



MASSAGE THERAPY AT A GLANCE

Statutes: Chapter 455, Occupations Code

Rules: Title 16 T.A.C. Chapter 117; Chapter 60

Practice Act? Yes

Title Act? Yes

Inspections? Yes

Facilities? Yes

Equipment? Yes

Individuals? Yes

Number of Licensees: 48,797 (FY 25)

Massage Therapists: 33,224

Massage Therapy Student Permits*: 10,022

Massage Therapy Instructors: 1,654

Massage Establishments: 3,449

Massage Schools: 86

Massage Therapy Continuing Education Providers: 362

Webpage: www.tdlr.texas.gov/mas



In Texas, a state license is required to advertise or practice massage therapy. A certification from a national board such as the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) is a voluntary certification – NOT a license. Licenses are issued by government entities and provide licensed professionals with specific authority to use a title and/or perform specific services.

All massage therapy students enrolled in a licensed massage school must obtain a massage student permit and a student permit is not valid unless the student's photo is attached. A student permit does not authorize the student to act as a licensed Massage Therapist

Colleges and universities are exempt from having a massage school license.

Public Safety

All licensees undergo fingerprinting for criminal history background checks, and TDLR is automatically notified of any subsequent arrests. A person is permanently ineligible for a license as a massage establishment owner, massage school, massage therapist, or massage therapy instructor if the individual has been convicted of, entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to, or received deferred adjudication for sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault.

Massage therapists are required to drape genitals and gluteal cleavage of all clients, and the breasts of female clients, for their privacy and protection, and a new written consent is required before each massage session involving breast massage of a female client.

All massage establishments and massage schools are required to display a sign with information about available services and assistance to victims of human trafficking, including information on how to report suspicious activity to the Texas Department of Public Safety. The sign has information in five languages.

Beginning on Sept. 1, 2023, TDLR's executive director can issue an emergency order halting the operation of any massage establishment if law enforcement or TDLR believes human trafficking is occurring at the establishment.

Overview:

A person must hold a massage therapist license to advertise or offer to practice or administer massage therapy or other massage services to a client for compensation.

- A "massage therapist" may also be referred to as a licensed massage therapist, therapeutic massage practitioner, massage technician, masseur, masseuse, myotherapist, body massager, body rubber, or any derivation of those titles.
- "Massage therapy" is **the manipulation of soft tissue by hand or through a mechanical or electrical apparatus for the purpose of body massage.** "Massage therapy" includes effleurage (stroking), petrissage (kneading), tapotement (percussion), compression, vibration, friction, nerve strokes, and Swedish gymnastics. "Massage therapy" may also be referred to as massage, therapeutic massage, massage technology, myotherapy, body massage, body rub, or any derivation of those terms.

License Required

Massage establishments must have a TDLR license. A "massage establishment" is a place of business that advertises or offers massage therapy or other massage services and does not meet certain exemptions. The term includes a place of business that advertises or offers any service described by a derivation of the terms "massage therapy" or "other massage services."

Inspections

TDLR performs inspections on massage establishments and massage schools to ensure that facilities and massage therapists are appropriately licensed and ensure these facilities and schools comply with sanitation and record-keeping requirements.

Legislation enacted in 2019 prohibits people from residing at a massage establishment.

Massage Schools

Massage Schools are required to report students' hours to TDLR every month. Only certain hours of instruction may be taught via distance education, with a minimum of 250 hours required onsite at the school and with a licensed massage therapy instructor.

Distance learning may only be used to fulfill certain hours of instruction, limited to a maximum of 250 hours. Distance learning is not limited to live instruction.

Human Trafficking Prevention Training Course

HB2059, passed in the 86th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature, requires all licensed massage therapists to complete a one-hour HHSC-approved Human Trafficking Prevention Training Course as a requirement for license renewal.

Program History

In 1985, the Massage Therapy program and Advisory Council on Massage Therapy were established at the Texas Department of Health (later Department of State Health Services) through the enactment of House Bill 2012 (69th Legislature).

In 2015, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 202, which transferred thirteen licensing programs from the Department of State Health Services to TDLR, including the Massage Therapy program. On November 1, 2017, TDLR assumed responsibility for all activities relating to the Massage Therapy program—including issuing and renewing licenses, customer service, and enforcement.

License:

A massage therapy licensee must:

- be at least 18 years old;
- pass a fingerprint-based criminal background check;
- satisfactorily complete massage therapy studies in a 500-hour minimum, supervised course of instruction* in which at least:
 - 200 hours of massage therapy techniques and theory and the practice of manipulation of soft tissue, with at least 125 hours of Swedish massage therapy techniques;
 - 50 hours of anatomy;
 - 25 hours of physiology;
 - 50 hours of kinesiology;
 - 40 hours of pathology;
 - 20 hours of hydrotherapy;
 - 45 hours of massage therapy laws and rules, business practices, and professional ethics standards;
 - 20 hours of health, hygiene, first aid, universal precautions, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR);
 - 50 hours in an internship program;
- pass the required examinations.

**Hours of instruction above must be provided by massage therapy instructor at a massage school, licensed massage school, state-approved educational institution, or any combination of instructors or schools.*

Massage instructors must hold a current massage therapist license and the massage therapist license must remain current for the instructor license to remain current.

Licenses are valid for two years.

License Renewal Requirements

Massage therapists must complete at least 12 hours of TDLR-approved or recognized continuing education to renew a license.

License Types	Fees
Massage Therapist	\$100
Massage Therapist renewal	\$75
Massage Therapy Instructor	\$100
Massage Therapy Instructor renewal	\$100
Massage Establishment	\$200
Massage Establishment renewal	\$200
Massage School	\$1,500
Massage School renewal	\$1,000
Massage Continuing Education Provider	\$200
Massage Therapy Student Permit	\$25

Continuing Education Audits now take place after a licensee renews. The purpose of the adopted rules is to ensure that Continuing Education (CE) audits do not delay the issuance of license renewals in affected programs. These rules allow for timing of the CE audit to occur before, during, or after the license renewal process, thereby preventing delays that could result in a lapse in licensure. This flexibility aims to avoid situations where the license holder's renewal is delayed due to the time needed to verify CE records, ensuring the license holder remains in good standing.

The **Massage Therapy Advisory Board** has nine members serving six-year terms, which includes:

- two licensed massage therapists;
- two licensed massage school representatives;
- two licensed massage establishment representatives;
- one peace officer with enforcement expertise regarding human trafficking and prostitution;
- two public members.