

ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

FOR

*Licensed Massage and Bodywork Therapists
in the State of North Carolina*



NORTH CAROLINA BOARD *of* MASSAGE & BODYWORK THERAPY

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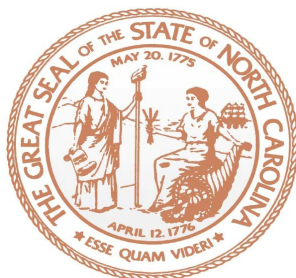
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North Carolina Board of Massage & Bodywork Therapy

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Congratulations on becoming a **Licensed Massage and Bodywork Therapist** in the State of North Carolina. As you are now part of a recognized health care profession, your new status as a licensee conveys certain benefits, as well as legal responsibilities.

This Orientation Handbook is designed to provide you with the basic information you will need to conduct your professional activities according to standards set by the State. Understanding that legal documents are sometimes hard to read, this Handbook is written in a more “user-friendly” style.

The **Massage and Bodywork Therapy Practice Act** (*Practice Act*) was passed in November 1998 by the **North Carolina General Assembly** for the protection of the public. This Practice Act is now part of the laws of this State, which are collectively known as the **North Carolina General Statutes** (G.S.).

The **North Carolina Board of Massage & Bodywork Therapy** (*Board*) is the agency responsible for implementing and administering the regulatory program for individual therapists and for schools of massage and bodywork therapy. To carry out this program, the Board has adopted **Rules & Regulations** (*Rules*), which are based on the mandates of the Practice Act, as well as a set of **Guidelines**, which list specific requirements based on the Rules.

The Licensure Application Package you received from the Board included a printed copy of the Practice Act and Rules. You are encouraged to keep this booklet on hand for your reference. You may also access the Practice Act, Rules, and Guidelines on the **Board’s Website**, www.bmbt.org – along with forms for license renewal, past issues of the Board Newsletter, and other information.

As a licensee, you are expected to:

- Know, understand and follow all Laws, Rules and Guidelines which apply to the practice of massage and bodywork therapy
- Uphold a high standard of professional conduct
- Renew your license from the Board every two years
- Obtain a state privilege license each year from the North Carolina Department of Revenue (*separate from your license to practice – see page 15*)
- Inform the Board of potential violations of Laws, Rules or Guidelines by licensees, schools, or unlicensed operators

This Handbook will only be of benefit to you if you read it thoroughly. It contains excerpts from the Rules and Regulations as well as explanations of key sections. If you still have questions about the requirements after reading the Handbook, you are encouraged to confer with fellow licensees. You may also contact the Board Office by emailing admin@bmbt.org if you need further assistance.

TERM OF LICENSE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSE RENEWAL

Practice Act G.S. 90-632

Rules Sections .0205, .0303

Guidelines 1.1, 5.3, 5.4

The Board grants licenses for a period up to **two years**, beginning on January 1. You are required to renew your license by **November 1** preceding the date your license expires. If you have not renewed your license

by the December 31 expiration date, your license is considered **expired** and you would be practicing massage and bodywork therapy without a license. Be sure to get your renewal application in on time so that you will not be subject to disciplinary action.

Typically, the Board will send out a renewal package to licensees. However, it **is your responsibility** to meet the licensure renewal deadlines, whether or not you have received these materials from the Board in a timely manner.

If a license has been expired for more than 24 months, it cannot be renewed – the holder of such a license must apply for a new license, according to the requirements at that time.

To renew your license, you must submit the following:

- A completed **Application for Licensure Renewal**
- Documentation that you have completed at least **24 hours if your licensure period is two years or more, or 12 hours if your licensure period is less than two years, of continuing education from an approved provider:**
 - For initial renewal, from the date your license was issued to November 1 of the year your license expires (OR)
 - For subsequent renewals, the 27-month period preceding the November 1 deadline for renewal
- **\$100 Renewal Fee**, which may be in the form of a personal check, money order, or bank check.

