



Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

What do cardiovascular invasive specialists do?

Cardiovascular invasive specialists assist physicians with cardiac or vascular catheterization procedures in which a small tube (catheter) is guided through a patient's blood vessels.

What is cardiac or vascular catheterization?

Cardiac or vascular catheterization procedures can determine if a blockage exists in the blood vessels (typically those that supply the heart muscle) and can help diagnose other problems. Part of a procedure may involve balloon angioplasty or stenting, which treat blockages of blood vessels or heart valves, without the need for surgery.

Cardiovascular invasive specialists also prepare patients for cardiac or vascular catheterization and interventions, and monitor blood pressure and heart rate using electrocardiograph (ECG/EKG) equipment during procedures and the implantation of pacemakers.

I am nationally certified as a cardiovascular invasive specialist, do I need a Washington certification in order to work?

Yes, a license is required to practice in Washington.

I'm certified as a radiologic technologist. Do I have to be certified as a cardiovascular invasive specialist to do cardiac or vascular catheterization?

No. A radiologic technologist can perform cardiac or vascular catheterization procedures. However, in order to refer to yourself as a cardiovascular invasive specialist, you would need to have the cardiovascular invasive specialist certification, which means meeting the education and examination requirements.

Then do I need both certifications?

If you choose to get the cardiovascular invasive specialist certification but also want to be able to apply ionizing radiation as a radiologic technologist, then yes, you have to hold both credentials.

Is my certification valid in other states?

It depends on the state you are traveling to and whether they require licensure. Check that state's specific laws regarding practicing as a cardiovascular invasive specialist in that state.

Since I can perform fluoroscopy in the cath lab, can I use my skills to perform fluoroscopy in other areas, like the radiology department?

No. The law limits cardiovascular invasive specialists to assisting in cardiac or vascular catheterization. If you want to perform non-catheterization interventional radiology procedures, you need to hold a radiologic technologist certification.

Applying for Certification

How do I apply?

Cardiovascular invasive specialist application forms can be found [here](#).

How much does it cost to apply?

For more information about the current fee schedule, please go [here](#).

Do I need to complete HIV/AIDS education and training?

Yes. State law requires all health care practitioners to complete four or seven hours of HIV/AIDS education prior to initial licensure, certification, or registration. Cardiovascular invasive specialists are required seven hours education and training. Some educational programs may already include the needed hours. Visit the department's [HIV/AIDS Education and Training Services website](#) for more information on courses.

Which educational programs are accepted?

The department accepts cardiovascular invasive specialist educational programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) which utilizes the standards and criteria established by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Cardiovascular Technology (JRC-CVT).

Is there an exam I need to take?

Yes. To qualify for certification, you have to have taken, and passed, one of the following examinations:

- Registered Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist (RCIS) examination through the Cardiovascular Credentialing International (CCI);
- Registered Electrophysiology Specialist (RCES) examination through CCI;
- North American Society of Pacing and Electrophysiology (NASPE) examination through the Heart Rhythm Society (HRS);

- International Board of Heart Rhythm Examiners (IBHRE) examination (formerly the NASPE) through HRS;
- Cardiac Interventional Radiographer (RTR-CI) post-primary examination through the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT);
- Vascular Interventional Radiographer (RTR-VI) post-primary examination through the ARRT; or
- Cardiovascular Interventional Radiographer (RTR-CV) post-primary examination through the ARRT.

How long does the application process take?

The required documentation may take several weeks to receive. After that, routine applications may be issued in as little as two weeks or 14 days following receipt of all required documentation and information. Applications requiring additional background information or review may take longer.

If I have a student-issued transcript, can I send that with my application?

No. All required documentation must be sent directly from the issuing institution to:

Department of Health
 Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist Credentialing
 P.O. Box 47877
 Olympia, WA 98504-7877

How do personal data questions affect my application?

A “yes” answer to a personal data question or the existence of a criminal conviction does not automatically prohibit the department from issuing a credential. If you answer “yes” on any of the personal data questions or if criminal history appears on a criminal background check, your file will be evaluated on an individual basis. The application now becomes an exception file and the normal application processing time does not apply.

Can I begin practicing once I submit the application?

No. You must have a valid Washington Cardiovascular Invasive Specialist certification issued to you before you may practice.

Alternate Certification – Time Limited (Grandfather Clause)

I did not attend a formal cardiovascular invasive specialist education program, nor did I take one of the national examinations. Can I apply with my on-the-job training?

Yes, provided you meet specific criteria. Until July 1, 2012, you can obtain a cardiovascular invasive specialist certification if you:

- Hold a current health care credential issued by the department that has been in good standing for at least the last five consecutive years; AND
- Can document 5,000 hours of adequate qualifying prior experience on a department form.

I haven't had one, single health care credential for the last five years; I have had a couple of them over the last five years, first one and then another. Will that qualify?

