



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Facility Services**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Approved EMS Educational Institutions

**FROM:** Drexdal Pratt, Chief  
Office of Emergency Medical Services

**SUBJECT:** Localizing Scope of Practice Evaluations

**DATE:** November 25, 2002

Pending adoption of the new educational curricula and credentialing guidelines, the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) has determined the need to modify the credentialing process for EMS personnel. This process will apply for the initial credentialing of all EMS levels that have previously required a skills examination, and will become effective for students scheduled for a credentialing examination after January 1, 2003.

The recent changes in statute and rule allow the OEMS greater flexibility in how it can conduct credentialing evaluations. Under the previous statute, EMS personnel were required to successfully complete both practical skills and written examinations. The OEMS is modifying this to now recognize the written examination as the only required credentialing examination. The skills evaluation is now considered a component of the EMS personnel's educational requirements that must be completed as a scope of practice evaluation prior to registering to take the written credentialing exam.

After January 1, 2003, the only individuals that should be taking a skills examination at a regional exam site are those that are either retaking prior failed skills stations, students whose course ended prior to implementing the scope of practice evaluation, or those challenging a state credentialing examination outside of an approved educational program. Individuals who have already begun the credentialing process using the state administered practical skills examination, but because of failure must retake one or more practical stations, will be required to complete the credentialing process using the state administered skills.

Previously, the OEMS recognized state or locally administered skills examinations to be valid for a period of 12 months. Effective immediately, this policy is being revised. The OEMS will still allow individuals enrolled in a continuing education program to receive credit for skills evaluation conducted within the



preceding 12 months; however, this must be reflected on the student's application form. All educational programs must conduct the scope of practice evaluation prior to submitting the student's application materials to the OEMS.

It is anticipated that initial EMT-Defibrillation courses will be most affected by this change. Because of the minimal number of hours required for this course, teaching institutions are encouraged to add additional time to allow for scope of practice evaluations.

A document entitled "Procedure for Transitional Scope of Practice Evaluations" is attached to provide more detail to the issues addressed in this letter. If you have any questions regarding these procedures, please feel free to contact one of the following agency staff.

**Western Regional EMS Office**

John Tartt, Regional Specialist

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**Central Regional EMS Office**

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**Eastern Regional EMS Office**

Michael Cobb, Regional Specialist

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Attachment

cc: OEMS Staff

## Procedure for Transitional Scope of Practice Evaluations

Recent legislative changes related to Emergency Medical Services in North Carolina have affected every aspect of the profession. Educational programs were largely effected and the transition continues as new procedures, program structures, and curricula are considered.

The purpose of this document is to describe the transitional procedures for execution of scope of practice evaluations as required for EMS credentialing. The process described in this document will be replaced when more qualitative scope of practice evaluations have been developed and validated. Future scope of practice evaluations will improve on current independent skills evaluations in that they will be a more accurate assessment of the students' critical thinking skills and ability to function at the level of their credential. Educational institutions should expect level-specific scope of practice evaluations to be implemented after final decisions are made with regard to curricula and related issues.

During the interim period, educational institutions should follow the process described in this document to evaluate students' scope of practice. These scope of practice evaluations, previously known commonly as skills evaluations, have been a part of the credentialing process for EMS in North Carolina for many years. The process described below is the first phase of education program changes that take scope of practice evaluations from the credentialing exam into the education process. Successful completion of these evaluations is no longer a part of the credentialing examination, but has become a prerequisite for the credentialing exam.

### **Evaluation Instruments**

Scope of practice evaluations accomplished as part of an initial EMS education program for medical responder, EMT, EMT-D, EMT-I or EMT-P must be conducted using the current criteria contained within the six OEMS practical station check sheets. Pass/fail criteria are detailed on the check sheets and should be adhered to during the evaluations. All students must successfully complete a scope of practice evaluation for the level of EMS credentialing application prior completing the initial EMS education program.

### **Conducting the Evaluation**

The scope of practice evaluations must be offered as part of an approved EMS education program. Evaluations must be conducted under the direction of the Level I EMS instructor designated as lead instructor for the course. It is preferable that persons conducting the actual evaluations be a Level I EMS instructor and also an OEMS state approved EMS evaluator. If an EMS educational institution does not have access to an adequate number of persons meeting this requirement, persons designated as an OEMS state approved evaluator may assist with the evaluations under the direction of a Level I EMS instructor who is either an OEMS state approved evaluator or who has completed an OEMS approved evaluator workshop. The administratively responsible person at the EMS educational institution must approve persons used for the evaluation process.

### **Documentation of Scope of Practice Evaluations**

EMS educational institutions must keep documentation of scope of practice evaluations for all persons that successfully complete the course. Documentation must verify successful completion of the scope of practice evaluation to OEMS staff who may monitor course records. Records should remain at the EMS educational institution for a minimum of one year after the course end date.

### **Submission of Application Materials to the OEMS**

EMS educational institutions must continue to submit a completed “Application Header” and “Credentialing Applications” for persons who successfully complete the course and who are being recommended to take an OEMS credentialing examination. Applications submitted for persons who plan to sit for the state administered written exam should include an indication that the educational scope of practice was successfully completed and the date of the evaluation in the appropriate section of the application. The Level I EMS instructor of the course must sign the statement verifying successful completion on the application.

Individuals who have already started the credentialing process using the state administered practical skills examination, but because of failure must retake one or more practical stations, will be required to complete the credentialing process using the state administered skills at a designated regional exam site. These individuals will not be eligible to use the local scope of practice evaluation options to complete the credentialing process. Also, individuals who have previously completed an approved course but who have not started the credentialing process must complete all credentialing requirements at a designated regional exam site.

### **National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)**

The OEMS recognizes the NREMT exam as an approved credentialing examination. There may be some EMS educational institutions that want to offer their students a credentialing process for the NREMT. Individuals may take the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) examination for their level of application. Upon verification that the individual has successfully completed the NREMT examination, he/she is eligible to apply for a four-year North Carolina credential. EMS educational institutions must follow the same procedures outlined in the “**Submission of Application Materials to the OEMS**” section of this document. In addition, a copy of the applicant’s NREMT credential must be attached to the applicant’s materials. EMS educational institutions interested in pursuing this option should contact the appropriate OEMS Educational Liaison for further direction.