ADVERTISING REQUIREMENTS

Practice Act G.S. 90-623

Rules Section .0404

You are required to include **your name and license number** in all promotion of your massage and bodywork therapy services, whether or not you use a trade name. Your license number may be listed as: Licensed Massage and Bodywork Therapist (#2845), or NC License #2845.

Promotion of your services is considered to be any form of advertising in any written, printed, broadcast, or computer-based form. This would include actual advertisements in newspapers, yellow pages, or radio; your business cards and practice brochures; signage for your place of business; or websites. (The only exception to this requirement is a standard single-line listing in the yellow pages, where just your name and business phone are printed in plain type.)

If you provide massage and bodywork therapy as an employee or independent contractor, the employer or business may advertise on your behalf, so long as all requirements are met.

DISPLAY OF LICENSE; CHANGE OF ADDRESS

RULES SECTIONS

.0302, .0401, .0403

You are required to **display your Certificate of Licensure** in your place of practice where it can be easily seen. If you are working in more than one location, or are providing treatment at the location of clients, you must have a photocopy of your Certificate of Licensure available for inspection upon request.

You are required to **notify the Board within 30 days of any change in:** your name, residence street address, mailing address, work address, home phone, work phone, or trade name.

CONTINUING EDUCATION STANDARDS

Practice Act G.S. 90-632

Rules Section .0700

Guideline 5.2

The Practice Act requires **24 hours** of continuing education as a condition of license renewal if your licensure period is two years or more. If your licensure period is less than two years, you are required to take **12 hours** of continuing education to renew your license. The Board has established Rules for what constitutes an approved provider of continuing education, and what constitutes an approved course. These Rules are intended to give licensees a broad range of educational options, while ensuring that providers demonstrate accountability to professional standards.

The Board has established the following definitions and standards:

Approved continuing education: Learning experiences that enhance and expand the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of massage and bodywork therapists that enable them to render competent professional service to clients, the profession and the public.

Approved continuing education provider: A provider of learning experiences to massage and bodywork therapists that meets one of the following criteria:

- The provider has been granted the designation of *Approved Provider for Continuing Education* by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB); or
- A course approved by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM); or
- The provider is an *accredited post-secondary institution of higher learning*, and offers courses that meet the Board's definition of continuing education

One "hour" of continuing education: At least 50 minutes of any one clock hour during which the student participates in a learning activity in the physical presence of an instructor, or in a distance learning activity designed by an approved provider. One semester credit hour at an accredited post-secondary institution (*college or university*) shall be equivalent to 16 clock hours.

Distance learning: Courses taken by home study, which are produced by an approved provider, whether delivered by videotape, audiotape, printed materials, or computer-based means. The licensee shall be required to demonstrate course completion and comprehension of learning to the provider before documentation is given. You may apply a maximum of 12 hours of distance learning towards the required continuing education hours per licensure period.

As a licensee, **it is your responsibility to ensure that each course for which you claim credit is offered by an "approved continuing education provider"**.

Documentation of continuing education may be in the form of a certificate of completion (*from an approved provider*) or an academic transcript (*from a college or university course*). Remember to keep all of your documentation. You will **submit photocopies** with your license renewal. Certificates of completion must have the approved provider number, date of course and name of massage therapist printed on the certificate. If you earn more than the minimum 24 hours of continuing education in a given licensure period, you may not carry over those hours to the following licensure period.

How can you find approved continuing education courses?

There are more than 1500 providers across the country, which have been approved by NCBTMB – a listing of which may be found at www.ncbtmb.com. You may also check the major publications such as *Massage Magazine*, *Massage Therapy Journal*, *Massage Today*, or *Massage & Bodywork* for educational listings.

In addition, professional conferences and conventions commonly offer courses, which will meet the requirements for license renewal.

PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

Practice Act G.S. 90-623

Rules Section .0301

Guideline 2.1

The Board has adopted a standard, which requires all licensees to use the same basic designation to convey a consistent professional identity to the public. This will assist the public in being able to seek out licensed practitioners, and will strengthen the profession as a whole by establishing a unified image.