If you have been actively, continuously credentialed for at least the last five years, then it would qualify. For example, you had a Health Care Assistant credential issued five years ago, held that credential for at least three years, obtained a Surgical Technologist credential issued two years ago, then let your Health Care Assistant credential lapse but retained the Surgical Technologist credential for the last two years; as long as there was an overlap between the credentials and there was no time during the last five years where you weren't actively credentialed, you would be considered to have been actively, continuously credentialed for the last five years.

What is "qualifying experience?"

Qualifying experience must be at least 5,000 hours (at least 1,000 per year), in cardiac or vascular catheterization functions as defined in WAC 246-926-400, must have been obtained in the last five years, and attested to by the catheterization laboratory lead technologist, manager, or director.

Where do I find the qualifying experience form?

You can get the qualifying experience verification form [here](#).

I won't meet the 5 year requirement until next year; can I get an extension to apply through the grandfather clause?

No. The law gave a deadline of July 1, 2012, and did not include authority for extending the timeframe.

Renewal Process

How do I renew my certification?

You must renew your certification every two years on or before your birthday. Please keep your address updated to receive courtesy renewal notices.

Your renewal must be postmarked or received by midnight of the expiration date or it is considered late and a late fee will be assessed. You can pay through regular or overnight mail, or in person. Your certification may be renewed up to 90 days before it expires. You should receive a courtesy renewal reminder 6-8 weeks before the credential expires. If you do not receive the notice within four weeks of your expiration date, please call 360.236.4700 or email us for help.

We cannot accept credit/debit cards over the phone or take payment on line. However, we do accept MasterCard or Visa credit/debit cards at the front counter.

Checks or money orders are payable to:

Washington State Department of Health
P.O. Box 1099
Olympia, WA 98507-1099

Avoid an expired license:

Do not let your license expire. You must make sure we have your renewal before it expires. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to practice. A timely postmark on your renewal will not prevent an expired license. Renewals sent by mail take about two weeks to process.

How long will it take to process my renewal?

If you send it by mail it will take approximately two weeks to update.

If you walk the payment in to the front counter it will take approximately 3-7 business days. This saves mail time and you will receive verification during the visit.

Our goal is to process all renewals within seven business days after we receive them. This includes payment and processing time.

How do I renew my credential without a renewal notice?

Courtesy renewal notices are not required for renewal. You can update your credential by mailing your renewal payment to us with documentation of your name, credential number, current mailing address and any other renewal requirements.

How do I know what my expiration date is?

Your license lists the expiration date. It is your birthday. You can also look at our [Provider/Facility Search website](#) to see your expiration date.

Is continuing education required to renew my certification?

No. Continuing education is not a requirement for Cardiovascular Invasive Specialists.

I was certified through the grandfather clause and my certification has been expired for longer than a year. How do I reactive my certification?

If you allowed your certification to be expired longer than a year, you will not be able to have it reactivated. You must now meet the education and examination requirements in order to activate your certification.

Other Information

How do I request a duplicate copy of my license?

Check the [fee page](#) to find the correct payment. Send a check or money order payable to:

Washington State Department of Health
Customer Service Office
P.O. Box 1099
Olympia, WA 98507-1099

Please note you are requesting a duplicate credential and remember to include your credential number.

If it is within 90 days of your expiration date, you can renew your credential and receive an updated copy.

How do I update my mailing address?

All address change requests must be sent in writing. If you are renewing and have received your renewal notice, please complete the address change request on the back of the card.

If you are not renewing or do not have your renewal card, please complete the [Address Change Form](#). You can fax your change to 360.236.4818, or select the email button on the form once you fill it out. Or print form out and mail it to the [Customer Service Office](#).

You must have your current mailing address on file. Otherwise, we cannot send you the courtesy renewal reminder.

The United States Postal Service will not forward state mail so it is your responsibility to inform the [Customer Service Office](#) of an address change.

What do I need to change my name on my license?

Please mail or fax a copy of your certified marriage certificate, divorce decree, or court order showing your name change to the [Customer Service Office](#). You will not be sent a credential showing your new name until we have processed your next renewal. You may also include this request when submitting your renewal.

If I am active military, how can I request military status?

Military service members retain their credentials during active duty status and can practice throughout the state. We will place you on "active military" status when you provide a copy of your service orders to our [Customer Service Office](#). A renewal card will not be sent to you but you must send current orders to the [Customer Service Office](#) each year before your credential expires. We do not charge renewal fees but if you do not submit current orders, your credential

expires. Your military status will change to active when you provide a copy of our discharge papers (DD214) and pay the renewal fee. You have a six-month period to update your credential after discharge. If you do not renew within six months after discharge, your credential expires. If you later want to renew, the regular process applies and may include penalties.

What is the process for verifying my Washington cardiovascular invasive specialist certification to another state?

Check the [fee page](#) to find the correct payment. Submit a written request and a check or money order along with the Certification of licensure fee made payable to:

Department of Health
Customer Service Office
P.O. Box 1099
Olympia, WA 98507-1099

Where can I locate the cardiovascular invasive specialist law?

The laws and rules relating to cardiovascular invasive specialists can be found [here](#).

How can I keep informed of changes to the cardiovascular invasive specialist program and/or rules?

You can join our [interested parties list](#) to receive updates and notifications.