.

131.3(2) Foreign-trained massage therapists shall:

a. Provide an equivalency evaluation of their educational credentials by one of the following: International Educational Research Foundations, Inc., Credentials Evaluation Service, P.O. Box 3665, Culver City, CA 90231-3665, telephone (310)258-9451, website www.ierf.org or email at info@ierf.org; International Credentialing Associates, Inc., 7245 Bryan Dairy Road, Bryan Dairy Business Park II, Largo, FL 33777, telephone (727)549-8555. The professional curriculum must be equivalent to that stated in these rules. A candidate shall bear the expense of the curriculum evaluation.

b. Provide a notarized copy of the certificate or diploma awarded to the applicant from a massage therapy program in the country in which the applicant was educated.

c. Receive a final determination from the board regarding the application for licensure.

131.3(3) An applicant who has relocated to Iowa from a state that did not require licensure to practice the profession may submit proof of work experience in lieu of educational and training requirements, if eligible, in accordance with rule 645—19.2(272C).

[ARC 5769C, IAB 7/14/21, effective 8/18/21]

645—131.4(152C) Examination requirements. The examination required by the board shall be the examination required pursuant to subrule 131.2(6).

131.4(1) The applicant shall apply to the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork.

131.4(2) Results of the examination are mailed directly from the examination service to the board of massage therapy after the applicant takes the examination.

[ARC 2778C, IAB 10/26/16, effective 11/30/16]

645—131.5(152C) Temporary licensure of a licensee from another state.

131.5(1) A temporary license may be issued to an applicant who holds a current license from another state with lower licensure requirements than those in Iowa. The applicant shall:

- a. Submit to the board a completed application;
- b. Pay the licensure fee;
- c. Provide proof of passing any NCBTMB examination or the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx), to be sent directly from the testing service to the board office, if applicable;
- d. Provide official verification of license(s) from every state in which the applicant has been licensed, to be sent directly from the state(s) to the board office;
- e. Submit a plan for meeting the board's requirements for licensure within one year of the issuance of the temporary permit. Such plan shall include proof of enrollment in a school of massage therapy whose curriculum has been approved by the board, the date of enrollment, and the expected date of graduation.

131.5(2) A temporary license shall be valid for a period of up to one year and shall not be renewed.

131.5(3) The applicant shall be issued a permanent license upon receipt of a transcript of completion from a board-approved school sent directly from the school, and proof of passing any board-approved examination sent directly from the testing service to the board office.

131.5(4) There is no additional fee for converting a temporary license to a permanent license.

[ARC 2778C, IAB 10/26/16, effective 11/30/16]

645—131.6(152C) Licensure by endorsement.

131.6(1) An applicant who has been a licensed massage therapist under the laws of another jurisdiction shall file an application for licensure by endorsement with the board office. The board may receive by endorsement any applicant from the District of Columbia or another state, territory, province or foreign country who:

- a. Submits to the board a completed application;
- b. Pays the licensure fee;
- c. Shows evidence of licensure requirements that are similar to those required in Iowa;
- d. Provides official copies of the academic transcripts sent directly from the school to the board;
- e. Provides proof of passing any National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) examination. Proof of passing shall be sent directly from the testing service to the board of massage therapy. The passing score on the written examination shall be the passing point criterion established by the national testing authority at the time the test was administered; and
- f. Provides verification of license(s) from every jurisdiction in which the applicant has been licensed, sent directly from the jurisdiction(s) to the board office. Web-based verification may be substituted for verification direct from the jurisdiction's board office if the verification provides:

- (1) Licensee's name;
- (2) Date of initial licensure;
- (3) Current licensure status; and
- (4) Any disciplinary action taken against the license.

131.6(2) Licensure by verification. A person who is licensed in another jurisdiction but who is unable to satisfy the requirements for licensure by endorsement may apply for licensure by verification, if eligible, in accordance with rule 645—19.1(272C).

[ARC 5769C, IAB 7/14/21, effective 8/18/21]

645—131.7 Reserved.

645—131.8(152C) License renewal.

131.8(1) The biennial license renewal period for a license to practice massage therapy shall begin on the sixteenth day of the anniversary month and end on the fifteenth day of the anniversary month two years later. The licensee is responsible for renewing the license prior to its expiration. Failure of the licensee to receive notice from the board does not relieve the licensee of the responsibility for renewing the license.

131.8(2) An individual who was issued a license within six months of the license renewal date will not be required to renew the license until the subsequent renewal date two years later. Those persons licensed for the first time shall not be required to complete continuing education as a prerequisite for the first renewal of their licenses.

131.8(3) A licensee seeking renewal shall:

a. Meet the continuing education requirements of rule 645—133.2(152C) and the mandatory reporting requirements of subrule 131.8(4). A licensee whose license was reactivated during the current renewal compliance period may use continuing education credit earned during the compliance period for the first renewal following reactivation; and

b. Submit the completed renewal application and renewal fee before the license expiration date.

