



### **FAQs of the new and amended massage rules**

The Board of Massage and the Department of Health recently enacted amendments and added new rules to [chapter 246-830 WAC](#) – Massage Practitioners. These became effective July 30, 2017. Below are some of the frequently asked questions we have received regarding these changes.

Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of the changes. We encourage you to review the entire chapter of rules.

Violations of rule may subject a massage therapist's credential to disciplinary action.

#### **Do I need to change all my advertisements to reflect the title change from LMP to LMT?**

##### **[WAC 246-830-015 – Professional Title](#)**

Yes. A new rule was adopted in response to Substitute [House Bill 2425](#) which was passed during the 2016 legislative session. Effective July 1, 2017, all references to "massage practitioner" were changed to "massage therapist." Any advertisements using the abbreviation LMP must be changed to LMT. We do understand that some of these changes (such as new business cards or signs) may require some time.

#### **Do I qualify for a Washington massage license if I am licensed in another state?**

##### **[WAC 246-830-035 – Licensing for out-of-state applicants](#) (formerly *Licensing without examination*)**

A massage therapist applicant holding a massage license in another state or foreign jurisdiction may be granted a Washington massage license if:

- Their education and training is substantially equivalent, as defined in the rule, to Washington State's and
- Their massage license is active and in good standing.

If there is a gap in practice of three or more years immediately prior to applying for a Washington State massage license then the applicant must provide documentation of 24 hours of hands on delivery of massage therapy services

#### **Do I have to complete a full board-approved massage program if I already partially or fully completed a massage training program but don't meet current education and training requirements?**

##### **[WAC 246-830-037 – Transfer programs and transfer of prior education and clock hours](#)**

Not necessarily. In order to recognize prior education that is applicable to licensure as a massage therapist, the board adopted rules to allow board-approved massage programs to establish transfer programs that accept an individual's hours earned at a school that has not been approved by the board.

Note: As the board and the department establish a process for approving transfer programs, existing board-approved schools may continue to accept transfer credits through November 15,

2017, without penalty. The department will continue to process applications for applicants who transferred hours to a board-approved program on or before November 15, 2017. Students who begin instruction after November 15 with a school that does not have an approved transfer program will **not** be allowed to count the transferred hours toward meeting the licensure requirement.

A special meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2017, specifically related to applications received for approval to offer a transfer program. Applications the board receives on or before November 15 will be presented at the board's meeting in December.

**I want to obtain the additional training to perform breast massage. What credential(s) does an instructor need in order to teach a breast massage class?**

[WAC 246-830-555 – Breast massage](#)

The rule does not specify any credential requirements for the course instructor. It is up to practitioners to make sure the training they are receiving meets the subject requirements in WAC 246-830-555(2).

**Do I have to get consent to undrape a man's chest?**

[WAC 246-830-560 – Coverage and draping](#)

Yes. The rule applies to all clients and patients, regardless of sexual identification.

**How often do I have to get written consent?**

The intention of getting written consent is for clients or patients to know what they are consenting to. The rules intentionally do not address the frequency of receiving client or patient consent. It is up to therapist to make their own professional determination, based upon whether a client or patient's condition and/or treatment regimen change.

**Do I have to do recordkeeping if I'm going to see a client only one time?**

[WAC 246-830-565 – Recordkeeping](#)

Yes. A massage therapist must document any professional services provided, regardless of the practice setting. This includes, but is not limited to, medical massage, therapeutic massage, and chair massage. The rule provides flexibility for different practice settings. Therapists are not required to do SOAP notes under this rule, and may, depending on the type of massage, use simple fill-in-the-blank, check-box, or circle options for gathering patient data.

**Do I have to keep my records and for how long?**

[WAC 246-830-570 – Record retention](#)

Yes. Records must be retained as follows:

- For clients or patients 18 years of age and older, records must be retained for at least three years from the date of last treatment.
- For clients or patients under the age of 18, records must be retained for at least three years after the client or patient reaches 18 years old.

A massage therapist must also comply with record retention requirements of [chapter 70.02 RCW](#) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.