

Agency Bulletin

December 2009

In this Bulletin we provide details of:

1. Certificate duration for all Occupational First Aid (OFA) Certificates and requirement for medicals for OFA 2 & 3
2. Recommendations for OFA - AED training equipment.
3. Changes to the EMR License equivalency to OFA 3 as well as certificate duration for the Paramedic in Industry course.
4. BC certification for out of Province Paramedics.

1) Certificate duration and certificate of fitness

Effective **January 1, 2010**, all Occupational First Aid (OFA) and equivalent certificates will be valid for three years from the date of successful completion of the OFA level 1, Transportation Endorsement (TE) or equivalent course or the successful completion of an OFA level 2, 3 or equivalent examination.

Also effective **January 1, 2010**, OFA level 2, 3 or equivalent course candidates are no longer required to provide a Medical Certificate of Fitness that is signed and stamped by a physician licensed in BC, every 2 years prior to being issued a certificate. Candidates are now required to complete and sign a Statement of Fitness (attached to this email) when they register for any OFA Level 2, 3 or equivalent course and the Statement of Fitness must be maintained with the class file. This form will help protect agencies during the training and examination if it is completed and signed by all candidates prior to or at the start of any OFA Level 2, 3 or equivalent course.

The Statement of Fitness form can be forwarded to your printer for inclusion in the OFA Level 2 & 3 Training Guides, but you can also print this for use in the interim.

In the event that the candidate answers “yes” to any question on the Statement of Fitness, they will then be required to provide a Medical Certificate of Fitness signed and stamped by a physician licensed to practice in BC before certification is issued. A Medical Certificate of Fitness may also be required on the order of a WorkSafeBC Officer at any time. These changes will be outlined in the Standard OFA1 available on worksafebc.com.

2) Recommendations for AED training equipment for OFA courses

After consultation with WorkSafeBC Physicians regarding best practice for AED training, Certification Services recommends that training agencies provide a variety of AED trainers in their OFA (and equivalent) courses. Due to the multitude of AEDs that are available in the workplace, workers may have access to AEDs that may be different than what is used for training by an agency. First aid training agencies should allow their students to achieve as much practice with as many different brands of acceptable AED trainers as is practicable. **AED trainers should replicate what is acceptable and available in industry**; AEDs should meet three minimum criteria to be acceptable for use in the workplace in BC.

They should be:

- Currently licensed by Health Canada for use as an external defibrillator in Canada
- Semi-automatic in operation, (the only type licensed for use at this time in Canada)
- Capable of storing both electrocardiographic and AED event data.

For more information, reference the *OHS Guideline Part 3 G3.17(1)-1 Implementing an early defibrillation program in the workplace*

3) EMR License equivalency to OFA Level 3

Background:

Some years ago, in order for Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) License holders to work in industry, the EMR License that is issued by the Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board (EMALB) to the EMR was granted equivalency to Occupational First Aid (OFA) Level 3 Certification. No additional training or certification was required. This was due to a revision in the EMR curriculum that allowed the necessary OFA skills to be included in the EMR course. Primary Care Paramedic (PCP), Acute Care Paramedic (ACP) and Critical Care Paramedic (CCP) Licenses were not given this equivalency as those courses were not undergoing a revision and the OFA skills were not included in the course curriculum.

Current Status:

As part of the major evaluation of all certifications due to the TILMA and AIT legislation, this equivalency certification was also reappraised. We have been informed by attorneys employed by the EMALB and WorkSafeBC that EMRs working in industry under the EMR License are at risk of putting their Licenses in jeopardy.

The two occupations, EMR and OFA, are deemed to be two separate occupations and they are governed by two separate *Acts*. The EMA License's scope of practice enables the holder to "treat and transport" the injured party whereas the OFA Level 3 Certification's scope of practice requires the holder, when appropriate, to be able to "treat and return to work". Requiring the EMR License holder to treat and return to work may violate that License's scope of practice and may jeopardize the EMR's License.

In addition, with the advent of EMRs from other provinces obtaining licenses in BC under TILMA and AIT legislation, it is possible that in the future the holder of a BC EMR License will not have been trained in the necessary OFA skills required to be competent as a first aid attendant in industry. In other words, **it can no longer be assumed that a Licensed EMR has been trained in the required OFA duties.**

WorkSafeBC has designed a “Paramedic in Industry” (Pii) course that is comprised of a home study component plus a 4 hour, in class, practical workshop. The Pii workshop includes the competencies that are not included in paramedic training but are required by an occupational first aid attendant in industry.

