

FLORIDA CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT REGISTRY

Frequently Asked Questions

General:

Q. How do I get in touch with the Florida Nursing Assistant Registry?

A. You can reach the registry at (850) 245-4567 or you may write to the Department of Health, Florida Nursing Assistant Registry at 4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin #C13, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3263.

Q. Do I need to keep the registry updated on any personal information?

A. Yes, you are required to notify the registry in writing of any changes in your name or address. Official notifications and renewal forms are sent to your address of record.

Q. Does my Florida nursing assistant certificate expire?

A. Under current Florida law, the nursing assistant certification expires on December 31 of odd years, starting in 2005. Renewal forms are sent out about 120 days before the expiration date. As part of the renewal process, you will verify that you have worked for pay in a nursing-related capacity for any amount of time during the two-year renewal period. You do not need to send any documentation of employment with your renewal form and fee. If you do not meet this requirement, you cannot renew your certification, your certification will lapse, and you will be required to take both the written and the performance exams to be re-certified.

Q. What can I do if I do not get a renewal form?

A. CNA renewal forms will be in the mail by September 30th so you should receive it by the middle of October. If you recently moved and left a forward address with the US Postal Service within the last 6 months, the Department will forward your renewal form to the new address. However, you will have to submit the address change on the renewal form with the correct fees in order to renew your certificate. If you do not get a renewal form by mid-October, call 850-488-0595.

Q. What happens if I do not renew by CNA certificate by December 31st?

A. If you do not renew and pay fees (\$25) by January 1, 2006, your certificate becomes delinquent and you cannot work as a CNA. If you do not renew and pay the late fees (total \$45) by June 30, 2006, your certificate will become null and void and you will have to take the CNA examination again to be certified in Florida.

Q. What if my original certificate was from the Department of Education and my CNA status is not in the Department of Health CNA look up screen?

A. You may submit a notarized copy of the following documents to the CNA Registry, 4052 Bald Cypress Way, BIN C13, Tallahassee, FL 32399: copy of certificate from Department of Education, social security card, driver's license or other ID card; name and current address. You must renew by December 31, 2005 or you cannot work as a CNA after January 1, 2006 unless you pay the delinquent fee of \$45. After June 30, 2006, you will need to take the CNA examination to be certified in Florida.

Q. How do I obtain a duplicate or replacement of my certificate or change my name?

A. Send your current license or a letter requesting a duplicate license stating your full name, license number, profession, and the reason for requesting a duplicate, along with a \$25.00 check or money order made payable to the Department of Health. Please mail your request and fee to Department of Health, MQA, Post Office Box 6320, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6320. You should receive a new license in two (2) or three (3) weeks. To change the name of a current licensee, provide a written request that clearly indicates your new name, your license number, including alpha prefix or profession, and a copy of the legal document showing the change of name, for example a marriage license or divorce decree.

Q. How will the registry know if my certificate has lapsed?

A. The expiration date of CNA certificates now shows on the Department of Health Internet Licensure Look up screens.

Q. Are my expenses associated with obtaining my certification reimbursable?

A. If you complete a state approved training program and meet specified requirements, you might be eligible to receive reimbursement for some of your expenses. You should ask your employer (nursing homes are only employers which do reimburse) or the district Medicaid office in your area for details.

Q. Are there instances where I may begin my employment as a nursing assistant prior to obtaining certification?

A. Yes, there are three (3) exceptions which allow you to work for a maximum of four (4) months (120 days) while awaiting receipt of your Florida certification: (1) applicants enrolled in or have completed a state approved program, or (2) applicants who have been verified as being actively certified in another state, or (3) applicants who have preliminarily passed the state exam but have not yet received the certificate. (See 400.211, F.S.) All of these are at the determination of the employer.

Certification Eligibility:

Q. Am I required to attend a training program or may I simply challenge the exam?

A. Yes, you may "challenge" the exam. Completion of a state approved training program is not mandatory. However, it is strongly recommended to attend a state approved training program.