131.8(4) Mandatory reporter training requirements.

a. A licensee shall indicate on the renewal application completion of training in child abuse identification and reporting, as required by Iowa Code section 232.69(3) “*b*,” in the previous three years if:

(1) In the scope of professional practice or in the licensee’s professional employment responsibilities, the licensee examines, attends, counsels, or treats a child; and

(2) The licensee is employed in any of the following settings:

1. A residential care facility;
2. A nursing facility;
3. An intermediate care facility for persons with mental illness;
4. An intermediate care facility for persons with an intellectual disability;
5. A school;
6. A child care center, registered child development home, or head start program;
7. A substance abuse program or facility licensed by the Iowa department of public health;
8. The Glenwood state resource center, Woodward state resource center, mental health institute in Cherokee, mental health institute in Independence, state training school, or Iowa juvenile home;
9. A juvenile detention center or juvenile shelter care facility;
10. A foster care facility; or
11. A mental health center.

b. A licensee shall indicate on the renewal application completion of training in dependent adult abuse identification and reporting, as required by Iowa Code section 235B.16(5) “*b*,” in the previous three years if:

(1) In the course of employment, the licensee examines, attends, counsels, or treats a dependent adult; and

(2) The licensee is employed in any of the following settings:

1. A residential care facility;
 2. A nursing facility;
 3. An intermediate care facility for persons with mental illness;
 4. An intermediate care facility for persons with an intellectual disability;
 5. A hospital;
 6. An elder group home, as defined in Iowa Code section 231B.1(3);
 7. An assisted living program certified under Iowa Code section 231C.3;
 8. An adult day services program, as defined in Iowa Code section 231D.1(1);
 9. A community mental health center; or
 10. A supported community living service, sheltered workshop, or work activity center.
- c.* The course(s) shall be the curriculum provided by the Iowa department of human services.

d. The licensee shall maintain written documentation for three years after mandatory training as identified in paragraphs 131.8(4)“*a*” to “*c*,” including program date(s), content, duration, and proof of participation.

e. The requirement for mandatory training for identifying and reporting child and dependent adult abuse shall be suspended if the board determines that suspension is in the public interest or that a person at the time of license renewal:

- (1) Is engaged in active duty in the military service of this state or the United States; or
- (2) Holds a current waiver by the board based on evidence of significant hardship in complying with training requirements, including an exemption of continuing education requirements or extension of time in which to fulfill requirements due to a physical or mental disability or illness as identified in rule 645—4.14(272C).

f. The board may select licensees for audit of compliance with the requirements in paragraphs 131.8(4)“*a*” to “*e*.”

131.8(5) Upon receiving the information required by this rule and the required fee, board staff shall administratively issue a two-year license. In the event the board receives adverse information on the renewal application, the board shall issue the renewal license but may refer the adverse information for further consideration or disciplinary investigation.

131.8(6) A person licensed to practice as a massage therapist shall keep the license certificate displayed in a conspicuous public place at the primary site of practice.

131.8(7) Late renewal. The license shall become late when the license has not been renewed by the expiration date on the renewal. The licensee shall be assessed a late fee as specified in 645—subrule 5.8(4). To renew a late license, the licensee shall complete the renewal requirements and submit the late fee within the grace period.

131.8(8) Inactive license. A licensee who fails to renew the license by the end of the grace period has an inactive license. A licensee whose license is inactive continues to hold the privilege of licensure in Iowa, but may not practice as a massage therapist in Iowa until the license is reactivated. A licensee who practices as a massage therapist in the state of Iowa with an inactive license may be subject to disciplinary action by the board, injunctive action pursuant to Iowa Code section 147.83, criminal sanctions pursuant to Iowa Code section 147.86, and other available legal remedies.

[ARC 9430B, IAB 3/23/11, effective 4/27/11; ARC 2778C, IAB 10/26/16, effective 11/30/16; ARC 5097C, IAB 7/15/20, effective 8/19/20; ARC 5769C, IAB 7/14/21, effective 8/18/21]

645—131.9 to 131.13 Reserved.

645—131.14(17A,147,272C) License reactivation. To apply for reactivation of an inactive license, a licensee shall:

131.14(1) Submit a reactivation application on a form provided by the board.

131.14(2) Pay the reactivation fee that is due as specified in 645—Chapter 5.

131.14(3) Provide verification of current competence to practice as a massage therapist by satisfying one of the following criteria:

a. If the license has been on inactive status for five years or less, an applicant must provide the following:

(1) Verification of the license(s) from every jurisdiction in which the applicant is or has been licensed and is or has been practicing during the time period the Iowa license was inactive, sent directly from the jurisdiction(s) to the board office. Web-based verification may be substituted for verification from a jurisdiction’s board office if the verification includes:

1. Licensee’s name;
2. Date of initial licensure;
3. Current licensure status; and
4. Any disciplinary action taken against the license; and

(2) Verification of completion of 16 hours of continuing education within two years of application.

b. If the license has been on inactive status for more than five years, an applicant must provide the following:

(1) Verification of the license(s) from every jurisdiction in which the applicant is or has been licensed and is or has been practicing during the time period the Iowa license was inactive, sent directly from the jurisdiction(s) to the board office. Web-based verification may be substituted for verification from a jurisdiction's board office if the verification includes:

1. Licensee's name;
2. Date of initial licensure;
3. Current licensure status; and
4. Any disciplinary action taken against the license; and

(2) Verification of completion of 16 hours of continuing education within two years of application; and

(3) Verification of passing one of the following examinations offered by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) or the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) within two years immediately prior to the submission of the completed reactivation application. If the applicant can provide proof of two years of active practice in another state as a licensed massage therapist, the applicant is not required to provide proof of passing one of these examinations. The two years of active practice must have occurred immediately prior to the submission of the completed reactivation application.

1. The National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage (NCETM); or
2. The National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCETMB);

or

3. The National Examination for States Licensing (NELS) option; or
4. The Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx).

[ARC 2778C, IAB 10/26/16, effective 11/30/16]

645—131.15(17A,147,272C) License reinstatement. A licensee whose license has been revoked, suspended, or voluntarily surrendered must apply for and receive reinstatement of the license in accordance with 645—11.31(272C) and must apply for and be granted reactivation of the license in accordance with 131.14(17A,147,272C) prior to practicing as a massage therapist in this state.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapters 17A, 147, 152C and 272C.

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[◇] Two or more ARCs