



STATE BARBER LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

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QUESTION

What are barber licensure requirements in Connecticut and other states?

OLR Report [2014-R-0199](#) also describes Connecticut's barber and hairdresser licensure requirements.

SUMMARY

Connecticut barbers must obtain a biennial license from the Department of Public Health ([DPH](#))([CGS Chapter 387](#)). Generally, initial applicants must have successfully completed (1) eighth grade or passed an equivalency exam and (2) at least 1,000 hours of study in an approved barber school. They must also pass a DPH-prescribed exam and pay a \$100 fee.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, all states require barbers to obtain a state license. Alabama was the last state to do so beginning in 2013. Previously, the state had not regulated barbers for over 30 years, except for five of its 67 counties (Baldwin, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Madison, and Mobile), which implemented their own barber licensing systems.

Licensure requirements vary by state, but generally, an individual must (1) be at least age 16 or 17, (2) obtain a high school diploma or equivalent, (3) successfully complete training at a state-approved barber or cosmetology school, (4) pass a practical examination, and (5) pay licensing and examination fees.

Some states, such as California, Connecticut, and Kentucky issue a single barber license ([Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 7301-7414](#) and [KRS Chapter 317](#)). Others, such as Massachusetts and Maryland offer different levels of licensure, including apprentice, barber, and "master barber" licenses ([Md. Business Occupations and Professions Code Ann. §§ 4-101 et. seq.](#)). With respect to training requirements, some states, such as Alabama, [Georgia](#), [Hawaii](#), and [Pennsylvania](#) allow applicants

to complete an apprenticeship under a licensed barber in lieu of completing a course of study at a barber or cosmetology school. [California](#) and [Louisiana](#) offer two-year, state-administered barber apprenticeship programs.

Below, we offer a few examples of states' barber licensure requirements.

CONNECTICUT

In order to obtain a DPH barber license, an applicant must:

1. have graduated eighth grade or its equivalent (DPH's website explains how a person can show equivalency, including passing the General Educational Development (GED) test or other specified examinations);
2. have successfully completed at least 1,000 hours of study in a barber school approved by the Connecticut State Board for Barbers, Hairdressers, and Cosmeticians, or if trained outside the state, in a school with equivalent requirements to those of a Connecticut school;
3. pass a DPH-prescribed written examination; and
4. pay a \$100 fee.

Licenses must be renewed every two years for the same fee ([CGS § 20-253](#)). Additional information is available on DPH's [website](#).

Licensure By Endorsement

A person licensed as a barber or to perform similar services in another state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. commonwealth or territory can be licensed without examination, if the other jurisdiction required education, training, and an exam for licensure. Applicants must pay a \$100 fee, unless he or she has held a barber license from another jurisdiction for at least 40 years.

Licensure by endorsement is not available to an applicant who is the subject of pending professional disciplinary action or an unresolved complaint ([CGS § 20-254](#)).

Disciplinary Action and Penalties

Anyone who practices without a license, or violates other provisions of the barber laws for which no other penalty is provided, is subject to a \$100 fine for a first offense. A subsequent offense is a class D misdemeanor, punishable by up to 30 days in prison, a fine of up to \$250, or both ([CGS § 20-265](#)).

DPH can revoke the license of a person convicted of violating any provision of the barber laws. The department can also take its full range of disciplinary action against a licensee for (1) drug or alcohol abuse and (2) physical, emotional, or mental illness or loss of motor skill. DPH must give a licensee notice and an opportunity for a hearing before revoking or suspending a license (CGS §§ [20-238](#) & [20-263](#)).

ALABAMA

Prior to 2013, Alabama barbers were not required to obtain a state license. The industry was mostly unregulated, except in five of the state's 67 counties (Baldwin, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Madison, and Mobile), which implemented their own barber licensing systems.

2013 legislation renamed the Alabama Board of Cosmetology as the Alabama Board of Cosmetology and Barbering. The law requires barbers to obtain a biennial license from the [board](#), with exemptions for certain barbers already practicing when the law took effect ([Code of Alabama §§ 34-7B-1 et seq.](#)).

Licensure Requirements

In order to obtain a barber license, an applicant must:

1. be at least age 16;
2. successfully complete the 10th grade or its equivalent;
3. submit to the board a completed application and \$40 application fee;
4. successfully complete (a) 1,000 hours of study at a board-approved barber school or (b) 2,000 hours of direct supervision under a licensed barber (i.e., apprenticeship); and
5. pass written and practical examinations and pay a \$195 examination fee.

Licenses must be renewed every two years for an \$80 fee.

Barber Apprenticeship

An applicant choosing to fulfill the board's education requirement by completing an apprenticeship may do so only if he or she (1) is at least age 16, (2) successfully completed the 10th grade or its equivalent, (3) pays a \$75 apprenticeship fee, and (4) registers with the board as an apprentice.

