



Montana Department of LABOR & INDUSTRY

Montana Board of Barbers and Cosmetologists

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

(Updated 10/25/24)

General Information

You can access all the board's statutes and administrative rules on the board website under the *Regulations* menu or through these links:

- [ARM Title 24, chapter 121](#) (board and profession specific rules)
- [MCA Title 37, chapter 31](#) (board and profession specific statutes)
- [ARM Title 24, chapter 101](#) (general department rules)
- [MCA Title 37, chapter 1](#) (general department statutes)

If you are interested in receiving notification of upcoming board meetings and proposed rulemaking you can subscribe to our interested parties list through the [department website portal](#). You can also find past and upcoming meeting information on the [board meeting webpage](#).

General Licensing Questions

Question: What professions does this board license and regulate and what are the licensing requirements?

- Barber – [license requirements](#)
- Barber nonchemical – [license requirements](#)
- Cosmetologist – [license requirements](#)
- Electrologist – [license requirements](#)
- Esthetician – [license requirements](#)
- Teachers – [license requirements](#)
- Manicurist – [license requirements](#)
- Salon/Shop – [license requirements](#)
- School or Course – [license requirements](#)
- Booth Renter – [license requirements](#)

For more information visit the board's website at <http://boards.bsd.dli.mt.gov/cos>.

Question: How do I apply for a license?

Apply for a license using our [online application](#). Paying the fee at the end is what submits the application so one of our processing staff members can begin reviewing your application. Once you submit the application the processor will be in contact with you within ten business days via e-mail with any additional questions and/or requests for information or documents. It's okay to submit an application to begin the review process even if you are still collecting information or documents.

Question: Do I have to wait for a board meeting so the board can review my application?

License applications that are routine can be issued by department staff without board review. However, applications that are nonroutine must be evaluated by the board at a scheduled meeting.

[ARM 24.101.402](#)(12) "Nonroutine application" means an application that staff has determined requires board review, because it involves:

- (a) evidence of unprofessional conduct as defined by law or rule;
- (b) materials that require evaluation by the professional members of the board to determine compliance with qualifications for licensure;
- (c) missing documentation due to natural disaster, national emergency, or other good cause supported by reliable information;
- (d) a matter specifically defined by board or program rule or law as nonroutine; or
- (e) an issue staff deems necessary for the board to review.

The board's specific rules regarding what is nonroutine can be found in [ARM 24.121.406](#), [24.121.408](#), and [24.101.406](#).

Question: I am already licensed in another state. How do I get licensed in Montana?

If you already hold a license in another state you still have to submit an application for a Montana license using our [online application](#). Staff will evaluate your application based first on that state's current licensing laws and then by your qualifications, if necessary.

Question: Can I get a temporary license?

In order to potentially qualify for a temporary license you still must submit a regular license application. Staff will review your application to determine if you meet the criteria for that type of temporary license.

- Applicants for barber, barber nonchemical, cosmetologist, electrologist, esthetician, and manicurist can qualify for a temporary license if staff determine your application is routine and you meet all the licensing requirements except having passed the written and or practical licensing exams (see [37-1-305](#)(2), MCA).
- Applicants for a salon/shop can qualify for a temporary license if staff have determined your application is routine and you meet all the licensing requirements except having passed your initial inspection ([ARM 24.121.410](#)(4)). Department staff will work with you to schedule the initial inspection once they determine the rest of your application is complete.
- Applicants for teacher and school/course(s) do not qualify for temporary licenses.

Question: How do I schedule an inspection for my salon/shop or school?

Department staff inspectors conduct initial inspections as part of the application process. They are scheduled while working with staff as part of the license application process. Annual inspections are conducted by department inspectors once a salon/shop or school is licensed and can be conducted with or without notice (see [ARM 24.121.410](#)).

Question: I already have a licensed salon/shop but am moving to a new location. Do I need to apply for a new license?

Yes. Salon/shop licenses are based on both physical location and ownership. If you are moving to a new location you will need to log into your [existing license account](#) and submit an application for a new shop/salon license.

Question: The ownership is changing at my salon/shop but the new owner(s) plan to operate it in the same location. Do they need to apply for a new license?

Yes. Salon/shop licenses are based on both physical location and ownership. If the ownership is changing by greater than 50% the new owner(s) must get a new license in order to operate the shop/salon even if the location was previously licensed to a different owner (see [ARM 24.121.412](#)). There is not grace period to operate under the old owner's license. The new owner must be issued a license in order to conduct business.

Question: What is a booth renter license and do I need one?

A booth renter license is for a licensee who works in a salon/shop but is not the owner or an employee of the owner. Booth renter licenses are not location specific and allow licensees to work in any licensed salon/shop where they are not an owner or employee.

Question: How do I renew my license? When do I renew my license? How much does it cost?

Renew your license online during the renewal period by logging into your existing [license account](#). Renewal fees can be found in [ARM 24.121.401](#).

