



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Olympia, Washington 98504

NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF A POLICY STATEMENT

Title of Policy Statement: Continuing Education Requirements During the COVID-19 Response. | Policy Number: BOM 20-01.2

Issuing Entity: Board of Massage

Subject Matter: The Board of Massage has extended the policy addressing the impact COVID-19 response measures are having on licensed massage therapists regarding meeting continuing medical education (CE) requirements until December 31, 2021.

Effective Date: July 1, 2021

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**Department of Health
Health Systems Quality Assurance
Board of Massage**

Policy Statement

Revised – 10/18/11

Title:	Continuing Education Requirements During the COVID-19 Response	Number: BOM 20-01.2
References:	RCW 18.108.010 ; RCW 18.108.025 ; WAC 246-12-210 ; WAC 246-830-475 ; Proclamations 20-05 , 20-14 , 20-24 , and 20-25	
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Approved By:	Heidi Williams, LMT Chair, Washington State Board of Massage	

To address the difficulties related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic that impact licensed massage therapists with regard to meeting continuing education (CE) requirements in Washington State, and in accordance with WAC 246-12-210 the Washington State Board of Massage (Board) will allow a licensed massage therapist (LMT) to substitute any or all “direct supervised massage skills training” hours required in WAC 246-830-475(1)(a) with equivalent number of hours in any activities listed in WAC 246-830-475(2)(a)-(h).

[WAC 246-830-475](#) requires LMTs to complete 24 hours of continuing education every two years. Subsection (1)(a) requires that eight hours be direct supervised massage skills training. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the ability of LMTs to meet these CE requirements and has particularly impacted the availability of direct supervised massage skills training CE.

[RCW 18.108.025](#)(1)(e) gives the Board the authority to establish and administer requirements for CE. Chapter 246-12 WAC regulates healthcare practitioners credentialed under the Uniform Disciplinary Act; an LMT is a health care practitioner subject to the Act. WAC 246-12-210 states: “A practitioner may be excused from or granted an extension of continuing education requirements due to illness or other extenuating circumstances. The profession’s regulatory entity determines when the requirements may be waived or may grant an extension.” The Board is the regulatory entity with authority to make determinations about continuing education requirements for LMTs.

As the spread of COVID-19 continues the Center for Disease and Prevention (CDC) guidance encourages the restriction of large gatherings. The Governor issued Proclamation 20-25.6 Stay Home—Stay Healthy requires people to engage in personal protective behaviors to suppress the spread of COVID-19, and as the state begins its phased reopening under the Governor’s [Safe Start Washington](#) plan, the practice of social distancing remains a primary tool in curbing the spread of COVID-19 to the state’s most vulnerable populations. Adhering to this guidance limits direct supervised massage skills training for LMTs to obtain CE.

To address the difficulties related to the COVID-19 pandemic and obtaining direct supervised massage skills training to meet CE requirements, and in accordance with WAC 246-12-210, the board makes the following allowances:

To renew their massage license, a massage therapist must complete twenty-four hours of continuing education every two years.

1. A minimum four hours must be in professional ethics, communication, or Washington state massage laws and regulations. Two of these hours must include professional roles and boundaries.
2. The eight hours of direct supervised massage skills training required in WAC 246-830-475(1)(a) may be waived and instead 20 hours, rather than 12, may be met by completing any combination of the subjects listed in subsection (2) of [WAC 246-830-475](#).

This policy does not require an LMT to obtain direct supervised massage skills training as part of their continuing education, even if this education is available.

In addition, there may be situations where an LMT is still unable to meet these temporary requirements due to illness or other extenuating circumstances. The Board will continue to exercise its authority in WAC 246-12-210 to review extenuating circumstances that may prevent an LMT from meeting his or her CE requirements. The Board may waive requirements or grant extensions as a result of illness or other extenuating circumstances.

An LMT whose license expiration date does not fall within the effective dates of the policy will not be found non-compliant with their CE if they obtain their CE hours in accordance with the allowances of this policy while it is in effect.

This policy will be in effect through December 31, 2021, or until the declared state of emergency issued under Proclamation 20-05 is rescinded, whichever is later. The policy will be re-evaluated at the November 5, 2021 board meeting to determine if an extension of the effective dates is necessary.