

Frequently Asked Questions—Licensing Process

Q: What is the process?

A: The state requires submission of an application and the payment of a fee for the license/certification you are requesting. By law, the OSBN may not begin to process your application unless the correct fee is paid. All fees and instructions for individual license and certification applications are clearly listed on each application.

Once the application/payment is received, the OSBN is required to determine if you meet the standards for safe nursing practice in Oregon. For examination or endorsement applications, requires a fingerprint-based criminal background check, transcripts from your original nursing program, verification of any current licenses, verification from your original licensing state, and a correctly completed application. Issues with any of the above may slow down or halt the application process.

Q: How long does it take to get a license?

A: The length of time is not predictable. There are many factors involved, such as:

- submission of a correct payment,
- submission of a correct application for the license type you are seeking,
- the criminal background check information received,
- our ability to receive verification that your license is active and without discipline (if you are licensed in another state), and
- receipt of transcripts (for first time applicants and applicants for endorsement).

The Board cannot guarantee nor predict a timeline for your application approval. We are not allowed to expedite any license other than those belonging to spouses of active duty military. We are not allowed to expedite licenses based upon job offers.

Q: If I call the Board about the status of my license, what will I be told?

A: The staff can let you know if your application is complete, if all your payments have been received, if we are awaiting any further documents, or if your application is in review. The staff **cannot** tell you why your application is in review, how long the review will take, or when your license can be expected to be issued.

The fastest way to find out the status of your application is to use our online Application Status Wizard: <https://osbn.oregon.gov/OSBNAppStatus/Search.aspx>. You'll be able to track when your payment is processed, when we receive your transcript, etc.

Q: So if there is no way to expedite my application, how can I move the process along faster?

A: By ensuring that you have provided the Board with the information needed to determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for safe practice in Oregon.

Most important, each application comes with a checklist that describes all the documents required for successful application submission. Read each one carefully and make sure that you follow the directions. If you do not submit the correct fees, this will stop your application process.

Disclose each and every arrest you have ever had, even if you think the charges were expunged. If you do not disclose an arrest and it is revealed during the fingerprint-based national background check, the Board needs to investigate and it will add weeks, if not months, to your application. States differ in expungement processes; if the arrest was expunged at the state level, it may not

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have been expunged at the national (FBI) level. If you disclose your entire arrest history on your application, there is a good chance (based upon the arrest and the outcome as well as the number of years since the arrest) that your disclosure will satisfy the application requirements and your application will continue to move forward.

If you are already licensed in another state, get your first license and current license verified by the state in which they were issued. If you have a license in the following states: Hawaii, California, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana LPN, and West Virginia RN, you must request that the state send us verification of licensure, there may be a fee involved from that state to send the verification. This may take several weeks to arrive at the OSBN.

If you are licensed in any other state and/or your original license was issued in any state **other** than those listed above, you need to apply to the NURSYS database for them to send us license verification (which is immediate). The directions on how to obtain a NURSYS license verification is listed at www.nursys.com.

Transcripts take the longest to arrive at the OSBN. Get your request into your school where you received your nursing education as soon as possible.

Q: Why does it take so long?

A: Although the requirements may seem extensive, the OSBN is charged with the safety of the public, not nursing advocacy or nursing employment. Oregon law guides the Board for the requirements of licensure. For example, in Oregon there must be proof that you graduated from an accredited school of nursing. Some states allow equivalency testing for a nursing license, but Oregon does not.

Oregon requires a fingerprint-based background check. If the check comes back positive, the Board must investigate the situation, particularly if the arrest has a relationship to safe nursing practice. For example, if you are working with a vulnerable population and you have had an arrest for domestic violence or shoplifting, these could influence decisions you could make in your practice. The length and scope of the investigation is controlled by the Board. Investigations could add weeks or months to your application. Once an investigation is opened, the Board staff cannot grant your license application; only the full Board (which meets 12 times a year) may grant your license approval. Board meeting times also influence how soon you will receive an answer on license approval.

Q: Why can't the OSBN verify my license with other states for me?

A: The NURSYS database is owned by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN). The requirements for license verification are written by the NCSBN and the fees involved for licensure verification are set by the NCSBN. The states not participating in NURSYS make their own rules and the requirement is that the request comes from the licensee.

Q: Why does the OSBN need my transcripts if I have already been working for years?

A: Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 678.040 (1)(2) states that the applicant must show proof they have graduated from an accredited school of nursing. Not all states have this requirement. Transcripts are currently the only way to verify this. The statute makes no allowance for experience or length of time since graduation. The OSBN, being a state agency, is required to follow the law. If your school no longer exists, you will need to contact the licensing Board in the state where you were originally licensed and ask them to send a copy of your transcript (that you submitted with your original application in that state) to the OSBN. The OSBN cannot do this for you.

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Q: Why does the background check take so long?

A: Fieldprint, the state's fingerprint vendor, sends fingerprints to the Oregon State Police (OSP) who in turn, will send them to the FBI. The FBI will not accept fingerprint requests from individual Boards; all fingerprint submission to the FBI must go through OSP. Once at the FBI, the fingerprints are run against the FBI database and results are returned to the OSP; the OSP then makes the results available to the OSBN. This process can take up to three weeks based upon the batching by the OSP and the FBI.

