



Universal Temporary Licensure

(HB 85 & SB 83 in the 33rd Legislature)

What is Universal Temporary Licensure (UTL)?

It's a measure that establishes a pathway for limited reciprocity through temporary licenses issued by the department for qualified professionals who:

- Hold substantially equivalent licenses in good standing from other U.S. or Canadian jurisdictions
- Have demonstrated substantial compliance with licensing requirements in Alaska but live in a U.S. jurisdiction or Canadian territory/province where the profession is not licensed; or
- Meets the qualifications for Alaska licensure through military education, training, and service per AS 08.01.064(a) and do not already hold a license in another jurisdiction.

What are the qualifications for a professional to qualify for the temporary license?

Applicants must submit an application, provide documents verifying they meet the qualifications listed above, pay all required fees, and undergo a criminal history background check if that's a requirement for the profession's initial/permanent licensure. Applicants cannot be the subject of disciplinary action related to their profession or be the subject of ongoing review or disciplinary proceedings by the professional licensing entity in another jurisdiction, or have committed an act in another jurisdiction within the past ten (10) years that would have constituted grounds for denial or revocation of a license in Alaska at the time the act was committed.

What are the stipulations of the temporary licenses?

They're issued by the department and valid for 180-days with an option for a 180-day extension at the department's discretion. Temporary license holders must practice in compliance with Alaska's laws. The department has the authority to revoke a temporary license if the license was secured under deceit, fraud, or intentional misrepresentation.

What licensing programs would this new temporary license provision apply to?

All professional licensing programs within the Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing except Architects, Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Landscape Architects (AS 08.48), Big Game Guides and Related Occupations (AS 08.54), and Marine Pilots (AS 08.62), as those programs require Alaska-specific training.

Why is UTL needed?

Alaska is experiencing a workforce shortage in several fields, and it's time to streamline the process to allow qualified professionals to quickly get to work in Alaska. It's no secret that processing times are lengthening for many of our programs despite the hard work of our staff and boards. This is due to the 64 percent increase in the number of professional licenses in the last decade which was compounded by staffing shortages and turnover over the last few years. We're finally seeing significant improvements in staffing. Universal temporary licensure is a concept that's being adopted by many states, although it looks slightly different in all of them. We need to use every option available that allows us to safely get licensed professionals to work in Alaska sooner.

How will UTL work?

For professionals looking for permanent licensure in Alaska, the department will issue the temporary license automatically if/when an applicant meets the qualifications for the temporary license as part of the permanent licensure process – reducing the need for multiple applications and processes. For professionals looking to come to Alaska for only a short period of time (180 days or less), the department will issue a temporary license when the required items have been received and processed.

How do we know UTL will help?

The Alaska State Medical Board and Board of Nursing led the way in making temporary permits part of the permanent licensure process. Although temporary licensure does require some additional tracking and communications beyond what was previously needed for the permanent license, it eliminated the need for professionals to submit applications for both the temporary and permanent licenses, reducing the number of applications that staff must process for the same person. The regulation changes made by these boards allow physicians, physician assistants, registered nurses, and practical nurses to work in Alaska while licensing examiners wait on items from third parties (such as verifications of work experience, verification of hospital privileges, etc.). We also have similar provisions under the temporary military licenses offered to our active duty military members and their spouses thanks to the passage of SB 21 in 2021 (CH. 29 SLA 2021).

Specific to nursing, how would UTL relate to the board's efforts to enact the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) in Alaska?

The department still sees the NLC as the very best option to address the nursing shortage in Alaska and reduce application processing times. Only the NLC will reduce the number of applications that come into the state. However, UTL will complement the NLC as it will allow a pathway for qualified nurses from non-compact states to obtain a temporary license quickly and get to work.

How many states have UTL-type provisions?

So far, 18 U.S. states have enacted some type of universal recognition policies for out-of-state licensed professionals.

What happens to the existing temporary licensure statutes under each programs' statutes?

They will be repealed to allow for a standard and streamlined temporary licensure process and requirements that's the same across all boards.

Why is this necessary if boards already offer temporary licenses?

Despite all boards having the authority to offer temporary licenses under AS 08.01.062, only some do. At this point, Alaska needs to promote the fact that we are "open for business" and make it easier for qualified licensees in good standing that have not received disciplinary action against any license in other jurisdictions to come to Alaska to fill vacancies and assist Alaskans in need of their services.

How do we know the professionals working under this temporary license are safe to practice in the state?

Because a professional can only qualify for the temporary license if they hold a license in good standing in another state, have not received disciplinary action on any license, have not committed an act in another jurisdiction within the last ten (10) years that would have constituted grounds for denial in Alaska.