



Registering as a Massage Therapist in Colorado

by Rebecca Mauldin

I recently got my Colorado massage registration in the mail. So, effective 4/1/09, I'll be an RMT (Registered Massage Therapist). Before the Colorado legislature passed the Massage Therapy Practice Act last summer, the only state law that regulated massage therapy was the Massage Parlor Act. This act is (as the name implies) an act that is primarily concerned with the sex industry. Massage therapists were given an exemption to the Massage Parlor Act if they had graduated from a school offering 500 hours of education, and the only people who could officially call themselves "massage therapists" had to meet that education requirement. The Massage Parlor Act is still on the books, but now regulation of massage therapists requires us to register with the state.

Under the new law, any one practicing massage therapy on or after 4/1/09 must be registered with the State of Colorado. To be eligible for registration, a person needs to have

- 1) graduated from an approved school with at least 500 hours of massage education;
- 2) passed either the National Certification Exam (NCE) from NCTMB or the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Exam (MBLex) from FSMTB; and
- 3) have a successful background check by the State Bureau of Investigation (fingerprints are submitted for this).

There is a "grandfather" clause for the examination portion of the eligibility requirements. During the grandfather period, the examination is not required for therapists who have 5 years of experience + 300 hours of education -or- 500 hours of education (with no experience requirement). So...the question is when is this timeframe. The regulations say it is one year from the date when applications were first available. Applications became available 12/1/08, so presumably this means until 12/1/09, an applicant will not have to pass the NCE or MBLex if the other requirements are met.

Those are the basics.

To apply, you need to mail an application in to the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA). You can download an application, but it cannot be submitted online.

Separately, you need to get fingerprints taken by a law enforcement agency. I went to the sheriff's department and it cost \$5.00 for the service. They had certain times they were available to do the fingerprints, so it's helpful to call ahead to get schedules and fees. Once you have the fingerprint card (it's a special FBI form), you fill it out with the information provided in your application packet and mail it to the Colorado SBI. The fee for the background check is \$39.50. So you send the fingerprints and a check to the SBI. If you follow the instructions properly on how to fill out the card, the SBI will send the background check results directly to DORA for your application.

The only other detail I can think of is you have to carry liability insurance to get and remain registered.

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