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Final Regulation Agency Background Document

Agency name	Board for Contractors
Virginia Administrative Code (VAC) Chapter citation(s)	18VAC50-30
VAC Chapter title(s)	Individual License and Certification Regulations
Action title	Continuing Education Amendment
Date this document prepared	May 23, 2024

This information is required for executive branch review and the Virginia Registrar of Regulations, pursuant to the Virginia Administrative Process Act (APA), Executive Order 19 (2022) (EO 19), any instructions or procedures issued by the Office of Regulatory Management (ORM) or the Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) pursuant to EO 19, the Regulations for Filing and Publishing Agency Regulations (1 VAC 7-10), and the Form and Style Requirements for the Virginia Register of Regulations and Virginia Administrative Code.

Brief Summary

Provide a brief summary (preferably no more than 2 or 3 paragraphs) of this regulatory change (i.e., new regulation, amendments to an existing regulation, or repeal of an existing regulation). Alert the reader to all substantive matters. If applicable, generally describe the existing regulation.

The Board for Contractors is amending the Individual License and Certification Regulations to revise the requirements for renewal and reinstatement of licenses, including requirements for continuing education.

The amendments make various changes to the renewal, reinstatement, and continuing education provisions of the regulation. These changes include removing provisions related to the activation and inactivation of tradesman licenses. The changes also remove requirements that are not necessary or are burdensome. Other changes are made to make the regulation clearer and ensure the regulation complements current Virginia law.

Acronyms and Definitions

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Define all acronyms used in this form, and any technical terms that are not also defined in the "Definitions" section of the regulation.

"APA" means Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq. of the Code of Virginia).

"CE" means continuing education.

"DPOR" means Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation.

"HVAC" means heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

"USBC" means Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (13VAC5-63).

Statement of Final Agency Action

Provide a statement of the final action taken by the agency including: 1) the date the action was taken; 2) the name of the agency taking the action; and 3) the title of the regulation.

On March 12, 2024, the Board adopted final amendments to the Individual License and Certification Regulations.

Mandate and Impetus

List all changes to the information reported on the Agency Background Document submitted for the previous stage regarding the mandate for this regulatory change, and any other impetus that specifically prompted its initiation. If there are no changes to previously reported information, include a specific statement to that effect.

There are no changes to previously reported information.

Legal Basis

Identify (1) the promulgating agency, and (2) the state and/or federal legal authority for the regulatory change, including the most relevant citations to the Code of Virginia and Acts of Assembly chapter number(s), if applicable. Your citation must include a specific provision, if any, authorizing the promulgating agency to regulate this specific subject or program, as well as a reference to the agency's overall regulatory authority.

The promulgating agency is the Board for Contractors. Chapter 11 of Title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia enumerates the legal authority for the Board to administer the licensure and certification programs for tradesmen, gas fitters, liquefied petroleum gas fitters, natural gas fitter providers, water well systems providers, elevator mechanics, residential building energy analysts, backflow prevention device workers, and automatic fire sprinkler inspectors.

Section 54.1-1102 of the Code of Virginia states, in part:

B. The Board shall promulgate regulations not inconsistent with statute necessary for the licensure of contractors and tradesmen and the certification of backflow prevention device workers, and for the relicensure of contractors and tradesmen and for the recertification of backflow prevention device workers, after license or certificate suspension or revocation.

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In addition, § 54.1-201 of the Code of Virginia provides, in part:

- A. The powers and duties of regulatory boards shall be as follows:
- 1. To establish the qualifications of applicants for certification or licensure by any such board, provided that all qualifications shall be necessary to ensure either competence or integrity to engage in such profession or occupation.
- 5. To promulgate regulations in accordance with the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.) necessary to assure continued competency, to prevent deceptive or misleading practices by practitioners and to effectively administer the regulatory system administered by the regulatory board. The regulations shall not be in conflict with the purposes and intent of this chapter or of Chapters 1 (§ 54.1-100 et seq.) and 3 (§ 54.1-300 et seq.) of this title.

Purpose

Explain the need for the regulatory change, including a description of: (1) the rationale or justification, (2) the specific reasons the regulatory change is essential to protect the health, safety, or welfare of citizens, and (3) the goals of the regulatory change and the problems it is intended to solve.

