

Certification Renewal and Continuing Education Relief During COVID-19 Emergency

On Friday, March, 27, 2020 Governor DeWine signed Amended Substitute House Bill 197 (HB 197) which includes many provisions intended to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This Bill includes relief to certificate holders whose certificates expire during the state of emergency declared by the Governor through Executive Order 2020-01D, issued March 9, 2020. **Only current certificate holders whose certificates expire during the state of emergency are affected by this recent legislation.**

In order to implement this provision, the following applies to any individual who holds an active certification with the Ohio Division of EMS during this state of emergency:

- **Certification Expiration Date:** If a certificate expires during the state of emergency, it will be given an automatic extension until no later than 90 days after the state of emergency ends or December 1, 2020, whichever comes first. Certificate holders do not need to take any action to receive the extension. If you are ready and able to renew prior to your current expiration date, we encourage you to do so following the normal renewal process. Certificate holders will continue to receive automated renewal notifications based on your current expiration date; please ignore these emails as they do not apply during this declared emergency as noted above. If you have any questions, please contact the Certification staff at EMS-FireCertifications@dps.ohio.gov.
- **Continuing Education Requirements:** Due to the automatic extension on expiring certificates during the state of emergency, the deadline for completing continuing education requirements is also extended. During the state of emergency, continuing education providers are still offering courses, both online and in other distance learning formats, and certificate holders are encouraged to complete as much training as possible during the state of emergency to prevent the system from being overwhelmed once the state of emergency ends. In an effort to support our emergency responders with flexible training options during the COVID-19 pandemic, ODPS and the Ohio Fire Academy have chosen to continue the support and use of Action Training Systems, Inc. (ATS), to supplement traditional face-to-face instruction. This includes access for all Ohio fire departments, EMS agencies, firefighters, and emergency responders. Licenses for purchase include access to the COMPLETE lineup of Action Training Systems online interactive courses, including Fire,

EMS and Industrial Fire Brigades catalogs. Each fire course has been developed in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and each EMS course has been developed in accordance with the National EMS Education Standards. Ohio EMS providers will now be able to participate in Action Training trackable online interactive courseware from any place, at any time with an internet connection, for an annual fee of only \$30 per person. Participation is 100% voluntary. To learn more, please contact Jusup Lowry with Action Training at 800-755-1440 x107, or by email at jusupl@action-training.com. Additionally, the Ohio Fire Academy (OFA) has negotiated with the Health & Safety Institute (HSI) for greatly reduced pricing on online training memberships for all Ohio firefighters, EMS providers, and their departments. Annual membership fees of \$26/person provide access to over 130 fire CE courses, each of which is designed to comply with the codes and standards established by the NFPA as well as continuing education requirements in Ohio. Annual membership fees of \$26/person provide over 100 EMS CE courses that are ALS and BLS approved as well by the Commission on Accreditation of Pre-Hospital Continuing Education (CAPCE, formerly CECBEMS). CAPCE-approved courses meet national standards and are accepted by the state of Ohio and the National Registry of EMTs. The HSI courses can be found at the Ohio Fire Online Training System at www.ofots.com.

- **Initial Certifications and Schools:** All extensions outlined above will also apply to student deadlines in current courses as well as school renewal applications. If you have any questions, please reach out to the Division of EMS Education and Testing section.

Thank you for your service and please stay safe. Additional guidance will follow as this dynamic public health crisis continues to unfold.