

# New Requirements for Massage Businesses



On February 4, 2020, the County of Los Angeles (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) approved new requirements for massage establishments. Below are frequently asked questions received by the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the County's Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTC). The answers will help massage establishment owners understand and meet the new legal requirements for a County Public Health Permit and Business License.

These new requirements only apply to businesses in the unincorporated area of the County. To determine if your business is located in an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County, visit <http://gis.lacounty.gov/districtlocator/> and enter your business address, or visit <https://lavote.net/apps/precinctsmaps> and select "District Map Look Up by Address" in the drop-down box under the title "Precincts Maps Application," to confirm if your business is located in the unincorporated area of the County.

## Department of Public Health - Frequently Asked Questions:

- 1. Who is required to get a Public Health Permit?**  
In general, any place of business providing massage services for compensation (money) requires a Public Health Permit. For a list of exceptions, please visit the following website: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/misc/MassageEstmentInfo.htm>.
- 2. How do I get a public health permit?**  
DPH staff will issue a Public Health Permit to massage establishments after it conducts a site evaluation and ensures requirements are met. For additional information, please visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh>.
- 3. How much is the Public Health Permit Fee?**  
The annual Public Health Permit fee is \$409. DPH requires a site evaluation to determine if a Public Health Permit can be issued. The fee for the site evaluation is \$164.
- 4. If I already have a California Massage Therapy Council (CAMTC) certification, why do I need a public health permit?**  
The CAMTC certifies the massage therapist; it does not regulate the operation and requirements for the massage establishment. The issuance of a Public Health Permit entails a site evaluation process to ensure massage establishments meet health and safety codes.
- 5. Why are inspections needed?**  
Regular inspection of massage establishments ensures compliance with the County's new law, including business license requirements and public health permit requirements. Inspections will help ensure the safe, legal operation of massage establishments in the unincorporated County and local cities adopting the new law.



**6. When will inspections start?**

DPH staff will conduct a site evaluation prior to any inspections. The DPH will issue the Public Health Permit when the massage establishment meets the requirements and it will inspect massage establishments any time within the year after a massage establishment receives a Public Health Permit.

For additional questions regarding the public health permit, please call (888) 700-9995 or email [massageparlor@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:massageparlor@ph.lacounty.gov).

---

**Treasurer and Tax Collector - Frequently Asked Questions:**

**1. When will the new massage establishment requirements take effect?**

The new requirements went into effect on March 4, 2020.

**2. Are there any restrictions to where I can operate a massage establishment?**

Yes, there are zoning and land use restrictions for the location of a massage establishment. prior to signing a lease and applying for the required licenses and/or permits, please contact the County Department of Regional Planning (DRP) to verify whether you may operate a massage establishment at your intended location. The DRP may be reached at [zoningldcc@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:zoningldcc@planning.lacounty.gov) or (213) 974-6411.

**3. Can I use a home-based residence as the location for my massage establishment business?**

No, you may not use your home or anyone else's home as the location of your business. Both the DRP and the TTC will deny your application if the proposed business location is a residence. The County's zoning laws prohibit the operation of a massage business from home-based locations.

**4. Why is the County enacting these new requirements for massage establishments and technicians?**

The Board finds that preventing and addressing human trafficking is a top priority for the County. Violations of law in the areas of public health, wage and labor, and general public safety often are an integral part of human trafficking. The Board also recognizes that, when operated professionally and legally, massage establishments provide valuable health and therapeutic services to the public. However, massage establishments have a history of abuse in prostitution and are prone to vice and other violations, often with links to human trafficking.

The new requirements seek to curb and prevent the potential for human trafficking and other abuses in massage establishments through a combination of enhanced business licensing and Public Health Permit requirements, including but not limited to inspections, reporting requirements, and operational restrictions, as well as review and coordination with law enforcement.

**5. Who do the new requirements apply to?**

The new requirements will apply to new and existing massage establishment owners and certain technicians providing massages in the unincorporated area of the County and in the cities of Malibu, Santa Clarita, or Westlake Village.