The General Assembly has charged the Board with the responsibility for regulating those who (i) engage, or offer to engage in, work as a tradesman (electrician, plumber, and HVAC technician), gas fitter, liquefied petroleum gas fitter, or natural gas fitter provider; (ii) engage in the drilling, installation, maintenance, or repair of a water well or water well system; (iii) engage in, or offer to engage in, work as an elevator mechanic or accessibility mechanic; (iv) engage in, or offer to engage in, work as a residential building energy analyst; (v) present themselves as a certified backflow prevention device worker; and (vi) perform or offer to perform inspections of automatic fire sprinkler systems, by requiring that such individuals obtain the appropriate licensure or certification.

The performing of trade-related work by those who lack sufficient expertise poses a risk to the public health, safety, and welfare. These risks include the potential for significant damage to property, personal injury, and death. In addition, the improper performing of trade-related work can pose a substantial risk of financial harm to property owner who will be responsible for assuming costs to correct or complete work that is defective.

As mandated by the General Assembly, the Board protects the public health, safety, and welfare, in part, by establishing through regulation the minimum qualifications for entry into the profession, as well as the minimum standards of conduct.

The goals of this regulatory action are to:

- 1. Update and clarify provisions of the regulation, this includes ensuring the regulation reflects current agency procedures and practices;
- Ensure the regulation complements current Virginia law, and is clearly written and understandable:
- 3. Remove requirements in the regulation pertaining to renewal and reinstatement of licenses and certificates, and continuing education that are not necessary to protect the public welfare.

Substance

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Briefly identify and explain the new substantive provisions, the substantive changes to existing sections, or both. A more detailed discussion is provided in the "Detail of Changes" section below.

- 1. Section -10 is revised to remove the definition for "inactive tradesman." This definition is removed because sections -73 and -75 pertaining to the inactivation and activation of tradesman licenses are being repealed. Accordingly, this definition is no longer necessary.
- 2. Sections -73 and -75 pertaining to the activation and inactivation of tradesmen licenses are repealed. The Board determined that the inactivation and activation of tradesman licenses provided for in sections -73 and -75 is no longer necessary. Since the period of licensure for a tradesman license is currently three years, these provisions are no longer applicable, as an individual license may only be on inactive status for a maximum of three years. According to the Board's records, licensees seldom make use of these provisions.
- 3. Section -130 is revised to add a new provision that would allow an individual who failed to reinstate a license to be deemed eligible to re-take the license examination in the same category and specialty as the expired license.
- 4. Section -210 is revised to remove the provision which requires a training provider to receive Board approval of the training course subject prior to offering the course. This change was made to make the regulation less restrictive.
- 5. Section -220 is revised to remove the requirement that CE provider include course and material fees with an application for approval of a CE course. This change was made to make the regulation less burdensome.
- 6. Sections -210 and -230 are revised to remove the requirement that student records and course completion information sent to the Board contain a student's social security number. This change is being made to comport with federal requirements regarding use of social security numbers.
- 7. Section -240 which requires the posting of CE provider and CE course certificates of approval be available at the location a course is taught is repealed. The requirements of this section are unnecessary and burdensome.
- 8. A new section (-270) is added. The new section provides that the Board may conduct an audit of any Board-approved education course to ensure compliance with the regulation. The Board has the inherent authority to audit approved training courses. Adding this provision provides notice to regulants that the Board has the authority to audit courses to ensure the courses meet standards.

Issues

Identify the issues associated with the regulatory change, including: 1) the primary advantages and disadvantages to the public, such as individual private citizens or businesses, of implementing the new or amended provisions; 2) the primary advantages and disadvantages to the agency or the Commonwealth; and 3) other pertinent matters of interest to the regulated community, government officials, and the public. If there are no disadvantages to the public or the Commonwealth, include a specific statement to that effect.

The primary advantages to the public and the regulated community are that the amendments to the regulation will:

- 1. Provide needed updating and clarification to the regulation;
- 2. Ensure the regulation complements current Virginia law, and is clearly written and understandable; and
- 3. Remove requirements in the regulation pertaining to renewal and reinstatement of licenses and certificates, and continuing education that are not necessary to protect the public welfare.

