



Licensee Information about Lapsed Licenses and Re-Entry

There are many reasons a Physical Therapist (PT) or Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) may choose to forego renewing their license/certification.¹ When this decision is being made, the PT or PTA may not realize the process for licensure reinstatement may require significant time, energy, and expense based on the laws and rules of the specific jurisdiction where they would like to be licensed. These laws and rules are in place to ensure that the public can feel comfortable that an individual with a license is competent to provide care.

An individual contemplating allowing their license to lapse should consider the following:

- **Practice Restrictions:** Once your license has lapsed, you are no longer legally allowed to practice as a PT or work as a PTA. This means you cannot provide physical therapy services to patients/clients and, in many states, cannot engage in teaching, research, or administrative positions. This can have professional and financial consequences.
- **Skill Erosion:** The longer you are out of practice and work, your skills and knowledge in care delivery and documentation decrease. Your exposure to the latest changes in the profession are also limited. The safe and competent delivery of care may require that you demonstrate the necessary skills and knowledge to reinstate your license.

Reinstating a Lapsed License

The process of reinstating a lapsed PT/PTA license can vary significantly depending on jurisdiction and the specific circumstances. Start by contacting the jurisdiction's physical therapy licensing board; they can provide information about the specific requirements and procedures for reinstatement. The mission of the licensing board is to ensure the protection of the public. The board may require you to demonstrate your ability to provide safe and effective care through the following:

- **Continuing Education:** Many licensing boards require PTs/PTAs to complete a certain number of continuing education (CE) credits to renew their license. You may need to complete additional CE hours to meet the renewal requirements to recover/reinstate a lapsed license.
- **National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE):** In some jurisdictions, to reinstate your license you may be required to retake and pass the NPTE.
- **Documents:** You may need to provide evidence of your previous education, work experience, and any additional training you've completed during the period your license lapsed.
- **Processing time:** Plan ahead! It will take time to gather the necessary documents and for the board to process your application. This time period varies and may not align with your desired timeline to return to work.
- **Application requirements:** You will need to meet other application requirements such as paying fees and jurisprudence assessments.

¹ The majority of states license PTAs, but states with PTA certification are: AZ, CO, KS, KY, NE, PA, SD, and WY. The word licensure will be used for the remainder of this paper and will refer to PTA licensure and/or certification.