**6 What are the new massage establishment requirements?**

At a general level, below are the new requirements:

- CAMTC certification requirement for massage practitioners conducting massage services in private rooms or areas with doors, curtains, or other devices capable of being closed, or
- TTC Massage Technician Business License requirement for technicians who only conduct massages in open areas,
- Unobstructed windows at massage establishments,
- Prohibition of sleeping quarters on the premises,
- Client entrance through the front door only,
- Payment only at the reception area, and
- Posting of a human trafficking notice in a prominent location (information about the notice can be found at <https://oag.ca.gov/human-trafficking/model-notice>).
- Massage establishments must display list of services prominently inside the establishment, including the cost and duration of services. Advertising, including on the internet, may not suggest that services are available other than those listed in the establishment.
- Massage establishments must obtain a Public Health Permit from the DPH to operate legally.

**7. Will I need anything other than the licenses listed above to operate a massage establishment?**

Yes, in addition to the changes listed here, massage establishments must obtain a Public Health Permit from DPH to operate legally.

**8. What does the Human Trafficking Notice requirement entail?**

California law requires certain businesses such as massage establishments to post a Human Trafficking Notice in a highly visible location. The notice is to inform the public and victims of human trafficking of telephone hotline numbers to seek help or report unlawful activity (California Civil Code Section 52.6). There are specific posting mandates, language requirements, and penalties for failure to post. The mandated notice is available to download at <https://oag.ca.gov/human-trafficking/model-notice>. Each mandated business is required to post the notice in English, Spanish, and a third language.

**9. Do I need both a Public Health Permit and a TTC Massage Establishment Business License before I can operate?**

Yes, you must have both to be in compliance with the new requirements.

**10. If I am an existing business, how much time do I have to obtain a Public Health Permit?**

Existing businesses will have until July 2, 2020.

**11. How long will it take to receive a Public Health permit?**

The DPH will issue a Public Health Permit after the business meets health and safety requirements and provides evidence of a valid business license.

**12. How do I know if the massage technicians at my establishment require Massage Technician Business Licenses or CAMTC certifications?**

If your establishment contains any private rooms with doors, curtains, or other devices capable of being closed, massage technicians who conduct massages in such rooms must be CAMTC certified by March 4, 2022.



If your establishment has open areas only, the massage technicians are required to obtain a TTC Massage Technician Business License by March 4, 2022.

**13. Am I required to have a manager on the premises during hours of operation and does the manager need to have a Manager Business License?**

Yes, you do need to have a manager on the premises. However, a Manager's Business License is not required.

**14. Do I need to reapply every year to renew my Massage Establishment Business License?**

Yes, you will need to complete a new application every year and receive approval from the Los Angeles County Business License Commission annually to operate.

**15. Will there be a Public Health inspection every year?**

Yes, part of the renewal process is to pass a public health inspection every year.

**16. Who can I contact if I have more questions or need to apply for a business license?**

You can contact the TTC Business License Section at (213) 974-2011 or [businesslicense@ttc.lacounty.gov](mailto:businesslicense@ttc.lacounty.gov).



# New Requirements for Massage Technicians



The County of Los Angeles (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) approved changes to massage technician requirements on February 4, 2020. Massage technicians must now follow the new requirements to retain or obtain their Business License.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### 1. When will the new massage technician requirements be implemented?

The new requirements went into effect on March 4, 2020.

### 2. What are the new massage technician requirements?

The County now has a two-tier system of identifying massage technicians, with independent requirements for each, as follows:

#### **Tier 1 - Massage Technicians**

- Massage Technician Business License issued by the County Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTC) is required for massage technicians who will conduct massages in open areas only
- Criminal background check not required for massage technicians
- 2 (Two) years' experience or equivalent combination of education and experience required before applying for a license
- Massage technicians will have until March 4, 2022, to come into compliance

#### **Tier 2 - Professionals**

- California Massage Therapy Council (CAMTC) certification required for massage therapists or massage practitioners who will conduct massages in private rooms capable of being closed
- Applicants must apply with CAMTC for certification; no County business license requirement
- Massage therapists and massage practitioners have until March 4, 2022, to come into compliance

### 3. What are the educational and experience requirements for obtaining a Massage Technician Business License?

If you plan to fulfill the requirements through education alone, you will need 500 education hours from a massage therapy school that complies substantially with the requirements under the California Business and Professions Code Section 4604. If you plan to rely on both education and work experience, you will need an equivalent combination of 2 years' education and experience. If you plan to qualify only through work experience, you will need 2 years of massage therapy experience.

