



Communiqué

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512/305-6900

What's New in the New 2005 PT Rules

The newest edition of the PT Rules for 2005 is being mailed to each licensee with this newsletter, and is already available online. The Board no longer mails rules to licensees on a regular basis, due to the cost and the increasing availability of the web. However, agency finances allowed for the printing and mailing of newsletters and rules this fiscal year.

All rule changes made by the board are posted at the agency's website, www.ecptote.state.tx.us. The Board meets three or four times a year. Rules proposed or adopted by the Board at those meetings will be posted after each meeting. Please check the website for the dates of the upcoming meetings, if you want to know when to expect other action to be posted.

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If you have put your email address on the voluntary email notification list (also on the agency's website), you will receive an email whenever the Board proposes or adopts a new rule.



Rule changes made between January 2004 and August 2005

§323.4 Application Review Committee (repealed)

Questions about applications will now go to the Education Committee or the Rules & Practice Committee, as appropriate.

§329.5 Licensing Procedures for Foreign-trained Applicants

The amendments eliminated references to superseded procedures and clarified that exam registration materials will not be sent to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy until the applicant arrives in the US.

§341.1. Requirements for Renewal *(This amendment is proposed for adoption on 9/26/05)*

The amendments updated the description of the renewal process to include online renewals and postcard notifications to the licensee.

§341.2. Continuing Education Requirements

§341.3. Qualifying Continuing Education

The amendments standardized terms used and the length of time records must be retained by the licensee and the program sponsor; established clearer descriptions of the types of acceptable continuing education and what standards each type must meet to satisfy board requirements; established several new categories of CE, changed how CE credit is calculated for certain types of self-directed study, and gave TPTA more power to enforce the Board's requirements. *(continued on next page)*

§341.20. Licensees Called to Active Military Service *(This amendment is proposed for adoption on 9/26/05)*

The amendments extended the waiver of continuing education to all licensees who are called to active duty while serving in the military reserves, and clarified how the waiver will be applied.

§346.1. Educational Settings

The amendment corrected an out of date reference to another board rule.

§346.3. Early Childhood (ECI) Setting

The amendment corrected the name of Developmental Services in the ECI setting.

The Executive Council of PT & OT Examiners has raised fees on the following transactions, effective September 1, 2005.

§651.2 Physical Therapy Board Fees

PT applications - \$170
PTA applications - \$116
PT Temporary Licenses - \$80
PTA Temporary Licenses - \$60
Additional Facility Applications - \$124
Additional Facility Renewals - \$126

§651.3 Administrative Fees

Verification/Transfer of Licensure - \$50
Duplicate/Replacement License - \$30
Duplicate Renewal Certificate/Wallet Card - \$30
Duplicate of Facility Registration Certificate - \$30

Frequent Answer #1

PTs may accept REFERRALS from other STATES, and even other COUNTRIES, as long as the referral source is authorized to refer by that state or country.



Alphabet Soup

Professional Titles and Degree Designations

IF U CN RD THS, U MST B A PRFSSNL

A few years ago, the count of different degree designations (BSPT, MSPT, MPT, etc.) in Physical Therapy was up to 18. As the profession evolved and more programs offered more degrees, the names of the degrees proliferated, reflective of each university's unique outline. On the other hand, the initials that allow you to practice physical therapy in Texas – the ONLY initials authorized by the PT Practice Act – have changed only once in 33 years.

Originally, LPT and LPTA were the standard designation, with the “L” standing for Licensed. Some PTs and PTAs who have been practicing for many years continue to put the letter “L” in front of their professional initials. However, the Board has not recognized those initials in 20 years and there is no legal reason for that initial letter “L”.

Since the loss of the L, PT (or PTA) has been the only legal abbreviation for physical therapist or physical therapist assistant. These are the initials you should put immediately after your name when you are signing a treatment note, or on your badge or nameplate. As the rule has stated for some time:

§335.1. Licensed Physical Therapist/Licensed Physical Therapist Assistant.

The licensed physical therapist may use the title physical therapist with the initials PT. The licensed physical therapist assistant may use the title physical therapist assistant with the initials PTA.

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DEGREE LEADS TO LICENSE, LICENSE AUTHORIZES PRACTICE

In the last five years, the Board has seen a great increase in the number of people who put the letters designating their degree in physical therapy in place of the appropriate licensure title initials. Most of those people are recent graduates with MPTs (entry-level masters degrees) or DPTs (entry-level doctorates). But a degree is only part of what allows the Board to grant a license; it doesn't automatically give the holder the right to practice. The law gives a title to the licensed professional to signal that he or she met all of the requirements, which include passage of the licensure examination. A person with an MPT may be a "master of physical therapy", but that's not the title designated in the law. By law, regardless of whether Jane Doe got a bachelor's degree in 1963 or a doctorate in 2005, she is Jane Doe, PT.