- Barbers, cosmetologists, electrologists, manicurists, estheticians, and teachers renew **every two years**. Renewal opens on January 1 and ends on March 1.
- Schools renew **annually**. Renewal opens on January 1 and ends on March 1.
- Salons, shops, and booth renters renew **annually**. Renewal opens on May 1 and ends on June 30.

Question: What school should I attend to get education to become licensed in Montana?

If you are interested in attending a school in Montana you can use our [online licensee lookup](#) to find a list of schools with active licenses in Montana. After you search for schools you can click on each license and see what courses that school is licensed to teach.

If you attend in a school in another state that is regulated under that state's laws and apply for a Montana license, we would evaluate your education based on the education requirements under [ARM 24.121.604](#) and [37-31-304, MCA](#); or, for teachers, [ARM 24.121.607](#) and [37-31-305, MCA](#).

Scope of Practice Questions

Question: What is my scope of practice and what can I do under my license?

The scope(s) of practice for all professions licensed under this board can be found in [37-31-101, MCA](#). You can also see specific areas of study and training that applicants are required to have in order to qualify for licensure in Montana under [ARM 24.121.604](#).

Question: Can licensees under this board engage in medical esthetics and perform surgical or invasive procedures?

No. All licensees under this board are limited to noninvasive procedures as defined by the board in ARM 24.121.301(13) below. See also your specific scope of practice in [37-31-101, MCA](#).

[ARM 24.121.301](#)(13) "Noninvasive" means superficial procedures confined to the nonliving cells of the epidermis, specifically the stratum corneum layer, and through which living cells beneath the stratum corneum are never altered, cut, or scarred.

For more information on medical esthetics, medical spas and possibly practicing as an unlicensed assistant who is not regulated by this board and who works under supervision by a licensed medical professional with that licensee's patients, you can view the [Medical Spas and Cosmetic Medical Procedures FAQ](#).

Question: What are the board's regulations concerning facilities known as medical spas?

Medical spa is not defined by statute or rule. They are not licensed as facilities by this or any other licensing board. In common business usage, the term medical spa means a facility offering cosmetic medical procedures that exceed the scope of practice of licensees under the Board of Barbers and Cosmetologists. In other words, a medical spa is a facility that provides medical cosmetic procedures by licensed healthcare professionals as part of their healthcare practice. For more information see [Medical Spas and Cosmetic Medical Procedures FAQ](#).

Question: Does this board license tattooing, piercing, permanent makeup, microblading, etc.?

No. Those procedures fall outside the scope of your license under this board and are regulated by [Department of Public Health and Human Services Food and Consumer Safety Section](#). Contact that agency for more information on its regulations. However, please keep in mind that if you are operating another type business not regulated by this board including tattooing, etc., then that area must be separated by at least a full lengthy partition from the area licensed and regulated as a salon/shop ([ARM 24.121.407](#)(2)).

General Questions

Question: I am a licensee and work out of a licensed salon/shop. Can I provide services outside the salon/shop in another location?

Yes, you can as described below in the exemption. However, you must be based out of a licensed shop/salon in order to provide services to clients in other locations.

[MCA 37-31-301](#)(1):

Without an appropriate license issued under this chapter, it is unlawful:... (e) to practice barbering, barbering nonchemical, cosmetology, electrology, esthetics, or manicuring outside a licensed salon or shop as provided in this chapter, except when a licensee is requested:

(i) by a customer to go to a place other than a licensed salon or shop and is sent to the customer from a licensed salon or shop..."

Place of residence means a home; assisted living facility; intermediate care facility for the developmentally disabled; hospice; a critical access hospital; long-term care facility; or residential treatment facility ([37-31-101](#)(18), MCA)

Question: I am licensed under this board and would like to provide clients alcoholic beverages at my salon/shop. What are the board's laws pertaining to alcohol in shops/salons?

The Board of Barbers and Cosmetologists and the Department of Labor and Industry do not regulate alcohol in salons/shops. For more information on these regulations you will need to contact the [Department of Revenue Alcoholic Beverage Control Division](#). The [bottle club fact sheet](#) that agency developed might also be of use but you should contact that agency if you have more questions.

Question: How do I obtain a list/mailling list of licensees under this board?

You can request a mailing list of licensees through our [online portal](#).

License Status, Complaints, and Board Disciplinary Action Questions

Question: How do I find out if someone is licensed and/or if their license has been disciplined?

You can look up licensees using our [online lookup](#) system. The lookup will show the current license status. If a licensee has been disciplined a copy of that final order(s) will be included with their record for public access.

Question: How do I file complaint for potential unlicensed practice or unprofessional conduct by a licensee?

Information on how to file a complaint and the complaint process itself can be found on the department's [compliant webpage](#).

Question: How do I request an official license verification of my license?

Submit your request using our online [license verification request](#). You can have the verification sent to an e-mail address or physical mailing address.