There are no identifiable disadvantages to the public. It is not anticipated that the regulatory change will create any substantial disadvantages to the regulated community.

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The primary advantage of the regulatory change to the Commonwealth is that it will permit the agency to more ably administer the licensure program. There are no identifiable disadvantages to the Commonwealth.

Requirements More Restrictive than Federal

List all changes to the information reported on the Agency Background Document submitted for the previous stage regarding any requirement of the regulatory change which is more restrictive than applicable federal requirements. If there are no changes to previously reported information, include a specific statement to that effect.

There are no changes to previously reported information.

Agencies, Localities, and Other Entities Particularly Affected

List all changes to the information reported on the Agency Background Document submitted for the previous stage regarding any other state agencies, localities, or other entities that are particularly affected by the regulatory change. If there are no changes to previously reported information, include a specific statement to that effect.

There are no changes to previously reported information.

Public Comment

<u>Summarize</u> all comments received during the public comment period following the publication of the previous stage, and provide the agency's response. Include all comments submitted: including those received on Town Hall, in a public hearing, or submitted directly to the agency. If no comment was received, enter a specific statement to that effect.

No public comments were received following publication of the Proposed stage.

Detail of Changes Made Since the Previous Stage

List all changes made to the text since the previous stage was published in the Virginia Register of Regulations and the rationale for the changes. For example, describe the intent of the language and the expected impact. Describe the difference between existing requirement(s) and/or agency practice(s) and what is being proposed in this regulatory change. Explain the new requirements and what they mean rather than merely quoting the text of the regulation. * Put an asterisk next to any substantive changes.

Current	New	New requirement	Updated new	Change, intent, rationale,
chapter-	chapter-	from previous	requirement since	and likely impact of
section	section	stage	previous stage	updated requirements
number		_		

	number, if			
	applicable			
30-10	N/A	N/A	Stylistic changes are made to this section. The definitions of "reinstatement" and "renewal" are revised to replace the term "certification card" with "certification" when referring to a certification issued by the Board.	Throughout the regulation, the term "certification card" is being revised to reflect "certification." The changes to these definitions are intended to ensure the term is consistent throughout the regulation.
30-120	N/A	N/A	Stylistic changes are made to this section. Subsection J is revised to replace the term "issuance" with "licensure or certification" when referring to the Board's authority to deny renewal of a license or certification. As revised, the subsection will provide that the Board may deny renewal of a license or certification for the same reasons that it may refuse initial licensure or certification. The section is revised to replace the term "certification card" with the term "certification" when referring to a certification issued by the Board.	The change to subsection J is intended to make this provision of the regulation clearer. Throughout the regulation, the term "certification card" is being revised to reflect "certification." The changes to these definitions are intended to ensure the term is consistent throughout the regulation.
30-130	N/A	The provisions of current subsection E are revised to clarify that a license or certification may be reinstated for up to two years following	Stylistic changes or corrections are made to this section. Current subsection E will be further revised to provide that a	The changes to subsection E are intended to ensure consistency in the use of terms. Throughout the regulation, the term "certification card"

		the expiration date of the license or certification. An individual who fails to reinstate within 24 months of the expiration date must apply for a new license and meet entry requirements in effect at the time of submittal of the new application.	license or certification may be reinstated for up to 24 months following the expiration date of the license or certification, instead of two years. The section is revised to replace the term "certification card" with the term "certification" when referring to a certification issued by the Board. A technical correction is made to subsection F to clarify that the Board may deny reinstatement of a license or certification for the same reasons as it may refuse initial licensure or certification. A stylistic change is made subsection A to replace the term "shall" with "will."	is being revised to reflect "certification." The changes to these definitions are intended to ensure the term is consistent throughout the regulation. Throughout the regulation, the term "shall" is being replaced with "must" or "will" where appropriate.
30-220	N/A	N/A	*Subsection B is revised to remove "course and material fees" from the application requirements for CE course approvals. Technical corrections are made in subsection A.	The change to subsection B is intended to reduce the regulatory burden on CE providers. The Board determined this requirement was not necessary to approve a CE course.
30-230	N/A	N/A	The section is revised to clarify that the electronic transmittal of course completion data must include the current license or certification number of the individual.	The Board issues both licenses and certifications. The change is intended to make clear that the requirements are applicable to both licenses and certifications.