An apprentice may only work under the direct supervision of a barber who has been licensed for at least five years and working in a licensed barber shop for at least two years. (The five-year licensure requirement does not apply to barbers practicing on August 1, 2013.) In addition, the sponsor (i.e., the person supervising the apprentice) must (1) obtain an apprenticeship work permit from the board and (2) certify when the apprentice completes the required 2,000 hours of direct supervision.

The sponsor must submit the certification to the board within 120 days after the apprenticeship ends. If the apprentice does not obtain his or her license within two years after this certification, the board may require the apprentice to complete additional training hours.

Exemptions

A barber is exempt from state licensure if he or she (1) practiced barbering for at least 10 years on or before August 1, 2013 or (2) has a barber license from any county barber board in existence on that date. A barber with a county barber license may choose to also obtain a state license, but must continue to comply with county rules and regulations.

In addition, a person working as a barber on August 1, 2013 for less than ten years is exempt from the state's education and exam requirement, but must pay the \$40 license fee.

Reciprocity

A person licensed as a barber in another state or jurisdiction may apply to the board to obtain an Alabama license without examination. The other jurisdiction must certify to the board that the applicant holds a current barber license in good standing. Applicants must pay a \$100 fee and submit additional documentation at the board's request. Depending on the applicant's education and experience, the board may require that he or she pass a board-prescribed examination.

Disciplinary Actions and Penalties

Anyone who practices barbering without a license or violates other provisions of the barber laws is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by up to 30 days in prison, a fine of up to \$500, or both. A corporation that violates the barber laws is subject to a fine of up to \$1,000. The board can also levy an administrative fine of up to \$750 per violation for serious violations of the barber laws, rules, or regulations.

The board can suspend or revoke the license of a person who violates any provision of the barber laws, rules, or regulations. It can also take such action against a licensee for:

1. fraud or dishonest conduct in taking an examination;
2. conviction of a felony or gross immorality;
3. grossly unprofessional or dishonest conduct;
4. substance abuse;
5. false or deceptive advertising;
6. fraud or deceit in obtaining or renewing a license;
7. allowing another person to use his or her license; or
8. committing an offense in another jurisdiction resulting in license revocation or suspension or voluntary license surrender in order to avoid disciplinary proceedings.

Before taking such action, the board must provide the licensee with at least 20 days written notice and the opportunity for a hearing. If the licensee is found guilty, he or she must pay for all attorney, court, and professional recording fees.

MASSACHUSETTS

In Massachusetts, barbers must obtain a license from the [Massachusetts Board of Barbers](#) (M.G.L. Chapter 112, §§ 87F - 87S). There are two levels of licensure: "apprentice" and "master." Licenses must be renewed every two years and cost \$40 for an apprentice and \$78 for a master barber license.

Barber Apprentice

According to the board's website, applicants for a barber apprentice license must:

1. be at least 16 years old;
2. successfully complete 1,000 hours of study in an accredited barber school within at least six months;
3. pass a board-prescribed written and practical examination; and
4. pay a \$115 examination fee, \$20 license fee, and \$66 application fee.

Foreign-Trained Applicants

An applicant trained outside of the United States may apply for an “alien apprentice” license if he or she (1) is at least 18 years old; (2) receives board approval; (3) passes the board-prescribed practical examination; and (4) pays a \$66 application fee, \$90 examination fee, and \$20 license fee. An applicant must also submit to the board:

1. written proof of birth and residency in a foreign country;
2. letters from previous employers verifying that he or she worked for at least two years as a barber in that country (the letter must be in English and the original language);
3. a valid social security number;
4. immigration approval to work (i.e., a letter or green card);
5. a copy of his or her birth certificate or passport; and
6. a completed application.

Master Barbers

To obtain a master barber license, an applicant must (1) be a Massachusetts-licensed barber apprentice; (2) apprentice under a master barber for at least 18 months or, for an alien apprentice, 24 months; (3) obtain board approval; (4) pass board-prescribed written and practical examinations; and (5) pay a \$181 examination fee, \$66 application fee, and \$20 license fee.

Licensure By Endorsement

According to a board representative, a person licensed as a master barber in another state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. commonwealth or territory can obtain a master barber license without examination, if the applicant submits to the board (1) a completed application, (2) proof that he or she has worked as a master barber for at least two years in another state, (3) a copy of his or her master barber license from that state, and (4) a \$225 fee.

Disciplinary Action and Penalties

Anyone who practices without a license, pretends to be qualified to practice barbering, or violates any state barber laws or regulations is subject to 90 days in prison, a fine of up to \$100, or both (M.G.L. Chapter 112, § 87R).