When you are promoting yourself as a licensee in your professional communications, you must **always use** the professional title, **Licensed Massage and Bodywork Therapist**, OR the letters **L.M.B.T.** No other form or variation of this designation is acceptable.

You may not use any **other letters or abbreviations** after your name when promoting yourself as a licensee, except for the following types of professional designations:

- Abbreviations indicating an Associate, Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degree from an accredited post-secondary institution, such as A.A., B.S., M.A., Ph.D
- Abbreviations indicating another occupational license, such as D.C., R.N., L.P.C.
- The abbreviation N.C.T.M.B. for those holding current certification with the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork; or
- The abbreviation Dipl. O.B.T. (NCCAOM) for those holding current certification with the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

While a consistent professional identity is beneficial, the Board also recognizes the diversity represented in the wide range of modalities and therapeutic systems which licensees may utilize in their practices.

In addition to your primary identification as a Licensed Massage and Bodywork Therapist, you may also use other words descriptive of your work, such as areas of clinical specialty and advanced certifications. Here are some examples:

Diana Martinez

Licensed Massage and Bodywork Therapist (#395)
Nationally Certified in Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork
Swedish Massage for Relaxation and Wellness

Sara Bennett-Johnson

Licensed Massage and Bodywork Therapist (#2190)
Advanced Certified Rolfer®
Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner

David R. Cohen, LMBT

Oriental Bodywork Practitioner
Shiatsu, Acupressure and Thai Massage
NC License #1633

Annette Rogers, LMBT

Specializing in Neuromuscular Therapy
and Pain Management
NC License #72

Consistent with the Board Rules, you may offer and promote **only** those services you are **qualified to perform**. The Board has not established formal standards for individual modalities or advanced certifications. Therefore, you are responsible for ensuring that you have achieved a **professional level of knowledge and skill** in every area of practice, which you promote to the public.

USING A TRADE NAME

G.S. Chapter 66, Article 14

Rules Section .0402

If you conduct business under any name other than your own, you are using what's known as a **trade name**. Examples of trade names are: *Uptown Massage Therapy Center, Barbara's Bodywork Studio, Touch Therapy Associates, The Neuromuscular Clinic, etc.*

Under North Carolina law, a sole proprietor or partnership is required to **file a Certificate of Assumed Name** with the **Register of Deeds** in each county where business is conducted under a trade name. Corporations must register their names with the Secretary of State's Corporations Division. In addition, you are also required to send the Board a copy of all assumed name certificates, which have been filed.

REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR PLACE OF PRACTICE

Rules Sections .0507, .0513

As a licensee, it is your responsibility to practice massage and bodywork therapy in locations, which are **safe and sanitary**. The facility requirements adopted by the Board apply whether you have full control over your treatment environment as a self-employed practitioner, or limited control as an independent contractor or employee.

For the protection of the public, every place you provide professional services must:

- Comply with all state and local building code requirements, as well as fire, safety, and health inspection codes
- Maintain all equipment used in the practice of massage and bodywork therapy in a safe and sanitary condition
- Launder or sanitize, before reuse, all materials furnished for the personal use of the client, including towels and linens
- Provide adequate toilet and lavatory (sink) facilities for the client, which are maintained in a sanitary condition
- If your facility is equipped with a whirlpool bath, sauna, steam cabinet, or steam room, maintain adequate and clean shower facilities on the premises
- Maintain a lavatory for hand cleansing with hot and cold running water, or have available a chemical germicidal product designed to disinfect and cleanse your hands without the use of a lavatory

Note some limited exceptions: The building inspection, toilet, and lavatory requirements do not apply for treatments which are given at the location of a client, or for treatments given at a temporary location lasting not more than 14 days such as a trade show or sporting event.

HYGIENE AND DRAPING STANDARDS

Rules Section .0506, .0507

Guidelines 3.1, 3.2

You are required to maintain a professional **standard of hygiene** in the practice of massage and bodywork therapy. Before and after each treatment, you must **cleanse and disinfect your hands** by using hot soap and water or a chemical germicidal product designed to work without water.