Detail of All Changes Proposed in this Regulatory Action

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List all changes proposed in this action and the rationale for the changes. For example, describe the intent of the language and the expected impact. Describe the difference between existing requirement(s) and/or agency practice(s) and what is being proposed in this regulatory change. Explain the new requirements and what they mean rather than merely quoting the text of the regulation. * Put an asterisk next to any substantive changes.

Current chapter- section number	New chapter-section number, if applicable	Current requirements in VAC	Change, intent, rationale, and likely impact of updated requirements
30-10	N/A	Provides definitions that are necessary to make the regulation clear and understandable, and provides definitions for other specific terms used throughout the regulation.	*Adds definition for "Department" which means Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation. *Removes definition for "inactive tradesman." This definition is removed because sections -73 and -75 pertaining to the inactivation and activation of tradesman licenses are being repealed. Accordingly, this definition is no longer necessary. Stylistic changes are made to this section. The definitions of "reinstatement" and "renewal" are revised to replace the term "certification card" with "certification" when referring to a certification issued by the Board. Throughout the regulation, the term "certification card" is being revised to reflect "certification." The changes to these definitions are intended to ensure the term is consistent throughout the regulation.
30-73	N/A	This section provides that an individual who is not currently employed as a licensed tradesman and is not performing regulated activities may be licensed as an "inactive" tradesman by completing a Board-approved form.	*This section is being repealed. The Board determined that the inactivation and activation of tradesman licenses provided for in sections -73 and -75 is no longer necessary. Since the period of licensure for a tradesman license is currently three years, these provisions are no longer applicable, as an

			individual license may only be on inactive status for a maximum of three years. According to the Board's records, licensees seldom make use of these provisions.
30-75	N/A	This section provides that an inactive tradesman may activate a license by completing a Board-approved form and completing continuing education requirements for the current licensing cycle. A tradesman that has not had an active license for three or more years must meet current pre-licensing eligibility criteria.	*This section is being repealed. Please refer to the explanation and justification provided for section -73.
30-120	N/A	This section provides for the renewal of licenses and certifications. The section provides that licenses for electricians, gas fitters, HVAC tradesmen, and plumbers expire three years from the last day of the month in which the license was issued. For all other licensees or certificate holders, licensees or certifications expire two years from the last day of the month in which the license or certificate was issued. The section also provides for all license issued or renewed after December 31, 2007, licensees must complete CE as follows: • Tradesmen with designations for plumbing, electrical, and HVAC must complete three (3) hours of CE for each designation. • Individuals licensed as liquefied petroleum gas fitters or natural gas fitter providers must complete two (2) hours of CE. • CE must be related to the applicable building code and from a Boardapproved provider.	Subsection C is revised to remove language referring to the effective date of the CE requirement for renewal of tradesman and gas fitter licenses. This language is no longer necessary. *Subsection C is also revised to remove a provision that an inactive tradesman is not required to meet CE requirements. This provision is being removed in conjunction with the changes to sections -73 and -75. Subsection J is revised to clarify that a regulant has the right to request further review of any action to deny renewal of a license or certification in accordance with the APA. *Subsection K is revised to remove the provision that failure to timely pay a monetary penalty, reimbursement of cost, or other fee imposed as the result of a disciplinary action will result in withholding of exam administration. This change is made to conform the regulation to current agency practice. Minor stylistic changes are made to replace the word "shall" with "must" or "will" where appropriate. Other changes are made for the purposes of clarity or style.

The section also provides certified elevator mechanics and certified accessibility mechanics must complete eight (8) hours of CE related to applicable provisions of the USBC.

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The section also provides that certified water well systems providers must complete eight (8) hours of CE related to the practice of water well construction.

The section also provides that certified automatic fire sprinkler inspectors complete eight (8) hours of CE related to the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code.

The section provides for procedures for renewal of license and certifications.

The section provides that the Board will mail a renewal notice to the regulant that outlines the procedures for renewal.

A regulant's failure to receive the renewal notice does not relieve the regulant of the obligation to renew. In such instance, a licensee may submit a copy of the license with the required fee as an application for renewal.

The section also provides that certificates for automatic fire sprinkler inspectors may not be renewed one 30 days have passed since the expiration of the certificate.

