

**County of San Bernardino  
Department of Behavioral Health**

**DBH Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Programs Counselor  
Certification Policy**

**Effective Date** 5/1/06  
**Approval Date** 5/1/06

  
Allan Rawland, Director

**Policy** Any individuals providing intake, assessment of need for services, treatment or recovery planning, individual or group counseling to participants, patients, or residents in an alcohol and drug program (ADP) shall be licensed, certified, or registered to obtain certification pursuant to Chapter 8 of Title 9, California Code of Regulations, (commencing with Section 13000). Employees must register to obtain certification within six (6) months of the first date of hire and must complete certification within five (5) years after first date of registration.

**Certification Regulations** The counselor certification regulations were effective April 1, 2005. Within 6 months of the date of hire, a counselor shall register to obtain certification by one of the 10 certification organizations listed in the [Counselor Certifying Organizations](#) list. The regulations apply to all DBH/ADS staff and ADS contract agencies performing alcohol and drug counselor duties.

**Purpose** Ensure DBH/ADS adhere to the laws of the State of California certification requirements for AOD counselors.

**Initial Certification Requirements** Prior to certification as an AOD counselor, the certifying organization shall require each registrant to:

a) Complete a minimum of 155 documented hours of formal classroom AOD education.
b) Complete a minimum of 160 documented hours of supervised AOD training.
c) Complete an additional 2,080 or more documented hours of paid or unpaid work experience providing counseling services.
d) Obtain a score of at least seventy percent (70%) on a written or oral examination approved by the certifying organization.
e) Sign a statement documenting whether his/her prior certification as an AOD counselor has ever been revoked.
f) Sign an agreement to abide by the certifying organization's code of conduct.
* Authority cited: Title 9, Chapter 8, Section 13040

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### Other Requirements

The following are other requirements for counselors and licensed professional:

**Counselors:** May qualify to test out until April 1, 2007, if they provide written documentation to the certifying organization with whom they are registered.

**Types of documentation:**

1. Registration to obtain certification with a certifying organization.
2. Employment in an AOD program providing counseling services for the equivalent of 40 hours per week for a minimum of five years between April 1, 1995 and April 1, 2005
3. Official diploma or written transcript of successful completion of an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree (A.A., B.A./B.S., or M.A.) in the study of chemical dependency
4. Score of at least seventy percent (70%) on an oral and/or written examination approved by certifying organization

\* Authority cited: Title 9, Chapter 8, Section 13025

**Licensed professionals:** Licensed Physician, Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Marriage Family Therapist (MFT), Psychologist or interns registered with the California Board of Psychology or the California Board of Behavioral Sciences are not required to be certified (Chapter 8, Section 13015) and must complete 36 hours of continuing education every two years. All other professionals, including registered nurses, are required to register and be certified to provide alcohol and drug counseling services. Only RNs who work in methadone programs are exempt.

**Requirements for Counselors Certified or Licensed in Other States or by Other Certifying Organizations:** The registrant/certified AOD counselor shall provide proof of current certification with one of the certifying organizations listed in Chapter 8, Section 13035.

**Confirmation of registration or certification:** Employees must provide proof of registration within six (6) months of the first date of hire and proof of certification within five (5) years of the date of registration.

**Renewal of Certification:** Each AOD counselor is required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education, approved by the certifying organization, during each two-year period of certification (Chapter 8, Section 13055). The registration/certification information must be maintained in the employee's personnel file for the duration of employment.

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**Roles and Responsibilities in Maintaining Records**

Written documentation of licensure, certification, or registration to obtain certification and a copy of the code of conduct from the certifying organization must be kept in staff personnel records. See the information below for roles and responsibilities:

Staff Member	Responsibility
Employee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Submit copy of registration/ certification within six (6) months of the first date of hire and become certified within five (5) years, after first date of being registered.</li> <li>2. Sign the <a href="#">Alcohol and Drug Counselors Statement of Acknowledgement</a> to obtain registration/certification for continued employment Maintain ongoing registered/ certification status.</li> <li>3. Post a copy of the registration/ certification in the workstation.</li> </ol>
Deputy Director/Program Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Track registration/certification of all AOD counselors</li> <li>2. Obtain copy of registration/ certification at initial selection interview.</li> <li>3. Submit registration/certification to the Office Assistant III (OA III) in the Director's office when due.</li> </ol>
OA III /designee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Produce report identifying those individuals whose registration/ certification is about to expire or for whom no registration/ certification is on file.</li> <li>2. Distribute report to appropriate deputy directors and program managers who are responsible for ensuring each employee submits proof of registration/certification to the OA III in the Director's office.</li> </ol>
Contract agencies	Submit registration/certification material to their designated program manager.

**Consequence of Violations**

County employees who fail to register to obtain certification within six (6) months of the first date of hire and fail to be certified within five (5) years after first date of being registered will be terminated. If AOD counselor does not have a current registration/certification, he/she will not be allowed to perform the duties of an alcohol and other drugs counselor as defined in Chapter 8, Section 13005.

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## Definitions

The following definitions apply to alcohol and other drugs terminology pursuant to various sections of Chapter 8:Section 1300

<b>AOD</b> - Alcohol and other drug programs.
<b>Certified AOD Counselor</b> - An individual certified by a certifying organization, Chapter 8, Section 13035.
<b>Certified Organization</b> - An organization approved to certify individuals as AOD counselors, Chapter 8, Section 13035.
<b>Counseling Services</b> - evaluating participants', patients', or residents' AOD treatment or recovery needs; developing and updating a treatment or recovery plan; implementing the treatment or recovery plan; continuing assessment and treatment planning; conducting individual counseling sessions, group counseling sessions, face-to-face interviews, or counseling families, couples, and other individuals significant in the life of the participants, patients, or residents; and documenting counseling activities, assessment, treatment and recovery planning, clinical reports related to treatment provided, progress notes, discharge summaries, and all other client related data.
<b>Registrant</b> - An individual registered with any certifying organization to obtain certification as an AOD counselor.

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## Related Regulations

Department of Alcohol & Drug Programs (ADP), Adoption of Chapter 8- Certification of Alcohol and Other Drug Counselors (commencing with Section 1300), and Amendment of Sections 9846, 10125, and 10564, Division 4, Title 9, California Code of Regulations including Sections 9846, 10125, 10564, 13025, 13040, 13015, and 13005.

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