

Pharmacy Technician Training Requirements

Guidance Document

As of January 1, 2014, the Board no longer renews the registration of a pharmacy technician who was initially registered after January 1, 2013, or who was initially registered prior to that date but did not maintain continuous registration unless the individual has completed a pharmacy technician training program. There are several types of training programs that will be acceptable, including:

- A pharmacy technician training program offered by a Board-approved, accredited vocational/technical institution or college.
- A pharmacy technician training program accredited by a Board-approved, national organization that accredits pharmacy technician training programs.
- A pharmacy technician training program provided by a branch of the United States armed forces or Public Health Service.
- An employer-based program that includes a minimum of 240 hours in a one year period of both theoretical and practical instruction.
- A Minnesota Board approved examination (currently there are two: Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) or ExCPT (Exam for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians).

The Board is aware of only one national organization that accredits pharmacy technician training programs at this time, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP).

Pharmacy technician training programs accredited by ASHP are automatically approved.

Vocational/Technical Institutions and Colleges

The Board has adopted the following standards for approval of accredited vocational/technical institutions and colleges. A vocational/technical institution or college will be considered Board-approved for the purpose of providing pharmacy technician training if the following are true.

- The pharmacy technician training program is accredited by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists or;
- The following conditions are met;
 - The institution or college, or the pharmacy technician training program, is accredited by an accrediting agency that is recognized by the United States Department of Education or;
 - Students attending the institution or college are eligible to receive federal financial aid and the pharmacy technician training program includes an experiential component, with technicians being trained under the supervision of a pharmacist.

The Board does not maintain a list of approved vocational/technical institutions and colleges. You may want to contact an institution or college that you are interested in to determine whether or not it meets the criteria above.

Accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education can be found on the U.S. Department of Education's website, https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg4.html. If an institution or college is not accredited by one of the agencies listed on this website, it will not be approved by the Board.

Programs that are offered strictly online and that have no requirement for completing "hands-on" training in a licensed pharmacy are not approved.

Employer-Based Programs

An employer-based program must include a minimum of 240 hours in a one-year period of both didactic and practical instruction.

- The practical instruction portion of the training is determined by the pharmacist-in-charge to ensure that the technician receives adequate training in the tasks performed at their pharmacy. The practical instruction may vary from pharmacy to pharmacy or employer to employer based on the scope of the practice or the practice setting as listed below in Section I under General Considerations.
- The didactic portion of the training shall include the minimum content areas listed below in Section II. The pharmacist-in-charge may write or develop a didactic program that meets the minimum content areas or choose to use one of the three Board approved didactic program providers.

Employer based program must be regularly updated and available for Board inspection. The following standards for an employer-based program were adopted by the Board at the June 20, 2012 meeting and contain the following considerations.

I. General Considerations

- The content areas, listed below, are required for all employer-based technician training programs.
- Minnesota Rules 6800.3850 Subp. 1h contains the provision that notwithstanding the fact that a technician has completed a training program as specified in item (B), it is the responsibility of the pharmacist-in-charge of a pharmacy to ensure that a technician receives adequate training in the tasks performed by technicians working at that pharmacy. Consequently, pharmacies may have to include additional content in their technician training program. For example, a pharmacy which utilizes technicians to assist in sterile compounding must include training that covers what technicians need to know about USP Chapter 797 standards. Similarly, a pharmacy that utilizes technicians to assist in non-sterile compounding must include training that covers what technicians need to know about USP Chapter 795 standards. Other examples include, but are not limited to, the use of automated drug distribution systems and unit-dose packaging or prepackaging of drugs.
- These are the minimum standards that must be met in order for a technician training program to be considered Board approved. However, pharmacies may develop training programs that include additional content areas.

II. Minimum content areas required for all employer-based pharmacy technician training programs

- Legal and ethical content
 - Requirements for a valid prescription drug order.
 - Requirements for a valid controlled substance prescription drug order.
 - Patient privacy (may be completed as separate training).
- Basic pharmaceutical calculations necessary for the preparation and dispensing of drug products.
- Basic information about commonly available drug dosage forms and routes of administration.
- Trade and generic names and the common indications for medications frequently dispensed by the pharmacy.
- Error prevention, reporting and follow-up. (May be completed as separate training).
- Dispensing processes:
 - Data entry
 - Retrieval of medication
 - Filling of containers/packaging of medications
- Affixing labels
- Pharmacist certification requirement

Supplemental Information

So far, the Board has approved three programs that can be used as part of an employer-based training program.

These programs can only be used for the written or didactic portion of the training. A pharmacy that relies on one of these programs must also develop a formal experiential or “hands-on” training component. The details concerning all aspects of an employer-based training program must be specified in a formal technician training manual. The manual must list specific activities that the technicians will be doing as part of the training, list how many hours of training will be provided in each training area, list who will do the training (which for the most part should be a pharmacist) and describe how the technician will be assessed for competency in each area. **A pharmacy that is using an employer-based training program must provide the technician with a document certifying that the training has been completed and must maintain records of which technicians have completed the training for at least two years after the training is complete.** The three programs that have been approved for the didactic portion of the training are as follows.

- Pharmacy Technicians University. This is an online program that has been developed by the publisher of Pharmacists Letter. The website is located at <http://info.therapeuticresearch.com/ptu>.
- *Mosby's Pharmacy Technician Principles and Practice*, by Teresa Hopper. Textbook, workbook and e-book available.
- Career Step—Pharmacy Technician. This is an online program with textbooks. Their website is www.careerstep.com.
- NHA's PharmaSeer™ is a digital learning resource built to supplement existing pharmacy technician training or education programs. For more information, visit <https://info.nhanow.com/onepartner>.

Certifying Technician Training with the Board

Upon their first renewal, technicians will have to check a box certifying they have completed the required training. Technicians who register in the last half of the year will be allowed to renew their registration once without having completed training but will have to complete the training before their second renewal.

Training Audits

The Board conducts an audit of technicians on a rolling monthly basis, i.e., technicians are audited 12 months after the month during which they were initially registered. Those individuals who have indicated during the renewal process that they completed a training program but cannot provide proof that this training was completed will be subject to disciplinary action.

While the Board does not require employers to send in copies of training certificates, employers may be held accountable if they continue to employ a technician who has not met the training requirement.

Consequently, employers would be well-advised to make sure that any technician that they hire has either met the training requirement or is exempt from it as a result of being continuously registered before January 1, 2013. Technician training must be completed within 12 months from the date of original registration or reinstatement. In very limited cases, the Board may grant a one-time extension for extenuating circumstances. Only submit an extension request if you are able to provide documentation to substantiate an actual hardship. If training is not completed following an approved extension, no additional extensions will be granted and the technician registration will not be renewed.

A pharmacy technician who has not completed this training, but is otherwise eligible for renewal of his or her registration, may apply for renewal provided that: less than six months has elapsed between the date of initial registration as a pharmacy technician and the date of the pharmacy technician's first renewal of registration; or the pharmacy technician shows satisfactory evidence of being enrolled in a pharmacy technician training program offered by a board-approved, accredited vocational/technical institution or college, when the program is longer than six months in length.