Q. What exams are required to become a certified nursing assistant in the state of Florida?

A. You must pass both the written and the performance exam to be certified as a nursing assistant in the state of Florida. The only exception to this is for approved reciprocity candidates. Examination results are valid for two years, so if you pass one part of the exam, you must pass the second part within two years or you will have to repeat both parts of the exam to be certified.

Reciprocity:

Q. Does Florida require out-of-state certified nursing assistants applying for reciprocity to complete any exams?

A. Florida does not require the testing for those candidates who have been verified as being actively certified and in good standing in another state. Otherwise, you will be required to take the written and performance exams in order to be placed on Florida's Registry.

Q. Am I required to have a background check?

A. Florida now requires an FBI background check for the out of state CNA before approving for a Florida certificate.

Testing:

Q. If I completed the 1st half of my Nurse Aide Test in another state can I come to Florida and complete the 2nd half?

A. No, the exams are not the same from state to state.

Q. Is there a time limit to take the part of exam, which I failed?

A. Yes, you must pass both parts of the examination within two years to be certified in Florida.

Medical Assistants, Home Health Aides:

Q. Can a Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) work in a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) capacity without a CNA certificate?

A. No, the CNA must have a Florida certificate to work as a Certified Nursing Assistant in Florida.

Q. How do you become a Medical Assistant in Florida?

A. Medical Assistants are not regulated or licensed or certified in Florida. Medical assistants are able to do certain medical functions under the direct supervision of the physician. (FS 458.0825)

Q. Are Home Health aides regulated in Florida?

A. No, there is no state registry for HHAs. The HHA must inquire from the employing Home Health agency what are the HHA requirements.

Q. As a HH agency, can I use a CNA as a HHA?

A. The Agency for Health Care Administration regulates HH agencies and allows those agencies to substitute the CNA as a HHA.

In-Service:

Q. How many In-service hours am I required to obtain if I become certified in the middle of the year?

A. The CNA is required to have 1.0 hours of in-service per each calendar month or a total of 12 hours for a full calendar year. Therefore, if certified in June, the CNA would be required to have 6 hours by December 31st.

Q. Is it my responsibility or is it my employer's to supply my in-services?

A. It is the CNA's responsibility to keep documentation of all in-services received. If the employer does not provide the in-service it is the CNA's responsibility to obtain the in-services.

Q. What are the mandatory in-service hours for CNA?

A. Every 2 years, in-service hours shall include: HIV/AIDS, Infection Control; Domestic Violence; Documentation & Legal Aspects for CNAs; Resident Rights; Communication with impaired clients; CPR skills; and Medical Error Prevention/Safety. Specific agencies may have in-service requirements in addition to these.

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Ph/Fax: 863-421-5807
E-mail: fana202@verizon.net
Web: <http://hcassidy.tripod.com/FANA/FANA.html>

Florida Health Care Association
307 W. Park Ave.
P. O. Box 1459
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Phone: 850-224-3907
Email: (lgriffin@fhca.org)]
Web: www.fhcalearning.com

Florida Association of Homes for the Aging
1812 Riggins Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Phone: (850) 671-3700

Background:

Q. Is background screening a requirement for certification as a certified nursing assistant?

A. Yes, background screening is required by Florida law for this certificate/license. All offenses are reviewed except for routine traffic offenses.

Q. Can I be disqualified or ineligible to work as a certified nursing assistant?

A. Yes, to be eligible for employment in long-term care as a certified nursing assistant, you must hold current certification and have no disqualifying offenses as outlined in Chapter 435, Florida Statutes. If you have a disqualifying offense, you may apply for an exemption.

Q. Can only felonies disqualify me from employment?

A. No, both felonies and misdemeanors may be disqualifying. The disqualifying offenses are outlined in Chapter 435, Florida Statutes.

