

## **LICENSING REQUIREMENTS**

The S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulations requires the following:

1. A license as a cosmetologist shall be issued by the board to any person who:
  - a. is at least sixteen years of age and possesses a high school diploma, or at least tenth grade education, or the equivalent as established by tests used in public schools, or equivalent as established by psychological examinations determined by a certified psychologist, or successfully passes a standardized test given by a vocational rehabilitation counselor;
  - b. has completed 1500 hours in classes in cosmetology;
  - c. passes the examination prescribed by the board and pays the required fee.
2. A license as an esthetician shall be issued by the board to any person who:
  - a. is at least sixteen years of age and possesses a high school diploma, or at least tenth grade education, or the equivalent as established by tests used in public schools, or equivalent as established by psychological examinations determined by a certified psychologist, or successfully passes a standardized test given by a vocational rehabilitation counselor;
  - b. has completed 450 hours in classes in esthetics;
  - c. passes the examination prescribed by the board and pays the required fee.
3. A license as an instructor shall be issued by the board to any person who:
  - a. submits an application for an Instructor's License on a form prescribed by the Board; and
  - b. holds a high school diploma or a General Education Development (G.E.D.) certificate; and
  - c. is a licensed Cosmetologist, Nail Tech, or Esthetician and has practiced for at least two (2) years or, after receiving his respective Cosmetologist, Nail Tech, or Esthetician license, has completed a prescribed seven hundred fifty (750) hour instructor training program approved by the Board; and
  - d. has received forty-five (45) hours training in a teaching methods course approved by the Board; and-
  - e. pays the prescribed fee and passes the Instructor's Examination prescribed by the Board; or
  - f. alternately, for specialized theory hours, a person who has a minimum of five (5) years experience or a bachelors degree in a related profession, occupation or cognitive area, may instruct the required theory classes with prior approval of the Board.

Information regarding licensure and endorsement is available by contacting the South Carolina State Board of Cosmetology or by visiting their website at [www.llr.state.sc.us/POL/Cosmetology/](http://www.llr.state.sc.us/POL/Cosmetology/)

\*Those with convictions may not be able to receive a license. Anyone with a conviction may appear before the Board of Cosmetology, with a current SLED report, for licensure consideration.

1. A license as a massage therapist shall be issued by the board to any person who:
  - a. To be licensed as a massage therapist in South Carolina, a person must:
    - i. Be at least 18 years of age and have received a high school diploma or graduate equivalency diploma;
    - ii. Have completed a 650-hour course of supervised study at an approved school;
    - iii. Be a US citizen or qualified alien or nonimmigrant lawfully present in the US; and
    - iv. Have received a passing grade on an approved examination. (Section 40-30-110, South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended (the Massage/Bodywork Practice Act, Act 387 of the 1996 General Assembly)).
  - b. Effective March 11, 2024, all applicants applying for a massage therapy license with the SC Board of Massage Therapy will be subject to a state and national fingerprint criminal

background check. The fingerprint criminal background checks are required pursuant to § 40-30-110 of the SC Massage Therapy Practice Act.

- i. In addition to other requirements established by law and to determine an applicant's eligibility for initial licensure as a massage therapist, state law requires a state criminal records check by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division and a national criminal record check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
  - ii. **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK (CBC) PROCESS** The fingerprint criminal background checks are required pursuant to § 40-30-110 of the SC Massage Therapy Practice Act. Instructions for the fingerprint process will be sent to applicants after their applications for licensure are received by the SC Board. **DO NOT** have your fingerprints or CBC report processed until you have submitted an application and received instructions from the board.
- c. Pays the prescribed fees
- d. **NOTE:**
- i. For additional information and an application for licensure, contact the SC Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (LLR), Office of Business and Related Services, P.O. Box 11329, Columbia, SC 29211-1329; telephone (803) 896-4588. [Code of Laws – Title 40 – Chapter 30 – Massage Therapy Practice \(scstatehouse.gov\)](http://www.scstatehouse.gov).
  - ii. SCLLR accepts for licensing the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards' (FSMTB) Massage and Bodywork Licensing Exam (MBLEx). For information on the MBLEx, contact FSMTB, 150 Fourth Avenue North, Suite 800, Nashville, TN 37219 (P. O. Box 198689, Nashville, TN 37219-8689 <http://www.fsmtb.org>)
  - iii. Conviction, guilty plea, or nolo contendere plea involving a crime involving drugs, mortal turpitude, or other criminal charges may prohibit licensure or employment.

## **Employment Restrictions**

In the state of South Carolina, you must be licensed in order to practice in the field of cosmetology, esthetics, nail technology, or as an Instructor. All Employers must verify licensure for employment purposes.

The South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation's Board of Cosmetology oversees licensees within these modalities. All regulations relating to the above-mentioned licenses are promulgated by the Board of Cosmetology. These include the Safety, Sanitation, and Disinfection Regulations.

It is important to know that South Carolina is an at-will state.