Still want to include your degree in your professional name? Those letters should be in addition to your legal title designation when you are writing or signing your name professionally. And the degree initials should follow the professional initials, just as specialty certification initials do. Put as many sets of initials after your name as you like once you have earned them. Just make sure the initials that make you legal are the first ones after your name.

Frequent Answer #2

UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE COURSES used as CE for RENEWAL must be APPROVED BY TPTA.

⌘ Rodriguez Joins the Board; Thompson Extends

In May, the Governor appointed Melinda Rodriguez, PT (San Antonio) to replace Patrice Jones, PT, who resigned in December 2004. Ms. Rodriguez' term will expire January 31, 2009. Ms. Rodriguez is the CEO and Administrator of Access Quality Therapy Services (AQTS), a San Antonio-based home health and outpatient rehabilitation agency which specializes in the treatment of neurological and orthopedic conditions. Ms. Rodriguez expects to complete her doctorate in Physical Therapy from Boston University in 2007.

The Governor also extended by two years the term of Mary Thompson, PT, PhD, GCS, who was appointed to the Board in 1999. Dr. Thompson, who currently serves as Chair of the Board's Education Committee, is Associate Professor and Director of Post Professional Studies at the Dallas campus of Texas Woman's University. The extension of Dr. Thompson's appointment corrects the Board's appointment cycle so that three board members (two professional, one public) are appointed every two years.

Frequent Answers #3 and #4

- **PTs or PTAs who need to RESTORE an expired license in Texas must have been ACTIVELY WORKING as a PT or PTA for the past TWO years.**
- **ON CALL means immediately available by phone or pager; READILY AVAILABLE means able to RESPOND IN PERSON within a reasonable amount of time if necessary. There are no set time and distance limits; circumstances particular to each situation must be taken into account.**



Disciplinary Action Taken by the Board On May 4, 2005

The Board votes on disciplinary actions at each board meeting. The actions taken at each meeting are reported in the newsletter that follows that meeting. All newsletters since Spring 2001 are available at <http://www.ecptote.state.tx.us/pt/newsletter.html>.

1. **Jaime Moreno, PT #1086924 (Corpus Christi)** – failed to properly supervise the provision of physical therapy services by an unlicensed individual. Violation of §453.351 of the Act and Chapter 322 of the Board Rules. **Board Order required fifteen (15) hours of community service.**
2. **Terry Sablatura, PT #1026581 (Columbus)** – provided physical therapy services in a facility that was not properly registered. Violation of §453.351 of the Act and Chapter 322 of the Board Rules. **Board Order required thirty (30) hours of community service.**

Frequent Answer #5

Only a PT may direct a PTA to SCREEN patients; a PTA must report screen results DIRECTLY TO THE PT.



Finding Out the Hard Way *CE Audit Info*

Think that once you have been audited for renewal CE compliance you never have to worry about being audited again? Some people do seem to think that's the case, and have chosen to ignore the CE requirements after having gone through a successful audit for a previous renewal. In reality, you might get picked by the luck of the draw whenever the license numbers are randomly selected for the quarterly audit. Though the odds might be against it, you can be a winner more than once – as more than one licensee has discovered.

If professional responsibility and personal ethics aren't enough to motivate you to meet the CE requirements before you renew your license, maybe common sense should be. If you are caught with your CE out of order in the audit, you face disciplinary action from community service to license suspension or revocation.

Frequent Answers #6 and #7

- **A REFERRAL has NO AUTOMATIC EXPIRATION DATE set by the board, unless it is a PRIOR referral.**
- **ANYONE may be authorized to take a VERBAL ORDER – as long as there a PROCESS ESTABLISHED to make sure they DO IT RIGHT.**



Online Renewal Reminders

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

If you go online to renew your license, and you find that your name, or the spelling of your name, is not correct, do not complete the online renewal process. Stop and contact the agency first (email or fax) to make the correction. We can have the corrected spelling online in 2-4 days. If you do not notify us, we will mail your renewal certificate with a name or spelling error. If you notify us later, we will have to print and mail a second renewal certificate – at a \$30 cost to you. So please make sure your name is correct BEFORE you renew.