Q. What do I do if I am told I am disqualified from employment due to a problem with my background screening?

A. You may request an exemption review through the Registry to determine if the disqualifying offenses are eligible to be granted an exemption, thereby, allowing you to return to work.

Q. How will the candidate know if he is not clear to be certified?

A. If the result of his background report shows arrests and offenses, or incomplete dispositions, he will receive a notice from the Board office requesting additional information. Depending on the types and seriousness of the offenses, his case may go before the Board of Nursing; he will also be notified of this meeting. If the Board denies his certification, he will receive an official Intent to Deny Order and will have right of appeal.

Q. If I go through the Nurse Aide Training and there's something in my background will I still be allowed to work the four (4) month grace period?

A. That determination is made by the employer.

Q. Can I still sit for the exam even though there's something in my background?

A. Yes, once the candidate has provided a complete application with all required fees to the testing company, he will be scheduled to take the exam. The background check results may hold up the issuing of the certification.

Q. If there's something in my background and I pass both exams how long thereafter will I receive my certification?

A. It depends on the amount of information required regarding the offenses and how timely the applicant responds.

Q. What is a statewide background/check screening?

A. It is an official report provided by FDLE (Florida Department of Law Enforcement) state office in Tallahassee. It is a list of arrests and offenses, which occurred in Florida. It is often referred to as a Level 1 background check since it is for the State of Florida only.

Q. When is a background check required for the CNA applicant?

A. Effective November 2002, all new CNA applications to the testing company (Experior) will be required to have a background screen prior to certification. This means the testing company will collect a fee and send a request to FDLE for a background report to be forwarded to the Board of Nursing at the Department of Health. The Board office will review all background reports and notify Experior when and if the applicant is clear for receiving the CNA certificate.

Q. How will the candidate know about the fee and background requirement?

A. The testing company includes a notice of the fees in the application bulletin.

- Q. If the candidate repeatedly fails the exam, how long is the FDLE report good?**
- A. If the candidate reschedules to take the exam within the 6-12 month window from his initial application after November 2002, no new background check will be required.
- Q. How will the candidate know if his background check is clear?**
- A. If he officially passes both parts of the exam, he will receive the certificate directly from the Department of Health
- Q. When the background report is clear, meaning no criminal history, how long will it take to obtain the FDLE background report, screen it and notify the testing company of the results?**
- A. If the application is properly completed, all fees are received, the request to the FDLE agency has no errors, and the background result is clear, it is anticipated the turn around notice to the testing company will take approximately 2 weeks from time the testing company submits the background request to FDLE.
- Q. If the Board denies the candidate certification, will he receive any refund of testing and background fees?**
- A. No, there are no refunds if the Board does not approve the candidate. This is the same as in any other health care practitioner application or testing process.
- Q. What is the employer or training program role to the potential CNA exam candidate?**
- A. To inform and educate the candidate of the requirement and the process for background screening prior to the certification.
- Q. Is a background check required when entering a CNA training program/school?**
- A. The training program/school may have its own background requirement, but the Department of Health does not have a requirement for a background check prior to attending a training program.
- Q. If a background check is completed at time of entry to a training program, must it be completed again at time of application for CNA exam?**
- A. Yes, a new background check is required on all new applications (beginning November 2002) for the CNA exam.
- Q. If an employment background check is completed and the candidate then applies to take the CNA exam, can the employment background check be submitted to the testing company to meet the background requirement?**
- A. No, a new background check is required at time of new application (effective November 2002) for the CNA exam.
- Q. What is the difference between a background check used for employment screening and a background screening used for licensing/certification purposes?**
- A. For licensure or certification by the Board of Nursing, all criminal offenses are screened and reviewed prior to licensure or certification. For employment background screening, the employer uses a specified list of disqualifying offenses pursuant to Chapter 435, Florida Statute. If the employee has one of these specified offenses, he cannot be employed until he receives an exemption.