Upon successful completion of this Pii course a PCP, ACP or CCP license holder will be granted an OFA Level 3 Paramedic in Industry Certificate. The duration of a Paramedic in Industry Certificate will be three years from the date of successful completion of the Pii course. The Paramedic in Industry course will also count as 20 Continuing Medical Education Credits for the attending paramedic.

Resolution:

- Effective **January 1st, 2010** WorkSafeBC will eliminate the granting of EMR to OFA Level 3 equivalencies.
- All EMRs that are **licensed after January 1st, 2010** and intend to work as an OFAA in industry must successfully complete a Paramedic in Industry course.
- EMRs that were **licensed prior to January 1st 2010 will have until July 1st, 2010** to apply to a BC Level 3 Training Agency for the Pii Certificate and for a nominal fee a Pii Certificate will be issued.
- After **July 1st, 2010** all licensed EMRs that intend to work as an OFAA in industry must attend the Pii course.

Process for issuing a Paramedic In Industry Certificate to EMRs licensed prior to **January 1st 2010:**

1. With the assistance of EMA Licensing, Certification Services will contact all current EMR License holders with an issue date previous to **January 1st, 2010**, informing them of this decision.
2. They will all be offered the opportunity to apply for an OFA Level 3 Paramedic in Industry Certificate, with no additional training or assessment. The EMRs in possession of a valid EMR license issued prior to **January 01, 2010** will have until **July 1st, 2010** to apply for this arranged certificate.

3. Pii certificates will have an expiry date of three years from the date the certificate is issued regardless of the expiry date of the EMR license. **This 3 year certificate duration also applies to all levels of Paramedic licensing, EMR, PCP, ACP and CCP, who complete the Paramedic in Industry program in the future.** The three year Pii Certificates are only valid and recognized in industry if the Paramedic License issued by the EMRLB remains current and valid. We attached 2 replacement pages for the Pii practical workshop facilitator guide that reflects this three year certificate duration.
4. **When issuing a Pii certificate, agencies must write or stamp “Paramedic in Industry” on the certificate and after the expiry date, write or stamp “Requires a valid EMA License”.**
5. Any EMR License issued *before* **January 01, 2010** will be recognized in industry *until* **July 01, 2010** without the additional Pii certificate. *After* **July 01, 2010**, all EMR license holders must have the additional Paramedic in Industry Certificate to be recognized as an OFAA.
6. EMR License holders may apply for the OFA Level 3 Paramedic in Industry Certificate at any participating OFA Level 3 First Aid Training Agency in BC by presenting picture ID and their valid EMR License. EMR License holders should call training agencies in their area to determine if this service is offered.
7. Certification Services requests that, during the 6 month transition period of January 01 to June 30, 2010, training agencies participating in the Pii program minimize the fee for any EMR licensee requesting a Pii certificate. **This request only applies to existing EMR licenses issued before January 1st, 2010.**
8. Agencies must keep a copy of the EMR license # and the expiry date must be recorded on the application form during this transition period. We are providing an application form that can be used for this service for the transition period between **Jan 01** and **July 01, 2010**. This application form is attached to this email.
9. If a current EMR License holder wishes to obtain the 20 Continuing Education Credits for the Paramedic in Industry course, they will have to complete the home study and ½ day workshop conducted by an instructor authorized by the agency.

4) **BC certification for out of province Paramedics**

As stated previously, the two occupations, EMR and OFA, are deemed to be two separate occupations and they are governed by two separate *Acts*. Therefore, paramedics from other provinces **do not qualify** under TILMA or AIT legislation when it comes to First Aid Certification in BC, (they do qualify when it comes to paramedic licensing).

The options for paramedics that come to BC from other Canadian provinces and would like to work as an OFAA in BC are as follows:

1. If they are trained in another province:
If the out of Province EMR has provided proof of completion of a minimum 70-hour pre-hospital care course, they are eligible to challenge the OFA Level 3 or equivalent examination without any additional training. After successful completion of the OFA level 3 or equivalent examinations, they will receive OFA Level 3 or equivalent certification.
2. If licensed by another province:
If the out of Province EMR has provided proof of EMR Licensing, they are eligible to take the Paramedic in Industry course (home study component and 4-hour practical workshop). After successful completion of the Pii course they will be granted an OFA Level 3 Paramedic in Industry certificate valid for three years. As long as the Paramedic License remains valid, the Pii certificate will be recognized in industry.

