

Occupational Boards and Licensing

See full summary documents for additional detail

Physical Therapy Practice Act Modifications.

SL 2026-16 (H536)

S.L. 2026-16 (House Bill 536) makes the following changes to the Physical Therapy Practice Act:

- Changes the definition of "physical therapy" to include "the standards of acceptable and prevailing physical therapy practice."
- Updates the statute detailing how North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners (Board) members are appointed to reflect the current name of the American Physical Therapy Association of North Carolina.
- Allows the Board to encumber licenses of individuals who depart from the standards of acceptable and prevailing physical therapy practice.
- Updates the statute detailing qualifications for licensure to reflect the current name of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
- Updates the statute dealing with licensure requirements for graduates of foreign physical therapy education programs to reflect that those programs are not accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.
- Extends the window to apply for license renewal to November 1 through January 1.
- Establishes a fee of \$150 for continuing education course approval.
- Allows licensure applicants to practice physical therapy while completing clinical practice requirements.

This act becomes effective October 1, 2026.

Increase Compensation for Members of the Board of Trustees of the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation – Various Revenue Laws Changes.

SL 2026-31 (S595), Part XV

Part XV of S.L. 2026-31 (Senate Bill 595) increases the payment to members of the Board of Trustees of the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation for attending meetings from \$50 per meeting to \$100 per meeting.

This Part became effective July 2, 2026, and applies to meetings attended on or after that date.

On-Site Wastewater Board Changes – Water/Wastewater Affordability & Capacity Act.

SL 2026-32 (H376), Sec. 6

Section 6 of S.L. 2026-32 (House Bill 376) makes changes to the certification requirements for on-site wastewater professionals, which includes a requirement that they hold sufficient liability coverage for the project undertaken. It clarifies that a grade II contractor cannot be certified as an inspector without meeting the experience requirements and requires the complete renewal package to be submitted by the annual renewal date.

This section becomes effective January 1, 2027, and applies to applications for certification or certificate renewal on or after that date.

Modification of North Carolina Medical Board Licensing and Registration Fees – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 9L.1

Section 9L.1 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) raises the North Carolina Medical Board fees as follows:

License Fees:

- \$550 for licensure to practice medicine and surgery.
- \$125 for a limited license to practice in a medical education and training program.
- \$200 for initial and annual licensure of an anesthesiologist assistant.
- \$325 for initial licensure of a physician assistant.

Registration Fees:

- \$350 annual registration fee for every licensee, except \$150 annual registration fee for those who have a limited license to practice in medical education or training program and \$200 annual registration fee for physician assistants.

Fees:

- \$400 for license application.
- \$400 for biennial renewal of license.
- \$200 for provisional license.

This section becomes effective October 1, 2026.

North Carolina Engineering and Land Surveying Act Update – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 38A.1

Section 38A.1 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) does all of the following:

- Reenacts land surveyor intern provisions that were previously repealed.
- Allows for the award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs in situations where the North Carolina State Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors (Board) prevails in actions to enforce certain violations that were committed with fraudulent intent.
- Allows the Board to expend its funds to support nonprofit engineering and surveying professional societies, as well as nonprofit foundations dedicated to advancing the engineering and surveying professions, for the purpose of encouraging licensure and providing continuing education to licensees.
- Requires that a roster showing the names and places of business and of residence of all licensed professional engineers and all licensed professional land surveyors be published on the Board's website.
- Eliminates the requirement for three character references, including one professional engineer, for licensure as an engineer intern or land surveyor intern.
- Removes outdated options to satisfy the professional land surveyor licensing requirements.
- Removes the procedures for reexamination or reapplication for a candidate that fails an examination required for licensure as a professional engineer or professional land surveyor.
- Allows the Board to enact a multiyear license renewal cycle.
- Makes various changes to the expiration and renewal of licenses.
- Provides that any person who unlawfully practices engineering or land surveying or unlawfully uses certain titles or terms is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.
- Clarifies that an unlicensed person must not represent themselves as a professional engineer or a professional land surveyor or hold out to the public any engineering or land surveying expertise with the intent of practicing engineering or land surveying.
- Clarifies that Chapter 89C does not prevent an individual from testifying as a lay or expert witness at a deposition or trial as well as the preparation and drafting of an expert report in preparation for testifying as an expert at a deposition or trial.
- Repeals an outdated reporting requirement on programs of licensure by discipline.

The reenactment of land surveyor intern provisions that were previously repealed became effective retroactively to July 1, 2022, and applies to certificates or licenses issued on or after that date. The remainder of this section becomes effective October 1, 2026.

Modify Dental Management Arrangement Approvals – 2026 Appropriations Act.

SL 2026-41 (S257), Sec. 38A.2

Section 38A.2 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) requires the North Carolina Board of Dental Examiners (Board) to modify its rules regarding the approval of dental management arrangement contracts to remove any provisions requiring the Board to review and approve the contracts before they are executed. The Board can review the contracts after they have been executed as part of the normal course of an investigation into a valid complaint.

This section became effective July 7, 2026, and applies to contracts executed, modified, or renewed on or after that date.

Update Funeral Board Statutes and Conforming Changes. – General Statutes Commission Update Funeral Board and Department of Insurance Licensing.

