

COUNTY OF VENTURA HEALTH CARE AGENCY		EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	
Policy Title: Continuing Education for EMS Personnel		Policy Number 1133	
APPROVED: Administration:	Steve L. Carroll, Paramedic	Date: June 1, 2018	
APPROVED: Medical Director:	Daniel Shepherd, M.D.	Date: June 1, 2018	
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- I. **PURPOSE:** To identify acceptable continuing education topics for prehospital providers, in addition to outlining acceptable delivery formats and limitations related to continuing education.
- II. **AUTHORITY:** California Health and Safety Code – Title 22, Division 2.5, Sections 1797 – 1799.207; California Code of Regulations – Title 22, Division 9, Chapter 11.
- III. **DEFINITIONS:**

**EMS Continuing Education Provider:** EMS Continuing Education Provider means an individual or organization approved by the requirements of VCEMS Policy 1130 – Continuing Education Provider Approval to conduct continuing education courses, classes, activities or experiences and issue earned continuing education hours to EMS Personnel for the purposes of maintaining certification/licensure or re-establishing lapsed certification or licensure.

**Continuing Education (CE):** A course, class, activity, or experience designed to be educational in nature, with learning objectives and performance evaluations for the purpose of providing EMS personnel with reinforcement of basic EMS training as well as knowledge to enhance individual and system proficiency in the practice of pre-hospital emergency medical care.

**Continuing Education Unit (CEU):** Shall be any one of the following:

  1. Every fifty minutes of approved classroom or skills laboratory activity.
  2. Each hour of structured clinical or field experience when monitored by a preceptor assigned by an EMS training program, EMS service provider, or receiving/base hospital.
  3. Each hour of media based / serial production CE as approved by VCEMS
- IV. **POLICY:**
  - A. CE Provider Approving Authority

1. VCEMS shall be the agency responsible for approving EMS Continuing Education Providers whose headquarters are located within the County of Ventura, if not otherwise approved by an item listed below.
    - a. Courses and/or CE providers approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Prehospital Continuing Education (formerly CECBEMS) or approved by EMS offices of other states are approved for use in California and need no further approval.
    - b. Courses in physical, social or behavioral sciences (e.g., anatomy, physiology, sociology, psychology) offered by accredited colleges and universities are approved for CE and need no further approval.
      - 1) Ten (10) CEHs will be awarded for each academic quarter unit
      - 2) Fifteen (15) CEHs will be awarded for each academic semester unit
      - 3) Unofficial transcripts from the accredited college / university shall be the only method of verification when issuing CEH for these types of courses.
    - c. The California EMS Authority shall be the agency responsible for approving CE providers for statewide public safety agencies and CE providers whose headquarters are located out-of-state if not otherwise approved according to one of the above items.
  - B. Continuing Education Topics
    1. Continuing education for EMS personnel shall be in any of the topics contained in the respective National Standard Curricula for training EMS personnel, including advanced topics in subject matter outside the scope of practice of the certified or licensed EMS personnel but directly relevant to emergency medical care (e.g. surgical airway procedures).
  - C. Continuing Education Delivery Formats
    1. Classroom - didactic and/or skills laboratory where direct interaction with instructor is possible.
    2. Organized field care audits of base hospital communication and/or patient care records;
    3. Courses offered by accredited universities and colleges, including junior and community colleges;
    4. Structured clinical experience, with instructional objectives, to review or expand the clinical expertise of the individual.
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5. Media based and/or serial productions (e.g. films, videos, audiotape programs, magazine articles offered for CE credit, home study, computer simulations or interactive computer modules).
  6. Precepting EMS students or EMS personnel as a field preceptor or as a hospital clinical preceptor, as assigned by an approved EMS training program, an authorized EMS service provider, or as a receiving/base hospital that is approved as a continuing education provider, in accordance with VCEMS Policy 1130.
    - a. CE for precepting can only be given for actual time precepting a student and must be issued by the EMS training program or EMS service provider that has an agreement or contract with the field preceptor or with the preceptor's employer.
    - b. In order to issue CE for precepting EMS students or EMS personnel, an EMS service provider must be a CE provider approved in accordance with VCEMS Policy 1130.
  7. Precepting EMS students or EMS personnel as a hospital clinical preceptor, as assigned by an EMS training program, an EMS service provider, or a receiving/base hospital that is approved as a CE provider program in accordance with VCEMS Policy 1130.
    - a. In order to issue CE for precepting EMS students or EMS personnel, an EMS service provider, hospital or alternate base station must be a CE provider approved according to this Chapter.
    - b. CE for precepting can only be given for actual time spent precepting a student or EMS personnel and must be issued by the EMS training program, EMS service provider, or receiving/base hospital that has an agreement or contract with the hospital clinical preceptor or with the preceptor's employer.
- D. Limitations
1. CE courses shall not be approved for less than one hour of credit.
    - a. For CE courses greater than one (1) CEH, credit may be granted in no less than half-hour increments.
  2. No more than twelve (12) hours of continuing education, in any form, will be accepted within any twenty-four (24) hour period.
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3. An individual may receive credit for taking the same CE course/class/activity no more than two times during a single certification or licensure cycle.
  4. At least fifty percent of the required CE hours must be in a format that is instructor based, which means that instructor resources are readily available to the student to answer questions, provide feedback, provide clarification, and address concerns (e.g., on-line CE courses where an instructor is available to the student).
    - a. This provision shall not include precepting or magazine articles for CE credit. VCEMS will determine whether a CE course, class or activity is instructor based.
  5. During a certification or licensure cycle, an individual may receive credit, one time only, for service as a CE course/class/activity instructor.
    - a. Credit received shall be the same as the number of CE hours applied to the course/class/activity.
  6. During a certification or licensure cycle, an individual may receive credit, one time only, for service as an instructor for an approved EMT or paramedic training program
    - a. The hours of service shall not exceed fifty percent of the total CE hours required in a single certification or licensure cycle.
  7. When guided by the EMS service provider's quality improvement plan, an EMS service provider that is an approved CE provider may issue CE for skills competency demonstrations to address any deficiencies identified by the service provider.
    - a. Skills competency demonstration shall be conducted in accordance with the respective National Standard Curriculum skills outline or in accordance with the policies and procedures of the VCEMS medical director.
  8. If it is determined through a quality improvement plan that EMS personnel need remediation or refresher in an area of the individual's knowledge and/or skills, the VCEMS medical director or an EMS service provider may require the EMS personnel to take an approved CE course with learning objectives that addresses the remediation or refresher needed, as part of the individual's required hours of CE for maintaining certification or licensure.
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9. Because paramedic license renewal applications are due to the California EMS Authority thirty days prior to the expiration date of a paramedic license, a continuing education course(s) taken in the last month of a paramedic's licensure cycle may be applied to the paramedic's subsequent licensure cycle, only if that CE course(s) was not already applied to the licensure cycle during which the CE course(s) was taken.
10. VCEMS shall not require additional continuing education hours for accreditation, beyond the state required minimum of forty-eight (48) hours.

E. Continuing Education Records

1. In order to receive credit, CE shall be completed during the current certification/licensure cycle, except as provided in Section IV.D.8 of this policy.
  2. CE shall be valid for a maximum of two years prior to the date of a completed application for certificate/license renewal.
  3. EMS personnel shall maintain for four years all CE certificates issued to them by any CE provider.
  4. In order to verify the authenticity of continuing education certificates, or as part of a CE provider's approval process, CE certificates may be audited by VCEMS.
  5. Any/all continuing education records issued by a CE provider program shall meet the minimum requirements outlined in VCEMS Policy 1130.
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