

2017

Military Service Member and Military Spouse Licensing Report

DECEMBER 2017

Report Requirement

Senate Bill 5359, adopted during the 2017 regular legislative session, charged the Department of Licensing (the Department) and the Department of Health to file a report to the legislature biennially and the Washington State military transition council annually beginning January 1, 2018, to provide updates on progress in our efforts to implement the requirements of chapter 18.340 RCW, chapter 23, Laws of 2011, and chapter 351, Laws of 2011.

This report contains background information and updates on progress efforts.

Background Information

The Department issues professional and business licenses for 39 non-health related programs.

There are approximately 230,000 active professional licensees and about 35,000 active business licensees.

For professional licenses, the department ensures individuals meet or exceed the minimum qualifications before being licensed. The department reviews education and experience, administers examinations, conducts background checks, and ensures continuing education requirements are met.

Professional licenses regulated by the department are as follows:

- Architects
- Auctioneers
- Bail Bond Agents and Bail Recovery Agents
- Tattooing, Body Art & Body Piercing
- Engineers
- Camping Resort Sales
- Combative Sports
- Cosmetologists
- Court Reporters
- Driver Training School Instructors
- Funeral Directors and Embalmers
- Geologists
- Home Inspectors
- Landscape Architects
- Land Surveyors
- Notaries Public
- On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems
- Private Investigators
- Real Estate Brokers
- Real Estate Appraisers
- Security Guards
- Timeshare Sales

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After license issuance, the department's regulatory functions include conducting audits and inspections and resolving complaints with or without administrative action. When warranted, the department may take appropriate administrative action that includes fines, license denials, suspensions and revocations.

The department also provides information, engages in education of licensees or the public, and conducts outreach efforts.

Professional licensees generally experience very little delay in getting their license applications approved. The Department has an average of 90% on-time for processing licensee applications. Many of the Department's licensee programs have comity with other jurisdictions (reciprocity). This makes it easier for individuals from other states to transfer their licenses into Washington, to include military spouses.

Most Department of Licensing professions are regulated under authority of the Director. The following have regulatory Boards:

- Architect Board
- Collection Agency Board
- Funeral and Cemetery Board
- Geologist Board
- Landscape Architects Board
- Board of Registration for Engineers and Land Surveyors

Prior and ongoing issues

The Department does not hear of many issues from military service members and their spouses in relation to business and professional licensing, however we have been aware of a couple issues that relate to their unique situations.

In 2015, the Department worked with the Legislature to pass [SHB 1063](#) defining 'hair design' as a practice area separate from cosmetology. The hair design license is issued in many states. Prior to this legislation, to cut, style, straighten, or color hair in Washington required a full cosmetology license, which includes additional study in areas like manicure, waxing and skin care. This made it difficult for individuals with hair design licenses from out of state, such as military spouses, to obtain a cosmetology license. With the new 'hair design' license it has been easier for individuals to transfer their licenses to Washington.

Due to high turnover in the industry the Security Guard program often has a backlog for application processing. However this delay is offset by a temporary license issued by the hiring company.

The Private Investigator application process also experiences delays, typically due to missing information on the application. There was a bill introduced in the 2017 session that would create a temporary registration card for private investigators that may assist military applicants with the approval process, although we very seldom receive interest from military persons regarding this license.

Below is a summary of program interactions with military members and their spouses:

- Real Estate: has not had requests from military members or their spouses in over three years
- Public Protection – Bail Bond Recovery Agents, Security Guards, Private Investigators
 - Military spouses: No requests for assistance
 - Military members: We receive an application using military experience to meet the licensing requirements about once every two months.
 - The Bail Bond Recovery Agent and Security Guard programs assist military applicants by matching their military experience to the licensing requirements; for example, if the applicant had 2,000 hours as 'military police' then they met the minimum requirements for a license.
 - The Private Investigator program requests documentation in the military records that indicate "investigative" activities and reporting on investigations. DOL will accept a letter from the Commanding Officer identifying the job duties as the verifiable proof if no other documentation would be available.
- Cosmetology: In the last two years staff have had two military assists – the first was a military spouse with a 'hair design' license who transferred into Washington and the other was a military spouse not completely finished with training so we helped her locate a school and transfer the hours of training she had completed.
- Regulatory Boards:
 - There is occasionally a transitioning military member who becomes licensed as a Professional Engineer by passing the requisite exam; they do not appear to have any issues with passing the exam and obtaining their license as the program has not received any requests for assistance. There are many opportunities to use military engineering experience without a license, so the demand is not high.
 - The other regulatory Boards accept pertinent military experience but have not heard from military members or spouses for assistance with applying during the last two years.
- Driver Training Schools:
 - Have not received any requests from military spouses for assistance.
 - Driver training skills Instructor – Since October 2016, approximately a dozen military members have submitted military documents for review. Only 2-3 were found to have no relevant and applicable experience. The Department will accept relevant military training as a 40-hour credit toward the 100-hours required to be a licensed instructor. Relevant and verifiable training (via Enlisted/Officer record brief or DD-214), such as Master Driver or AIT Instructor, count towards the 40-hour credit. Non-relevant training (i.e. basic jump school) cannot be used for credit hours.

Progress and future steps

The Department has been making guidelines around working with military spouses. Due to low demand, it has taken time to get adequate information to proceed.

We published information for military transferees that is linked from our “Moving to WA?” section of the Department's home page. It encourages military members or their spouses to contact us regarding assistance we may be able to provide when seeking a professional or business license. (<http://www.dol.wa.gov/business/militarylicense.html>)

The Department is currently preparing to do rulemaking related to military members and military spouses for all of its professional and business license programs. In brief, these rules clarify requirements for:

- Military spouses making their Washington license inactive;
- Military spouse applicants able to receive a temporary license; and
- Military members entering inactive status due to military status.

We plan to file the CR 101 by Spring 2018, the CR 102 by late Summer 2018, and file the CR 103 in Fall 2018.

The Department is open to feedback and suggestions on how to better serve military members and their spouses.