The board can suspend, for up to six months, the license of a person who (1) abuses alcohol or (2) violates the board's sanitary rules and regulations. It can also revoke the license of a person who violates its rule and regulations. The board must give at least five days written notice and an opportunity for a public hearing before taking such action (M.G.L. Chapter 112, § 87L).

NEW YORK

In New York, the Department of State's Division of Licensing Services (DLS) regulates and licenses barbers. An individual can [apply](#) to DLS for a barber license based on (1) an apprenticeship, (2) education, (3) experience, or (4) reciprocity (i.e., licensure in certain other states).

All applicants must submit to DLS:

1. a completed application with a \$40 application fee;
2. proof of completing a one-time, state-approved course on the (a) transmission of contagious diseases and (b) proper sanitation and sterilization methods used in barber shops; and
3. a health certification form verifying that the applicant was physically examined by a licensed physician or physician's assistant.

Applicants, except those who qualify for licensure by reciprocity, must also pass a DLS-prescribed practical examination and pay a \$15 examination fee. Licenses must be renewed every four years for the same fee ([NY GBL §§ 430-447 and 19 NYCRR](#)).

Apprenticeship

An individual can obtain a barber license after working as a registered "barber apprentice" under the supervision of a New York-licensed barber for two years. To become a registered barber apprentice, an individual must be at least 17 years old and submit to DLS:

1. written affirmation from the applicant's supervising licensed barber verifying the planned two-year apprenticeship and
2. the documentation listed above, except that the application fee is \$20 instead of \$40.

Education

To apply for a barber license based on education, an applicant must complete a course of study in barbering at a state-approved school. The school director must provide written verification of the applicant's successful completion of the curriculum. (The law does not specify the number of hours of study required; each school determines the length of study).

Experience

To qualify for a barber license based on experience, an applicant must have at least three years of experience working as a licensed barber in another state or country. An applicant must submit to DLS a copy of his or her original license and two "experience statements" (e.g., professional reference letters).

Reciprocity

Because DLS deems New York's barber licensure standards to be similar to those of Maine, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania, applicants currently licensed in these states may obtain a New York barber license without examination. Such applicants must submit to DLS a copy of their original license from one of these states along with the required documentation and fees listed above.

Disciplinary Action and Penalties

Anyone who practices without a license, or violates other provisions of the barber laws, is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in prison, a fine of up to \$500, or both.

DLS can suspend or revoke the license of a person who violates any provision of the barber laws or regulations. It can also take such action against a licensee for:

1. refusing to submit to the physical exam, when ordered by the secretary of state (the law authorizes the secretary of state to require a licensee to submit to a physical exam by a physician he chooses);
2. practicing barbering with an infectious or communicable disease;
3. substance abuse;
4. fraud or bribery in obtaining (a) a barber apprentice certificate, (b) license, or (c) permission to take the practical examination;
5. making false statements on any application or required documentation; or

6. being convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude.

DLS must give a licensee notice and an opportunity for a hearing before revoking or suspending a license. In lieu of license revocation or suspension, the Department of State may impose a fine of up to \$500 or the secretary of state may reprimand a licensee for any behavior listed above (NY GBL §§ 441-444).

RESOURCES

Alabama Board of Cosmetology and Barbering, last visited on September 5, 2014:
<http://www.aboc.state.al.us/default.aspx>

California Barber Apprenticeship Program, California Department of Industrial Relations, last visited September 5, 2014:
http://www.dir.ca.gov/databases/das/results_aiglist.asp?varCounty=%25&varType=06&Submit=Search

California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology, last visited on September 5, 2014:
<http://www.barbercosmo.ca.gov/>

Connecticut Department of Public Health, last visited September 5, 2014:
<http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3121&q=521220>

Georgia State Board of Barbers, last visited September 5, 2014:
<http://sos.ga.gov/index.php/licensing/plb/10>

Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Professional and Vocational Licensing, last visited September 5, 2014:
http://hawaii.gov/dcca/pvl/boards/barber/application_publications

Kentucky Board of Barbering, last visited September 5, 2014:
<http://barbering.ky.gov/>

Louisiana Workforce Commission, Barber Apprenticeship Program, last visited September 5, 2014: http://www.laworks.net/Apprenticeship/APP_Info.asp

Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, last visited September 5, 2014: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/barbers/>

Massachusetts Board of Registration of Barbers, last visited September 5, 2014:
<http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/licensee/dpl-boards/br/>

National Association of Barber Boards of America, last visited September 5, 2014:
<http://www.nationalbarberboards.com/Contact.html>

New York Department of State, Division of Licensing Services, last visited
September 5, 2014: <http://www.dos.ny.gov/licensing/barber/barbering.html>

Pennsylvania State Board of Barber Examiners, last visited September 5, 2014:
http://www.dos.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_board_of_barber_examiners/12505

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, last visited September 5,
2014: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/barbers-hairdressers-and-cosmetologists.htm#tab-4>

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