### 4. Do education programs outside California qualify as CAMTC-approved programs?

No. Schools outside of California do not qualify for meeting the 500-hour requirement for CAMTC approval.



5. **Do the new massage technician requirements apply to me?**  
Yes. If you are not certified by CAMTC, these requirements apply to you.
6. **Who is exempt from the licensing requirements?**  
Certain subsets of professionals such as physicians, surgeons, and physical therapists are exempt. Additionally, barbers and cosmetologists who are duly licensed under State law are exempt if their massage services are limited to the neck, face, scalp, hands, or feet. For a complete list of the exemptions, please review the County Ordinance itself.
7. **Who is required to obtain a CAMTC certification?**  
If you plan to conduct massages in private rooms capable of being closed, you are required to obtain a CAMTC certification. Massage technicians seeking CAMTC certification must complete a 500-hour massage therapy education program that is accredited by the CAMTC. The CAMTC-approved schools can be found at <https://www.camtc.org/schools.aspx> or by contacting the CAMTC at (916) 669-5336.
8. **Who is not required to obtain a CAMTC certification?**  
If you do not plan to conduct massages in private rooms capable of being closed, you are not required to be CAMTC-certified. However, you are required to obtain a Massage Technician Business License from the TTC if you will be conducting massage services in any open area of a massage establishment.
9. **If I am certified through the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Body Work (NCBTMB), am I exempt from any of the proposed licensing requirements?**  
No. Your national certification from NCBTMB is a voluntary certification, not a license. Licenses are issued by government entities and provide licensed professionals with specific authority to use a protected title and/or perform specific services.
10. **What if I work at an establishment that has open areas *and* private rooms capable of being closed, am I required to be CAMTC-certified?**  
It depends. If you will conduct massages in private rooms capable of being closed, then you need to be CAMTC-certified. If you plan to work in open areas exclusively then you only need a Massage Technician Business License from the TTC.
11. **Where can I get more information on the clothing requirements?**  
Please consult Section 11.36.070 of the County Code for additional information. You can access the information through [https://library.municode.com/ca/los\\_angeles\\_county/](https://library.municode.com/ca/los_angeles_county/).
12. **If I am an existing massage technician, how much time do I have to obtain a CAMTC certification or a TTC Massage Technician Business License?**  
You have until March 4, 2022, to obtain a CAMTC certification or a TTC Massage Technician Business License.
13. **If I am a new massage technician, how much time do I have to obtain a CAMTC certification or a TTC Massage Technician Business License?**  
You have until March 4, 2022.
14. **What happens if I don't meet the new massage technician requirements by the deadline?**  
You run the risk of losing your business license and no longer being able to operate as a



massage technician within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County and in the cities of Malibu, Santa Clarita, and Westlake Village. Additionally, if you apply for a business license in another county, the local licensing authority may deny your license application.

**15. Are there continuing education requirements for maintaining my Massage Technician Business License?**

No.

**16. Does the new Public Health Permit requirement apply to massage technicians?**

No. The Public Health Permit requirement only applies to massage establishments.

**17. Am I allowed to practice out of my own home?**

No. Zoning laws prohibit massage-based businesses in home-based residential locations.

**18. Who can I contact if I have further questions or need to apply for a business license?**

You can contact the TTC Business License Section at (213) 974-2011 or [businesslicense@ttc.lacounty.gov](mailto:businesslicense@ttc.lacounty.gov).

For questions or comments on the Public Health Permit requirements for massage establishments, you can call (626) 430-5205 to speak to a representative or email [permitfees@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:permitfees@ph.lacounty.gov).