Once the OSBN receives the fingerprint results, we will open an investigation if there is a history of an arrest (as previously stated).

If you disclosed anything on your application, as requested by the disclosure questions, even if your fingerprints come back without a positive history, we will need to review the disclosure and make a decision on whether a case needs to be opened. Cases are opened according to Board-approved criteria.

Due to all the variables within the background check process, it is not possible to estimate a date of completion. Board staff are not authorized to provide any timeline for completion of the application. Regardless of your licensure in any other state, it is the responsibility of the OSBN to determine if you are safe to practice in Oregon.

Q: Does Oregon provide for a temporary license while we are waiting for all the documentation to get to the OSBN?

A: No, unless the application for licensure in Oregon meets the criteria listed in ORS 678.031, 7(e) and ORS 678.034 (temporary staffing shortages not due to a labor dispute). This allowance in the statute is currently only an option for intensive care units, coronary care units, emergency departments, and long-term care facilities. Employers are required to submit a request to the Board as required by Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 851-031-0040. Otherwise, an applicant working in the state of Oregon without a valid license is subject to civil penalty and a denial of licensure. Any role that requires a license is subject to this regulation even if the role requires no patient care.

Q: Why can't the OSBN use fingerprint results from my other licenses?

A: Since public protection is the primary mission of the OSBN, the criminal history information must be determined once an application has been submitted. This will give us the current criminal history. OSP will not accept fingerprints from other sources except those approved by the state. Instructions on how to submit fingerprints through state approved sources are listed in all applications. As an FYI, upon renewal of each license or certificate, the OSBN runs and Oregon only, non - fingerprint background checks.

Q: Why was I charged a \$100 late fee?

A: ORS 678.101 states that your license must be renewed by 12:01am on your birthday in either an odd or an even year (based on if you were born on an odd or even year). We must have your application and fee in hand prior to that time. Even if you mailed it and the postmark was prior to that time, we must have received it in the office by that time and date for your license to be considered "renewed on time." There is no grace period. The \$100 is not a late fee. It is a "in lieu of civil penalty" payment. Per state law, we can charge an overdue licensee \$50 per day for each day their license has expired, which could add up to hundreds of dollars for some licensees. To make this financial burden easier, the Board has approved a rule that states that if you renew within 60 days of expiration, you will pay the flat \$100 fee. If you renew after 60 days, you will be subject to the \$50 per day calculation. Please remember that as a license/certificate holder you are required to know

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the law and know when your license expires. While the Board will send out reminder notices starting at 90 days prior to the expiration date of your license, not receiving a reminder notice is not a valid reason to be late on renewal. There is no appeals process for this \$100 in lieu of civil penalty payment. One day late or 60 days late, the payment is \$100.

Q: How can I verify to my employer that I have a license since we do not get a card?

A: The Board stopped issuing cards in 2009. You and/or your employer may access the OSBN License verification line by going to our website, www.oregon.gov/osbn, and go to the Public Information section. Also, your employer may sign up with the OSBN for a subscription service which will allow the employer to get instant licensure updates.

Q: Can I do my Renewal over the phone?

A: No, you must fill out the online renewal form. There are disclosure questions that you must answer and there is a mandatory workforce survey, developed by the Oregon Health Authority (not the OSBN). At the bottom of the renewal application is a statement where you attest that you are the one who has filled out the form. You must complete your own application.

Q: I just got licensed a few months ago and have an expiration date coming up soon, why?

A: ORS 678 describes the expiration requirements of the license/certification. These expiration dates are linked to your birthdate. If you were born in an even numbered year, you renew in an even numbered year. If you were born in an odd numbered year, the renewal is due in an odd numbered year.

If you were licensed in an odd numbered year but you were born in an even numbered year, your renewal would be due on your next birthday since licenses cannot be granted for more than two years. This may mean that your first Oregon license is only good for a few months (depending on when your birthdate falls). While the OSBN acknowledges that this may seem unfair, this requirement is legislatively mandated.

Q: Can I use my EMT or Paramedic credentials to qualify for CNA?

A: No. The education for an EMT and a Paramedic is focused on the pre-hospital episodic care of a patient. CNA education is intended to provide the basis for consistent care of a patient within a health care facility and performing tasks delegated to the CNA by Registered Nurses. Many of the tasks involved in the Paramedic and EMT education process are not related to the authorized duties of the CNA. The only certification accommodation available is for the military medic; however, the medic would need to take the same tests required of anyone qualified for CNA certification.

Q: How do I get my CNA2 certification?

A: You can find all the information regarding the requirements of a CNA1 to become a CNA2 in Oregon Administrative Rule 851-062-0050 (3). You must be a CNA1, complete an approved CNA2 training course, and pass the competency evaluation. Please refer to the OAR chapter to determine what criteria for obtaining a CNA2 certification best fits your situation.

Q: I know that there are instructions on the website, but I don't have time to read them. Why can't the staff just walk me through it?

A: As an individual who is licensed or certified to care for the sick and fragile population in Oregon, it is expected that you be able to read and understand the instructions on how to obtain your license/certification. If you have technical problems with the online application, the staff can assist you. If you have questions about specific topics, the staff can assist you. However, the staff is not authorized to complete the application for you or explain the application process line by line.