At all times, you must **maintain a barrier of unbroken skin** on your hands and forearms. In the case of broken skin, use a finger cot, glove or chemical barrier product to cover the affected area during treatment.

You are required to maintain a sufficient supply of clean drapes, for the purpose of **draping each client** during treatment. "Drapes," mean towels, sheets, gowns or other appropriate coverings.

Before proceeding with a treatment, you must explain expected draping techniques to your client and provide them with a clean drape for the purpose of **ensuring their safety, comfort and privacy**. (These requirements do not apply in the case of treatments where the client does not disrobe.)

The **areas, which are customarily draped during treatment**, are the gluteal and genital areas for male and female clients, and the breast area for female clients. With the client's permission, the gluteal and breast drapes may be temporarily moved in order to treat specific muscular structures in those areas.

YOUR SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Practice Act G.S. 90-622

Massage and bodywork therapy is legally defined as: Systems of activity applied to the soft tissues of the human body for therapeutic, educational, or relaxation purposes. The application may include:

- Pressure, friction, stroking, rocking, kneading, percussion, or passive or active stretching within the normal anatomical range of movement
- Complementary methods, including the external application of water, heat, cold, lubricants, and other topical preparations
- The use of mechanical devices that mimic or enhance actions that may possibly be done by the hands

Within this scope of practice, you are permitted to offer a broad range of professional services to the public – in accordance with the **Standards of Professional Conduct** (Rules Section .0500). **You are prohibited from engaging in:** The diagnosis of illness or disease, medical procedures, chiropractic adjustive procedures, electrical stimulation, ultrasound, prescription of medicines, or the use of modalities for which a license to practice medicine, chiropractic, nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, acupuncture, or podiatry is required by law.

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Practice Act G.S. 90-622

Rules Section .0500

The Standards for Professional Conduct for the practice of massage and bodywork therapy are intended to protect the public health, safety and welfare, to preserve the integrity of the profession, and to allow for the proper discharge of responsibilities to those served. Licensees shall have a commitment to provide the highest quality of care to those who seek their professional services, and shall:

- 1. Represent their qualifications, credentials and professional affiliations accurately, and provide only those services, which they are qualified to perform.**

Promote yourself truthfully, and treat clients within the scope of your skills and knowledge. Your professional integrity is the foundation of your practice and of your reputation. Follow the Rules established by the Board for the proper use of your professional designations.

- 2. Inquire as to the health status of each client before treatment to determine whether there are contraindications for the application of massage and bodywork therapy.**

Use a health history form and/or verbal questioning to determine whether is it safe and beneficial for a client to receive treatment on that day. Know your contraindications thoroughly, and take the time to discuss any concerns with your client. Do not hesitate to seek additional information from primary health care providers before providing treatment. It is acceptable for you to decline treatment if you believe it is not in the client's best interest.

- 3. Inform clients, other health care practitioners and the public of the scope and limitations of the practice of massage and bodywork therapy, and refer clients to appropriate health care practitioners whenever indicated.**

Be clear with your clients and fellow practitioners about what you can and cannot offer as a massage and bodywork therapist. Develop a good network of health care and mental health providers in your community to whom you can refer your clients as needed.

- 4. Maintain the confidentiality of all client information, unless disclosure is consented to by the client, required by law or by court order.**

Every aspect of your work with every one of your clients must remain private with that client. Even the fact that someone is your client is confidential. Maintain your client records in a secure location, and obtain written permission from your client before discussing any aspect of your client's treatment with another person. Maintain client files for at least four years after the termination of the client/therapist relationship and store and dispose of client records in a secure manner. Protect the interests of clients who are minors or who are unable to give informed consent by securing permission from an authorized third party or guardian. Avoid relationships with the client that could impair professional judgment or result in exploitation of the client.