The exception to this is the Red Cross Emergency Medical Responder certificate which is accepted in industry by the province of Alberta at the Advanced level. Holders of this certificate qualify for an OFA Level 3 out-of-jurisdiction certificate if the course was conducted outside of the province of BC.

We have also added the Terms and Conditions of Certification to the back of the Out-of-Jurisdiction Certificate application form that we provided you earlier in the year. We attach a copy of the new version of this application form to this email for your use when issuing Out-of-Jurisdiction Certificates.



OCCUPATIONAL FIRST AID STATEMENT OF FITNESS

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Surname of candidate | Given name(s) in full | Date of birth (yyyy-mm-dd) | |
| Mailing address | City | Province | Postal code |

Section 3.21(2) of the Occupational Health & Safety Regulation (OHSR) states:

A first aid attendant must be physically and mentally capable of safely and effectively performing the required duties and the Board may at any time require the attendant to provide a medical certificate.

Participation in first aid training courses and performing the duties of a first aid attendant in the field can be physically demanding and may require prolonged kneeling, working in stooped positions, and rolling patients. Depending on the working conditions, these physical demands can become rigorous.

Statement of fitness

Answer all the following questions honestly and truthfully regarding any medical conditions. For more information on the statement of fitness, contact the agency representative.

If the answer to any of the following questions is yes, an Occupational First Aid Medical Certificate of Fitness, completed by a physician on a form acceptable to WorkSafeBC, must be provided before certification is issued. The Medical Certificate of Fitness form can be obtained online at WorkSafeBC.com or from the agency representative.

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Disease conditions — is there medical evidence and/or history of: | | | |
| Insulin-dependent diabetes | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Respiratory disease |
| Seizure disorder | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Heart disease |
| Communicable disease | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Multiple sclerosis |
| Have you experienced any problems in the previous 12 months, related to the overuse and/or addiction to alcohol, recreational or prescription drugs, and/or over-the-counter medications? | | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you experienced any psychological or emotional episodes which could preclude you from performing the duties of an occupational first aid attendant? | | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have any visual impairment that would prevent you from assessing a scene from a distance, performing minor wound care, removing small slivers, removing small particles from the eye, and/or assessing a patient for pallor and contusions? | | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Occupational First Aid Statement of Fitness *(continued)*

Do you have any hearing impairment that would prevent you from hearing a summons for first aid, hearing and assessing a patient's breathing, distinguishing if there is distressed breathing, and/or verbally communicating with a patient?

Yes No

Do you have any physical condition that would limit you from carrying 22.5 kg (50 lbs), traversing rough terrain such as steep banks, steep excavations, or high elevations to render first aid?

Yes No

I have answered all the above questions honestly and truthfully. This is a true reflection of any physical and mental condition that would have a bearing upon my ability to participate in a first aid training course and/or function as a first aid attendant.

Yes No

Name *(please print)*

Signature

Date *(yyyy-mm-dd)*

Registration and Application for Issuing Occupational First Aid Level 3 Paramedic in Industry Certification to EMR License holders

Instructions:

Please complete this registration form. The form must be signed and dated.

Please Print

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------|-----|
| Surname | | Given Names in Full | | |
| Mailing Address | | | Date of Birth | |
| | | | Month | Day |
| | | | Year | |
| City | Postal Code | S.I.N. (optional) | Work Phone# | |
| e-mail address | | | Home Phone# | |

| | | | | |
|------------------|----------|------------|-------------|--|
| Employer | | Occupation | | |
| Employer Address | | | | |
| City | Province | | Postal Code | |

EMR License information

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| License Number | Expiry date |
|----------------|-------------|

Paramedic in Industry Certificate information

| | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Certificate Number | Expiry date |
|--------------------|-------------|

Please sign to indicate that you, the applicant,

- agree to abide by the principles of first aid and the terms and conditions of certification as outlined in the Occupational First Aid Reference and Training Manual and Occupational First Aid Training Guides and WCB OFA1 Standard, as stated on the reverse of this document; and

Applicant's Signature

Date:

Terms and Conditions of Certification

The attendant must

- (a) follow the principles of first aid treatment as outlined in the Board's Occupational First Aid training programs that are provided to the attendant when he or she participates in the training program,
- (b) comply with the *OHSR*, and the other responsibilities of attendants in this standard, and
- (c) comply with any other terms and conditions provided to the attendant by the training agency when granted certification, or provided to the attendant by the Board at any other time.