HOW LATE IS TOO LATE?

Waiting until the last minute (or day or hour) before your license expires to renew your license online is a gamble. Your computer may not work, your internet service might be down. The State's online renewal system may be unavailable due to scheduled or emergency maintenance during the night. Any of these events can result in a late renewal, which means you cannot work and you may owe a late fee. What to do? The best advice: Don't wait until the very last minute to renew. But if you do, you may want to consider a paper renewal process to avoid the online hurdles mentioned above. Although your renewal certificate may not arrive until after the first of the month, your renewal will not be late if the postmark date on the envelope is before the first of the month – and that means no late fee. But remember, even with overnight mail, last minute renewal may mean days you cannot work since you will not have a current renewal certificate in hand. If you do decide to take the paper renewal route, there is a blank renewal form on the website, which you can print out and mail. Go to the PT Renewals page at www.ecptote.state.tx.us for more information.

State Offers Free Advertising to PTs and PTAs *Professional Profiles Online*

YOU ARE ONLINE 24/7

How do consumers find a health professional, such as a doctor or a PT? A referral or the yellow pages are the two primary ways. In 2004, the State of Texas added a third avenue when it decreed that professional information about various professional and occupational license holders should be available online for the public. PTs and PTAs – and registered PT facilities - were among those professionals chosen for online profiles. The Board provides the basic information about each individual or registered facility with a current license to Texas Online, the division of the Dept. of Information Resources responsible for the state's web services. That information is available to consumers, and to licensees who need to manage their profile, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

MAKE YOUR PROFILE MORE "ATTRACTIVE" – NO SURGERY REQUIRED

The Board only collects and provides the most basic information about each licensee. Our information includes a business address, when you got your license in Texas and when it expires, and whether you have had any disciplinary action against your license. Not enough to give the consumer a professional picture of you. If you work in a hospital, school, or other similar setting, you may not care. However, if you are a PT in private practice, adding voluntary information into your online profile enhances your outreach. When a consumer goes online to look for a PT, they can search by the following categories: Types of insurance you accept; Specialty certifications; Practice settings; Translation Services; and more. You can also add a link to your own website. *(continued on next page)*

ACCESS AND ADD TO YOUR PROFILE INFORMATION

Getting to the "Licensee Profile Management" page on the State's online system is easy – just go to the Board's web page and select "Update your profile" under Online Services. That link takes you directly there. You will need your license number and SSN to access your profile. Once you are in, you can add and edit all of the information mentioned above. You cannot edit your address or other information held by the Board. If you see an error, or need to make an update to existing information, such as an address, contact the Board at info@ecptote.state.tx.us, or 512/305-6900.

Frequent Answers #8 and #9

- PTs and PTAs who work in MORE THAN ONE FACILITY should keep a copy of their LICENSE ON FILE (not on the wall) at the other facilities.
- Patients must be reevaluated AT LEAST ONCE every 30 days, meaning on OR BEFORE the 30th day after the first treatment.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Executive Council of PT & OT Examiners Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners

www.ecptote.state.tx.us

512/305-6900 (voice)

512/305-6951 (fax)

Texas PT Association (TPTA)

*CE course approval, list of approved courses

www.tpta.org 512/477-1818

American PT Association (APTA)

www.apta.org 800/999-2782

Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT)

*Score transfers; Links to PT Boards in the US

www.fsbpt.org 703/739-9420

TX Dept. of State Health Services (TSHS)

*Licensing and certification of all Health and Safety Code facilities (including hospitals), and of many other health professions

www.dshs.state.tx.us 512/834-6650

TX Dept. of Aging & Disability Services (DADS)

www.dads.state.tx.us

*long term care 800/458-9858

*nursing home 800/252-8016

*home health agency 800/228-1570

Texas Council on Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

www.eci.state.tx.us 800/250-2246

TX Education Agency (TEA)

www.tea.state.tx.us 512/463-9734

TX Workers' Comp Commission (TWCC)

www.twcc.state.tx.us 512/804-4000

TWCC is transitioning to TDI on 9/1/05 (see below)

Division of Workers' Compensation at the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI)

<http://www.tdi.state.tx.us> 800/578-4677

State of Texas website - links to all state info

www.texasonline.com

MEDICARE & MEDICAID QUESTIONS

Trailblazer Health Enterprises

www.the-medicare.com

Medicare Part A 888/763-9836

(rehab depts, hospitals)

Medicare Part B 903/463-0720

(independent practitioners)

Medicaid 800/252-8263