SL 2026-48 (S857), Parts I and II

Part I of S.L. 2026-48 (Senate Bill 857) makes substantial changes to the Board of Funeral Service (Board) statutes, as recommended by the General Statutes Commission. Substantive changes include:

- Clarifies that a funeral service licensee is licensed to practice both funeral directing and embalming.
- Defines a "principal funeral establishment" as the operation of an ancillary branch funeral establishment, embalming facility, or chapel.
- Adds definitions.
- Lists application requirements for applicants for the practice of funeral service.
- Allows the Board to recognize examinations not prepared by the Board, and the Board can contract with a third party to administer examinations.
- Requires the Board to register applicants who meet qualifications for licensure and requires licensees who supervise resident trainees to register with the Board.
- Adds that a resident trainee can place their traineeship on inactive status.
- Requires an initial funeral establishment permit application to be submitted by the intended manager of the establishment.
- Requires a funeral establishment to register the name under which it operates with the Board. If the name includes the name of an individual, that individual must have been a licensee and owner or manager of the establishment when the establishment was issued its initial permit.
- Requires certain funeral establishments to contain a preparation room and applies a refrigeration requirement to unembalmed human remains.
- Requires individuals to treat human remains with respect, forbids photography or video recording of human remains without the consent of the decedent's family, and requires licensees to handle human remains consistently with State law.

- Enacts a new statute that discusses the business permit for transportation and removal of human remains. The statute includes requirements related to notification of the Board, display of permits, and professional liability insurance requirements.
- Enacts a new statute that discusses the issuance and display of licenses, permits, and certificates.
- Rewrites a statute that creates criminal penalties for practicing without authorization (Class 2 misdemeanor), abusing human remains (Class 2 misdemeanor), and the sale of embalming fluid by licensees outside of the scope of their activities as a licensee to certain individuals (Class I felony, imprisonment, and a fine between \$100 and \$500).
- In relation to Preneed Funeral Funds:
 - Requires a preneed licensee who purchases a prearrangement insurance policy to notify the Board of the name and address of the insurance company.
 - Requires the Board to order a contract to be transferred to a substitute preneed licensee if a preneed licensee is unable or unwilling to perform a preneed funeral contract.
 - Clarifies the duties of a substitute preneed licensee.
- Requires the Board to revoke a burial association's license and order its dissolution if it violates Article 13E of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.
- Requires an order of liquidation of a burial association by the Board to direct the termination of all agreements for members' benefits and the liquidation of all records, property, and funds of the association. The association is required to file a final report with the Board no later than 30 days after the liquidation is completed.
- In relation to Article 13F ("Cremations and Alkaline Hydrolysis") of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes:
 - Incorporates the concept of alkaline hydrolysis.
 - Discusses the requirements for a cremation license and hydrolysis license.
 - Requires the reduction of human remains to only occur in a reduction facility.
 - Discusses the qualifications of a reduction facility manager.
 - Discusses required information on a reduction authorization form.
 - Discusses preneed reduction arrangements, including separate disclosures for cremation and alkaline hydrolysis.
 - Discusses record keeping, reduction containers, reduction procedures, the final disposition of reduced human remains, limitation of liability, fees, and reduction licensee rights.
 - Discusses rulemaking and cremation societies.

Part II makes related conforming changes throughout the General Statutes.

Parts I and II become effective October 1, 2026.

Department of Insurance Licensing Programs. – General Statutes Commission Update Funeral Board and Department of Insurance Licensing.

SL 2026-48 (S857), Part III

Part III of S.L. 2026-48 (Senate Bill 857) makes several technical and conforming changes to licensing programs operated by the Department of Insurance, as well as the following substantive changes:

- Amends definitions related to the North Carolina Professional Employer Organization Act.
- Requires applicants for licensure as a professional employer organization who deposit securities to concurrently deliver to the Commissioner of Insurance a power of attorney authorizing the sale or transfer of those securities.
- Revises grounds for denial of professional employer organization licenses.
- Adds insurance producers, adjusters, appraisers, bail bondsmen, runners, and others licensed under Chapter 58 to the list of exceptions not subject to automatic licensure recognition for individuals licensed in neighboring states.

The exclusion for Chapter 58 licensees became retroactively effective October 1, 2025, and applies to licensure applications submitted on or after that date. All substantive changes became effective July 7, 2026. The remainder of this Part becomes effective October 1, 2026.

Exempt Certain Individuals from Barber and Cosmetic Arts Licensing. – Regulatory Reform Act of 2026.

SL 2026-59 (S445), Sec. 7

Section 7 of S.L. 2026-59 (Senate Bill 445) exempts from licensure as a barber or cosmetologist individuals employed outside of barbershops and cosmetic art shops whose duties are limited only to shampooing or blow drying of hair, provided they follow applicable statutes and rules concerning sanitation.

This section became effective August 11, 2026.

Clarify Exemption for Stretching Services at Massage and Bodywork Therapy Establishments. – Regulatory Reform Act of 2026.

SL 2026-59 (S445), Sec. 8

Section 8 of S.L. 2026-59 (Senate Bill 445) defines "stretching services" and clarifies that a person who provides only stretching services, including a person who is employed by or contracts with a massage and bodywork therapy establishment, is not required to be licensed by the North Carolina Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy.

This section became effective August 11, 2026.

Plumbing License Exemption for Certain Water and Sewer Line Connections Serving Mobile Homes. – Regulatory Reform Act of 2026.

SL 2026-59 (S445), Sec. 47

Section 47 of S.L. 2026-59 (Senate Bill 445) expands the limited exemptions from the licensure requirement of the State Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating, and Fire Sprinkler Contractors for a person who installs or connects (i) a sanitary sewer line that serves a manufactured home and (ii) a water line serving a manufactured home that is not more than 100 linear feet between the existing water meter and point of connection so long as certain conditions are met, including compliance with the State Building Code.

This section of the act became effective August 11, 2026, and applies to work occurring on or after that date.