- 5. Obtain and document the informed consent of the client before providing treatment. Informed consent may be given in written or verbal form.**

You are responsible for informing the client about the nature of the treatment, its intended purpose or benefits, length and cost of sessions, payment policies, and what your services do not include (such as medical treatment, diagnosis, spinal manipulation). Obtain the written consent of the client. An informed consent statement is an acknowledgement by the client that they understand all the terms

under which the treatment is offered, and they freely choose to receive this treatment from you. Keep a written record of each client's consent. For the purposes of this Section, "consent" means the therapist has informed the client as to the nature and purpose of the service to be provided, and the client acknowledges that he or she understands the terms under which the treatment is being provided and voluntarily agrees to receive such treatment. The treatment shall be modified only with the consent of the client. Respect the right of the client to refuse, modify or terminate treatment regardless of prior consent given.

6. Provide draping and treatment in a way that ensures the safety, comfort and privacy of the client.

The physical and emotional well being of the client is your primary concern while they are in your care. You are responsible for managing every aspect of the therapeutic environment, which includes setting and maintaining clear professional boundaries. Maintain a supply of clean drapes, such as towels, sheets, gowns or other coverings, for the purpose of draping the client's body during treatment. Explain expected draping procedures to the client before treatment. Ensure that the following areas are draped during treatment; the gluteal and genital areas for male and female clients, and the breast area for female clients. With voluntary and informed consent of the client, the gluteal and breast drapes may be temporarily moved in order to perform therapeutic treatment to structures in those areas. Communicate with your client throughout each session so that you can address their safety and comfort needs.

7. Respect the client's right to refuse, modify or terminate treatment regardless of prior consent given.

Remember that you are working with a person, and not just a set of muscles. No matter what treatment plan you have established – or what techniques you are using – the client determines their own boundaries. They have the prerogative to ask you at any time to change what you're doing or to stop what you're doing.

8. Refrain from initiating or engaging in any sexual activity involving a client, as defined in Rule .0508.

The professional relationship between client and therapist is founded on trust – which includes the understanding that you will not take advantage of your clients for your own personal needs or agendas. Nowhere is this more important than the arena of sexual and emotional boundaries. Rule .0508 provides an explicit definition of sexual activity. You may never use the therapist-client relationship to engage in sexual activity with a client, whether or not the client initiates or consents to such activity – and whether or not that sexual activity takes place inside or outside your treatment environment.

9. Refuse any gifts or benefits, which are intended to influence a referral, decision or treatment that are primarily for personal gain and not for the good of the client.

It is unethical for you to receive anything of value in exchange for treating a client, other than your stated fee for service. It is also unethical for you to receive anything of value in exchange for referring a client to another provider. In addition, you may not continue treating a client after you have determined that your work is no longer beneficial to them – simply to keep collecting a fee for treatment. Reasonable tips or gratuities may be accepted from a client in addition to your stated fee, if it is customary in your environment. Tipping is generally considered standard practice in "personal service" settings such as spas, hotels, resorts, health clubs, beauty salons, etc. Tipping is not customary in "health care" or clinical settings.

10. Inform the Board of any violation of the Practice Act or Rules and Regulations.

The Board relies on the community of licensees and consumers of massage and bodywork therapy to assist in monitoring the profession, which helps assure that quality services and care are provided to the public. If you observe, or have knowledge of, a possible infraction of the Laws or Rules, it is your obligation to report it to the Board for investigation. Licensees with actual knowledge shall inform the Board within 15 days of any person practicing without a license or any violation of the Practice Act when there is a potential for malpractice as defined in Rule .0102(6).

