



MIEMSS Factsheet on National Registry EMT (NREMT) Testing at the BLS Provider Level

MIEMSS began comprehensive efforts to upgrade Maryland EMS provider education and testing to national standards in 2009. The efforts required Maryland to adopt the National EMS Education Standards and to base State certification for Basic Life Support providers upon national testing standards through the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT). State licensure for Advanced Life Support providers has been based on NREMT testing for many years.

- The EMS Board approved the adoption of the National EMS Education Standards effective July 1, 2012.
- The move to NREMT testing was necessary because the test mechanism that Maryland had used for many years through the Atlantic EMS Council was being phased out, and states that had used this test mechanism were moving to NREMT testing.
- States in the Atlantic EMS Council that have previously moved to NREMT testing for BLS Providers, such as Virginia (beginning three years ago) experienced a drop in exam pass rates initially. Implementing similar strategies to the ones proposed for Maryland has resulted in increased pass rates, approaching the national average performance.
- In 2009, MIEMSS began efforts to educate and increase awareness regarding the National EMS Education Standards and the use of the NREMT for BLS Providers.
- Maryland is now one of 46 States that use NREMT testing for one or more EMS provider levels. At the BLS provider level, 40 states, the military, and the Department of Homeland Security require the use of NREMT for certification testing.
- Currently NREMT testing is required only for initial BLS certification in Maryland. BLS providers tested using the NREMT are not required to maintain a NREMT certification; and, current BLS providers are not required to obtain NREMT certification.
- MIEMSS pays the full cost of the applicant's first test.
- Ensuring high quality educational programs is key to student success. On an ongoing basis, MIEMSS is monitoring the overall exam passage rate and the passage rate by educational program, and will soon monitor exam passage rate by educational instructor. MIEMSS will work with educational programs with low passage rates to ensure that students are well prepared for NREMT testing.
- MIEMSS worked to increase the number of testing sites for BLS certification candidates from 5 testing sites to 12 testing sites located throughout Maryland. MIEMSS is continuing efforts to promote the addition of new testing sites.
- All stakeholders -- students and educators -- need to collaborate to ensure student success.
- MIEMSS is soliciting partner stakeholders to implement an out-of-classroom mentoring program to assist students in navigating the new testing environment (e.g., registering with NREMT for testing; scheduling exam date and site), MIEMSS is soliciting partner stakeholders to implement a Mentoring Program.

- A Best Practices Group of the BLS Committee to SEMSAC has been formed to provide recommendations for all stakeholders including EMS Education Programs, instructors, students, and company officers.
- To understand why some students were not taking or delaying scheduling of the NREMT exam, a survey was sent to eligible applicants with the help of MFRI. In total, 170 students filled out the survey. The main reasons for not taking the test were (note respondent could check more than one):
 - I do not feel prepared or ready to take the NREMT written exam – 48%
 - I have not had time/personal schedule conflicts – 39%
 - I am confused as to the procedure with setting up a date for the exam- 30%
- To help EMS instructors be prepared to answer student questions about NREMT testing, MIEMSS has:
 - Posted information about the process on their main website and the Instructors Corner.
 - Participated in a statewide rollout to educate instructors on the NREMT testing process.
- MIEMSS continues to work with EMS Education Programs and the NREMT to streamline the application process and increase the likelihood that students test as soon after course completion as possible.
- During FY2015, which covers the timeframe of the NREMT testing implementation, the number of EMTs in Maryland increased from 18,847 to 19,399.