Including:

The first aid certificate holder must not engage in inappropriate conduct, not restricted to but including:

- smoking while assessing or treating an injured or ill worker and/or while handling oxygen therapy equipment, or permitting others to do so;
- failure to use the assessment and injury treatment techniques outlined in first aid training courses unless conditions precluded them;
- conduct that poses an unreasonable threat to the safety and well-being of other workers or the public;
- removing themselves from being able to see or hear any summons for first aid at a workplace;
- abandonment of an injured worker after beginning assessment or treatment;
- refusal to treat an injured worker when acting as the designated attendant; or
- treating or transporting an injured worker while impaired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Attention points for written examination and certification process

If a participant has performed well in the practical aspect of the course but does not achieve 70% on the written examination, refer to the Training Agency policy for Oral Written Exams for instructions on how to proceed.

Any accommodation given to a participant, regarding the written examination, must be well documented and forwarded to the Training Agency for inclusion in the training records.

Refer to the Training Agency policy on violence in the workplace for procedures to follow when discussing the certification decision with each participant.

Successful participants are issued an OFA Level 3 certificate with “Paramedic in Industry” stamped or written on the certificate. The expiry date of the certificate is to be three years from the date of issue. The words “Requires valid EMA License” is written on the line after the expiry date where the Evaluator Number would normally be written.

CLASS ACTIVITY

30 minutes

Distribute written exam and answer sheet (blank on next page and on disk with instructor materials) to each participant

Allow 30 minutes for the written exam – 30 multiple choice questions

Passing grade is 70% or a minimum of 21 questions correct

Ensure pencils are available, explain multiple choice exam format

one correct answer per question

INSTRUCTOR ADMINISTRATION

- *Ensure all photo ID is checked. EMR, PCP or ACP license must be presented to verify expiry date*
- *Ensure all student application forms have been completed*
- *Ensure the Participant Checklist has been completed and ready to forward to the training agency*
- *Ensure participants complete class evaluation provided by the training agency*
- *Ensure certificate numbers are recorded*
- *Issue certification to those participants who have qualified*
- *Ensure the expiry date of the certificate is 3 years from the date of issue and the term “Requires valid EMR License” is included after the expiry date.*

Registration and Application for Issuing Occupational First Aid Certification to Out of Jurisdiction Certificate Holders

Instructions:

Please complete this registration form. The form must be signed and dated.

Please Print

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------|-----|
| Surname | | Given Names in Full | | |
| Mailing Address | | | Date of Birth | |
| | | | Month | Day |
| | | | Year | |
| City | Postal Code | S.I.N. (optional) | Work Phone# | |
| e-mail address | | | Home Phone# | |

| | | | | |
|------------------|----------|-------------|--|--|
| Employer | | Occupation | | |
| Employer Address | | | | |
| City | Province | Postal Code | | |

Out-of-jurisdiction certificate information

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Certificate Level | Province issued in: |
| Certificate Number | Expiry date: |

Please sign to indicate that you, the applicant,

- agree to abide by the principles of first aid and the terms and conditions of certification as outlined in the Occupational First Aid Reference and Training Manual and Occupational First Aid Training Guides and WCB OFA1 Standard, as stated on the reverse of this document; and
- agree to read and complete the Jurisprudence package issued by the agency prior to working as a designated first aid attendant on a worksite in British Columbia.

Applicant's Signature

Date:

Terms and Conditions of Certification

The attendant must

- (a) follow the principles of first aid treatment as outlined in the Board's Occupational First Aid training programs that are provided to the attendant when he or she participates in the training program,
- (b) comply with the *OHSR*, and the other responsibilities of attendants in this standard, and
- (c) comply with any other terms and conditions provided to the attendant by the training agency when granted certification, or provided to the attendant by the Board at any other time.

Including:

The first aid certificate holder must not engage in inappropriate conduct, not restricted to but including:

- smoking while assessing or treating an injured or ill worker and/or while handling oxygen therapy equipment, or permitting others to do so;
- failure to use the assessment and injury treatment techniques outlined in first aid training courses unless conditions precluded them;
- conduct that poses an unreasonable threat to the safety and well-being of other workers or the public;
- removing themselves from being able to see or hear any summons for first aid at a workplace;
- abandonment of an injured worker after beginning assessment or treatment;
- refusal to treat an injured worker when acting as the designated attendant; or
- treating or transporting an injured worker while impaired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.