11. Continuing Duty to report certain crimes and civil suits to the Board.

Licensees with actual knowledge shall report to the Board any and all charges of the following offenses, whether committed by themselves or by other licensees: felonies; crimes that involve moral turpitude; alcohol or drug-related offenses; sexual-related offenses; and assault. Licensees with actual knowledge are also required to report to the Board any and all convictions of, or pleas of guilty or no contest to the following criminal offenses, whether committed by themselves or by other licensees: felonies; crimes that involve moral turpitude; alcohol or drug-related offenses; sexual-related offenses; and assault. Licensees are under a duty to report to the Board if they are named as a defendant in a civil suit arising out of a licensee's practice or massage and bodywork therapy. Licensees shall report a charge, conviction, pleas in a criminal case, or involvement as a defendant in a civil suit within 30 days after it occurs.

12. Business and Ethical Requirements.

In the management and promotion of their practices, licensees shall represent their qualifications, credentials and professional affiliations accurately and completely; conduct their business affairs with integrity and avoid actual or potential conflicts of interests. Licensees must refuse any gifts or benefits that are intended to influence a referral, decision or treatment. Licensees must adhere to the advertising requirements and promote their practices accurately, avoiding language or images that are misleading. Licensees should provide the client with information on their business policies before commencing treatment, including a list of services available, payment arrangements, appointment scheduling and cancellation requirements; discuss and resolve any questions the client may have about such policies. A licensee should maintain accurate financial records, client records, appointment records and contracts and legal obligations for at least four years. A licensee must also comply with all applicable municipal, state, and federal laws.

13. Practicing while Impaired.

In the practice of massage and bodywork therapy licensees shall not provide therapeutic services to clients when the licensee is under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substance, with the exception of prescribed dosage of a prescription medication that does not impair the cognitive, psychological, or motor capacity of the licensee.

14. Facility Requirements.

The practice of massage and bodywork therapy shall be conducted in facilities that are safe and sanitary. With the exception of treatments that are given at the location of a client, or treatments given at a temporary location lasting not more than 14 days such as a trade show, sporting event or community festival, licensees shall assure that the facility in which they practice is in compliance with all local building code requirements, state fire safety codes, and state health inspection codes; provide toilet and lavatory facilities with hot and cold running water; and provide clean shower facilities on the premises, if equipped with a whirlpool bath, sauna, steam cabinet, or steam room.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Practice Act G.S. 90-626, 90-633

Rules Section .0900

The North Carolina General Assembly has given the Board **authority to enforce** the Laws and Rules related to the practice of massage and bodywork therapy. You may be subject to **disciplinary sanction by the Board** if you:

- Violate any of the provisions of the Practice Act or Rules, or assist any other person in the violation of these provisions
- Commit an act of malpractice, gross negligence, or incompetency
- Practice massage and bodywork therapy without a valid license
- Engage in conduct that could result in harm or injury to the public
- Use fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in obtaining or attempting to obtain a license or the renewal of a license, or when communicating with the general public, health care professionals, or other business professionals
- Use drugs or intoxicating liquors to an extent that affects professional competency
- Are convicted of a felony or other public offense involving moral turpitude, or an offense under any municipal, state, or federal narcotic or controlled substance law (*until proof of rehabilitation can be established*)
- Are judged to be insane or incompetent (*until proof of recovery from the condition can be established*)
- Falsely hold yourself out as licensed or certified in any discipline of massage and bodywork therapy without successfully completing the requisite training in that area of specialty

The following types of disciplinary sanctions may be utilized by the Board:

- **Denial of Application.** Refusal to license the applicant
- **Letter of Reprimand.** The mildest form of administrative action. This formal expression of disapproval will be retained in the licensee's file but shall not be publicly announced. It is not published, but is released upon request
- **Probation.** A period of time where certain restrictions or conditions are imposed on a licensee. Continued licensure is subject to fulfillment of specified conditions
- **Suspension of license.** A condition of probation. Loss of license for a certain duration of time after which the individual may be required to reapply for licensure or remain on probation
- **Refusal of License Renewal.** A refusal to reinstate or renew a license
- **Revocation of license.** An involuntary termination of a license

- **Injunction.** A court action prohibiting or compelling conduct by a licensee
- **Civil penalty.** Assessment of a fine
- **Costs.** Assessment of the expense of disciplinary actions

All properly filed complaints are screened by the Board to determine proper jurisdiction and the appropriate type of response. If the facts clearly indicate a Practice Act violation, the Board will commence an investigation. Depending on the particulars of each complaint, there may be informal meetings or formal hearings with the parties involved.