The section also provides that residential building energy analysts must provide documentation of continued membership, in good standing, of a certifying organization approved by the Board, and proof of insurance as required by section - 40 I 4 of the regulation.

		This section outlines the fees for renewal of a license or certification. The section further provides that the date on which a renewal fee is received by the Department will determine whether the regulant is eligible for renewal or required to apply for reinstatement.	
		The section contains provisions for a temporary reduction of renewal fees effective until August 31, 2025.	
		The section further provides that the Board may deny renewal of a license or certification for the same reasons that it may refuse initial issuance or discipline a regulant. The regulant has the right to appeal any such action in accordance with the APA.	
		The section further provides that failure to timely pay any monetary penalty, reimbursement of cost, or other fee assessed in a disciplinary action will result in delaying or withholding services by the Department, including renewal, reinstatement, processing of a new application, or exam administration.	
30-130	N/A	This section provides for the reinstatement of licenses and certifications. The section provides that should the Department not receive a renewal application or renewal fee within 30 days of the	*Subsection A is revised to clarify that if all the applicable requirements for renewal of the license or certification specified in section -120 are not completed within 30 days of the expiration date, a reinstatement fee will be required.
		expiration date, the regulant must apply reinstatement of the license or certification.	*Subsection A is also revised to provide that reinstatement provisions are not applicable to certified automatic fire sprinkler inspectors.
		The section provides that applicants for reinstatement must meet the general qualifications for licensure or certification outlined in section -30. The section provides that	*The provisions of subsection C requiring an applicant for reinstatement to meet the general qualifications for licensure in section -30 are removed. The requirements imposed by this subsection are not necessary.
		reinstatement is not permitted	Subsection are not necessary.

once two years from the license or certification expiration date have passed. Individuals must apply or a new license or certification and meet the current entry requirements.

The section further provides that the Board may deny reinstatement of a license or certification for the same reasons that it may refuse initial issuance or discipline a regulant. The regulant has the right to appeal any such action in accordance with the APA.

The section further provides that failure to timely pay any monetary penalty, reimbursement of cost, or other fee assessed in a disciplinary action will result in delaying or withholding services by the Department, including renewal, reinstatement, processing of a new application, or exam administration.

This section outlines the fees for reinstatement of a license or certification. The section further provides that the date on which a reinstatement fee is received by the Department will determine whether the license or certification is reinstated, or whether a new application is required.

The section contains provisions for a temporary reduction of reinstatement fees effective until August 31, 2023.

The section further provides that any regulated activity conducted subsequent to the expiration of a license or certification may constitute unlicensed activity and may be subject to prosecution under applicable statute.

The existing provisions in this section that allow the Board to deny reinstatement of a license or certification for the same reasons as it may refuse initial licensure or discipline a regulant are sufficient to address individuals who may no longer meet the requirements for licensure or certification.

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The provisions of current subsection E are revised to clarify that a license or certification may be reinstated for up to 24 months following the expiration date of the license or certification. An individual who fails to reinstate within 24 months of the expiration date must apply for a new license and meet entry requirements in effect at the time of submittal of the new application.

*In addition, a new provision is added that would allow an individual who failed to reinstate a license to be deemed eligible to re-take the license examination in the same category and specialty as the expired license.

The provisions of current subsection F pertaining to regulated activity conducted after a license is expired are revised to clarify that such activity may be subject to prosecution under Chapter 1 (§ 54.1- 100 et seq.) or Chapter 11 (§ 54.1-1100 et seq.) of Title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia.

*Current subsection H is revised to remove the provision that failure to timely pay a monetary penalty, reimbursement of cost, or other fee imposed as the result of a disciplinary action will result in withholding of exam administration. This change is made to conform the regulation to current agency practice.

Minor stylistic changes are made to replace the word "shall" with "must" or "will" where appropriate. Other changes are made for the purposes of clarity or style.

