

## **NATIONAL REGISTRY OF EMT'S TEST TRANSITION**

### **December 1, 2009**

This is a reminder that the transition for certification testing of EMS personnel will occur on January 1, 2010. At that time, people who apply for an EMS certification in Washington State must successfully complete the National Registry of EMT's certifying test. This applies to all levels of certification. Those people who are not in an approved OTEP program and use the CME method for recertification will be expected to successfully complete the NREMT assessment test. Additional information is included in this update. Please feel free to contact Michael Lopez via telephone 360-236-2841 or email [michael.lopez@doh.wa.gov](mailto:michael.lopez@doh.wa.gov) if you have questions.

#### **Transition Date**

As we announced in March of 2009, the effective date for this transition is January 1, 2010. For individuals not involved in an approved Ongoing Training and Evaluation Program (OTEP), the approved test will be the NREMT assessment test. This applies to all levels of certification in Washington State.

#### **Test Site Availability**

The EMS Office continues to work with the NREMT and organizations interested in becoming NREMT test sites. This process will continue well into the transition. As we have said along the way, identifying test sites is an ongoing project. Some current sites will choose to not participate in the future. As this occurs, we will work diligently to identify replacement sites. We are also committed to tracking test and student demand to identify additional sites. The NREMT test is offered in the following locations at this time:

- Yakima, Washington
- Pasco, Washington
- Spokane Valley, Washington
- Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
- Lewiston, Idaho ( for those communities in SE Washington)
- Renton, Washington
- Seattle, Washington (Northgate)
- Centralia, Washington
- Bellingham, Washington
- Port Angeles, Washington
- Portland, Oregon

We continue to work with organizations in Tacoma, Olympia and Wenatchee to identify additional testing sites. We will work with organizations in eastern Washington to bolster the available test sites.

#### **Management of the Current Washington State Test**

We recognize that some people will take the Washington State test right up to the end of December. In the event that someone must re-take the Washington State test after January 1<sup>st</sup>, they will be allowed to take the State test for the attempts allowed in the

Washington Administrative Code (3 attempts). We will maintain a stock of the Washington State tests for this purpose only until July 1, 2010. Since individuals have 3 chances to pass the State test within a six month time period, we do not anticipate needing to keep the Washington State test past July 1, 2010.

### **Current Status of Washington State Training Programs and the NREMT Test**

Currently, there are 46 EMS training programs registered to allow students to take the NREMT Test. In order for students to take the certifying test, the training agency/program lead or Senior EMS Instructor (SEI) must register their program with the NREMT. To do so, please visit the NREMT website at [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org) for instructions. Some interesting statistics about the NREMT test in Washington include:

- Of the 46 registered EMS training programs, over 50% have had students take the test in 2009.
- Of the 46 registered training programs, 26 come from small, less populated counties and communities.
- Since January 1, 2009, 388 people have taken the NREMT EMT-Basic test from Washington State. Overall, 85% of the people who have taken the NREMT EMT –Basic test have passed.

### **Testing for Washington State Intermediate Level Personnel**

People who wish to receive an EMT-Intermediate certification will take the NREMT I-85 test. This is the test that most closely follows Washington State Intermediate practice. The NREMT I-99 exceeds the requirements for Washington State Intermediates so we have identified the NREMT I-85 as the test.

As many know, there are changes to the proposed EMS Washington Administrative Code relating to scope of practice. The proposed WAC changes to the scope of practice include elements about Intermediate levels. If adopted, the WAC will reflect the new national scope of practice for EMS personnel. This includes Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), EMT, Advanced EMT and Paramedic. Washington State Intermediates will be migrated to the Advanced EMT. The proposed WAC change also includes IV insertion skills and supraglottic airways for EMT-Basics. Therefore, in the future, EMT's will be allowed to insert IV's and use supraglottic airways with the appropriate training and evaluation as well as approval by the County MPD. The remainder of the Intermediate skills will be included in the scope of practice for Advanced EMT's.

### **New National Education Standards and Instructional Guidelines**

The NREMT is working on transitioning to the newly adopted Education Standards and Instructional guidelines. This will not be in place on January 1, 2010. Therefore, your students will be tested on information that is included in the current National DOT curriculum and not the new standards and guidelines. Testing on the new standards and guidelines is anticipated to occur near the end of 2010 or early 2011. Our Office will be working with the State Education Committee and MPD's to refine the current curriculum to reflect the education standards and instructional guidelines with Washington Core Content. Washington Core Content is anticipated to include information on the POLST,

Trauma Triage Tool, Infectious Disease and other Washington expectations for EMS personnel. Updates on this project will be provided as progress occurs. Senior EMS Instructors should create end of course exams that include evaluating the students' understanding of Washington Core Content (Washington State Specific Objectives). Most, if not all, current programs do end of course cognitive and psychomotor exams to ensure student understanding of topic content.

### **Maintaining OTEP**

The OTEP program in Washington State has been a highly successful model for maintaining continuing education. The strengths of this program include accessibility to education, elimination of "test anxiety" and more frequent opportunities to refine EMS patient care skills. The Office whole heartedly supports maintaining the OTEP program and making sure that the OTEP programs have the necessary support and resources to continue. Approximately 95% of EMT's who recertify, do so through OTEP. We are continuing to receive OTEP program approval requests and we encourage consideration of OTEP as a means of providing EMS personnel with ongoing education.

### **Final Thoughts**

It seems as if EMS in Washington State and nationally is changing on a daily basis. Practice standards continue to evolve and new therapies are always being considered. Education of EMS personnel also operates in an ever-changing environment. January 1, 2010 is not an end date by any means. Work on developing educational standards, identifying additional test sites, creating resources for our SEI's and building our system will continue well past January 1, 2010. We will be providing additional information and resources as they are completed. The statistics provided earlier show that our SEI's are preparing their students well for the NREMT test. Staying focused on the curriculum and using current text book information will provide the students with great tools for success. You are encouraged to network with your peers to find out what kinds of strategies work. In the upcoming weeks, we will be sending additional updates. We will also be closely monitoring the transition and address the issues as they arise.