DUTY TO INFORM THE BOARD OF VIOLATIONS

Rules Section .0514

As a licensee, you are under a continuing duty to report to the Board within 15 days any time that you or another licensee have actual knowledge of 1) any person practicing without a license; or 2) any violation of the Practice Act when there is a potential for malpractice as defined in Rule.0102 (6).

DUTY TO REPORT CERTAIN CRIMES AND CIVIL SUITS

Rules Section .0515

As a licensee, you are under a continuing duty to report to the Board within 30 days any time that you or another licensee are **charged with, convicted of, or plead guilty or no contest to** any of the following:

- a felony
- a crime that involves moral turpitude
- any alcohol or drug-related offense
- sexual related offenses
- assaults

You must also report to the Board any time that you are **named as a defendant** in a civil suit arising out of your practice of massage and bodywork therapy. In general, you are required to report any charge, conviction, plea in a criminal case, or involvement as a defendant in a civil suit **within 30 days after it occurs.**

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

Practice Act G.S. 90-626

Rules Section .0101

The Board was created according to provisions of the Practice Act, and has been given **specific powers and duties**, which are listed in G.S. 90-626. The seven members of the Board serve in accordance with the Board Member Code of Conduct – a set of behavioral expectations which are intended to assure the public that the Board and its members uphold the highest level of integrity and ethical standards. **The fundamental mission of the Board is to serve the public interest.**

As a governmental agency, regular meetings of the Board are open to the public, and records of the Board are available for inspection upon request. Please be aware that the Board is NOT a board of arbitration, and cannot settle disputes between parties.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

Practice Act G.S. 90-635

As a Licensed Massage and Bodywork Therapist, you are NOT automatically considered to be an **authorized provider** by insurance companies or managed care organizations. Although insurers are not legally required to give direct third-party reimbursement to licensees, they may do so at their choosing.

If you are working under the employment or supervision of a primary care provider such as a medical doctor, osteopath or chiropractor, massage and other related modalities may be reimbursable for certain diagnosed medical conditions. It would be up to that primary care provider to recommend the treatment, and to determine the appropriate insurance codes for filing that claim.

As an independent practitioner, you are always permitted to give your clients a statement of charges for therapeutic services provided. A client may take this and submit a claim to their insurer or managed care plan, but there is no guarantee of payment.

ANNUAL STATE LICENSE TAX REQUIRED

G.S. Chapter 105, Article 2

State law requires every individual who practices a profession to pay an **annual license tax of \$50.00** for the privilege of conducting that activity. This tax is entirely separate from the occupational license fees you pay to the Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy. You are required to obtain this **statewide privilege license** from the **North Carolina Department of Revenue** BEFORE engaging in professional practice. This license is issued only to individuals, and not in the name of businesses or corporations.

Call the Department of Revenue – Business License Office at 919-733-3673 or 1-877-308-9103 to request a privilege license application for the category, “Art of Healing.” You may also mail a request to: PO Box 25000, Raleigh, NC, 27640. This tax is due on July 1 of each year. *Important note:* under this law, cities and counties may not levy an additional privilege license tax on professionals who are required to have this statewide privilege license.

BUSINESS LICENSE IN CITIES OR COUNTIES

Practice Act G.S. 90-636

It is your responsibility to determine whether the city or county where you intend to practice has any requirements for the operation of massage and bodywork therapy businesses. There may be zoning or building inspection issues to address, or business license fees. Note that the Practice Act indicates that while a city or county can regulate massage and bodywork therapists in their jurisdiction, they may not impose regulations that are inconsistent with the Practice Act.

If you encounter unfavorable local massage ordinances, you are encouraged to work directly with your city or county government to effect a change. Be sure to point out the existence of the Practice Act, and the fact that you are a licensed professional.