30-210	N/A	This section provides for the approval of providers of CE courses. The section provides for the application requirements for those who provide a building coderelated CE course must submit an application for approval on a Board-provided form. The application must include: Provider name. Provider contact person, address, and telephone number. Course contact hours. Schedule of courses. Instructor names. The section provides that CE providers must have their subjects approved by the Board prior to initially offering the course. Courses that are delivered by correspondence or distance learning must include appropriate testing procedures to verify completion of the course. The section further provides for recordkeeping requirements. Providers must establish and maintain a record for each student. The record must include the (i) student's name; (ii) student's social security number or Board license number; (iii) course name and clock hours attended; (iv) course syllabus or outline; (v) instructor names; (vi) date of successful completion; and (vii) Board's course code. Providers must maintain records for a minimum of five years. Such records must be available for inspection by authorized representatives of the Board during normal business hours.	*Subsection B is revised to remove the provision which requires a training provider to receive Board approval of the training course subject prior to offering the course. This change was made to make the regulation less restrictive. *Subsection C is revised to remove the requirement that student records contain the student's social security number. This change is being made to comport with federal requirements regarding use of social security numbers. In addition, this requirement is not necessary and helps mitigate the risk of loss or misuse of personal information. Minor stylistic changes are made to replace the word "shall" with "must" or "will" where appropriate. Other changes are made for the purposes of clarity or style.
30-220	N/A	This section provides for the approval of CE courses.	*Subsection A is revised to clarify that a course content must include any changes to the articles of the building code that are applicable to each

		The section provides that all CE courses must cover articles of the current edition of the building code for the applicable license specialty. The section further specifies the building code articles that are applicable to each specialty. The section requires an approved	license or certification. This change is made to conform the regulation to current agency practice. *Subsection B is revised to remove "course and material fees" from the application requirements for continuing education course approvals. The change is intended to reduce the
		CE provider to submit an application for course approval on a Board-provided form. The application must include:	regulatory burden on CE providers. The Board determined this requirement was not necessary to approve a continuing education course.
		 Provider name, and approved provider number. Course name. Date, time, and location of the course. 	*Subsection C is revised to remove the provision that courses may be approved retroactively. This change is made because the provision is unnecessary.
		 Instructor information. Course and material fees. Course syllabus. The section further provides that courses may be approved retroactively, but that a regulant will not receive credit toward CE requirements until the course is approved by the Board.	Minor stylistic changes are made to replace the word "shall" with "must" or "will" where appropriate. Other changes are made for the purposes of clarity or style.
30-230	N/A	This section provides for reporting requirements for CE providers. Providers must electronically transmit course completion data to the Board within seven (7) days of completion of each individual course. The format of the transmission must be approved by the Board. The transmittal must include the (i) student's name; (ii) student's social security number or Board license number; (iii) date of successful completion; and (iv)	*The section is revised to remove the requirement that the transmittal contain the student's social security number. This change is being made to comport with federal requirements regarding use of social security numbers. This requirement is not necessary and helps mitigate the risk of loss or misuse of personal information. Minor stylistic changes are made to replace the word "shall" with "must" or "will" where appropriate. Other changes are made for the purposes of clarity.
30-240	N/A	Board's course code. This section requires that CE provider and CE course approval	*This section is repealed. The requirements of this section are
		certificates be available at the location where the course is taught.	unnecessary and burdensome.

30-250	N/A	This section provides for reporting of changes by approved CE providers. The section provides that any change to the information provided by a training provider in its application to the Board must be reported to the Board within 30 days of the change. However, changes in the course schedule must be reported within 10 days of the change.	The provision in this section pertaining to withdrawal of approval for failure to report a change is removed. The substance of this provision is moved to section -260.
		The section further provides that failure to report changes may result in withdrawal of approval of a CE provider by the Board.	
30-260	N/A	This section outlines the grounds upon which the Board may withdraw the approval of a CE provider. The Board may withdraw approval for the following	*The section is revised to add failure to comply with the reporting requirements in section -250 as grounds for withdrawal of approval.
		 The courses being offered no longer meet the standards established by the Board. The provider advertises its services in a fraudulent or deceptive way. The provider, instructor, or designee of the provider falsifies any information relating to the application for approval, course information, or student records; or fails to produce records as required by section - 210.C. 	
N/A	30-270	N/A – No current requirements.	*This new section provides that the Board may conduct an audit of any Board-approved education course to ensure compliance with the regulation. The Board has the inherent authority to audit approved training courses. Adding this provision provides notice to regulants that the Board has the

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	authority to audit courses to ensure the courses meet standards.