

CHAPTER 1180

MESSAGE THERAPY — ESTABLISHMENT LICENSURE — SOLE PRACTITIONERS — PENALTIES

H.F. 2602

AN ACT relating to the licensure of massage establishments, and making penalties applicable.

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Section 1. Section 152C.1, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new subsections:

NEW SUBSECTION. 1A. “*Establishment*” means a location where massage therapy is practiced. “*Establishment*” does not include any of the following:

- a. A location where massage therapy is provided by a massage therapist at the site of the customer.
- b. Stand-alone devices, including chairs, that are operated by the customer.
- c. A location within a licensed health care facility where a person exempted from this chapter pursuant to section 152C.9, subsection 1, practices the person’s licensed profession or under the prescription of supervision of a licensed person.
- d. A student clinic operated by a school of massage therapy approved by the board.
- e. A location where a sole practitioner practices massage therapy.

NEW SUBSECTION. 5. “*Sole practitioner*” means a massage therapist who provides massage therapy at a location over which the massage therapist exercises physical control and from which only the massage therapist offers and provides massage therapy.

Sec. 2. Section 152C.4, subsection 1, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

The board, or its authorized agents, may inspect any facility establishment that advertises or offers the services of massage therapy. The board may, by order, impose a civil penalty upon a person who practices as a massage therapist without a license issued under this chapter, or a person or business that employs an individual who is not licensed under this chapter, or a person who operates an establishment without a license. The penalty shall not exceed one thousand dollars for each offense. Each day of a continued violation after an order or citation by the board constitutes a separate offense, with the maximum penalty not to exceed ten thousand dollars. In determining the amount of a civil penalty, the board may consider the following:

Sec. 3. Section 152C.5B, subsection 2, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

2. A person licensed or who purports to be licensed under this chapter shall, upon the request of any peace officer investigating a complaint of illegal services, present a copy of the person’s valid Iowa massage therapist license, a valid establishment license, if applicable, and a government-issued identification to the peace officer. A person who violates this subsection commits a serious misdemeanor.

Sec. 4. Section 152C.7, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

152C.7 Suspension and revocation of licenses.

The board may suspend, revoke, or impose probationary conditions upon a license issued pursuant to rules adopted in accordance with ~~section 152C.3~~ this chapter.

Sec. 5. **NEW SECTION. 152C.10 Establishment license.**

1. a. Beginning January 1, 2027, an establishment shall not operate unless the owner has obtained a license issued by the board. The owner shall apply to the board on forms prescribed by the board. The board may perform a sanitary inspection of an establishment prior to the issuance of a license and may perform a sanitary inspection of each establishment biennially. An inspection of an establishment may also be conducted upon receipt of a complaint by the board.

b. The board shall require the owner of an establishment to provide fingerprints to the board and shall submit the fingerprints to the federal bureau of investigation through the state criminal history repository for the purpose of a national criminal history check, except that the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing may adopt rules exempting a person who has previously submitted fingerprints to the federal bureau of investigation through the state criminal history repository for the purpose of a national criminal history check as part of an application for a license to practice massage therapy.

2. The application must be accompanied by the license fee determined pursuant to section 147.80. The license is valid for a period as determined by the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing by rule and may be renewed.

3. The board may deny an application for an establishment license if the applicant is any of the following:

a. A massage therapist who is not in good standing with the board or whose license is currently suspended.

b. A person who is under criminal investigation or who has a criminal history determined by the board to be disqualifying. The board may also consider criminal investigations and histories of owners and officers of an applicant that is a legal person. Disqualifying criminal acts include but are not limited to human trafficking as described in section 710A.2, sexual exploitation of a minor as described in section 728.12, sexual abuse as defined in section 709.1, money laundering as described in section 706B.2, child abuse as defined in section 232.68, and dependent adult abuse as defined in section 235B.2.

4. The board may revoke an establishment license based upon public complaint, upon receiving evidence of misconduct or disqualifying criminal acts at the establishment, or if the board discovers that the application for the establishment license was fraudulent.

5. The board may take emergency action to suspend the license of an establishment if the board learns of pending criminal charges against an establishment owner or officer. An establishment shall not operate with a suspended license.

6. An establishment shall keep records for a period of three years from the date the record is created, which shall include all of the following:

a. The name and license number of each massage therapist who has worked at the establishment.

b. A calendar or schedule of appointments and receipts which shall include the name of each client, and the name of each massage therapist who provided massage therapy to the client.

c. Any other records required by the board by rule.

7. A school of massage therapy teaching a massage therapy curriculum approved by the board is exempt from licensing as an establishment.

8. The board shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A to implement this section, which shall include all of the following:

a. A process for the evaluation of applications and the issuance of establishment licenses.

b. Requirements for adequate, safe, and sanitary establishments.

c. Requirements for compliance with state and local building, fire, and health codes necessary to ensure the safe and effective practice of massage therapy.

d. Requirements for retention of client and ownership records.

e. Requirements for initial and periodic sanitary inspections of establishments.

f. Requirements for the transfer of an establishment license.

Approved June 2, 2026