

Board Responds to Coronavirus Pandemic

On March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster for all Texas counties as a result of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and extended the disaster declaration on April 13, 2020. The Texas State Board of Public Accountancy (TSBPA) office has remained open and operational and we have continued to perform the essential functions of our agency while providing the highest level of service possible. To protect our staff from exposure to the virus, our physical office is temporarily closed to visitors and the public, and the majority of our staff is temporarily telecommuting. This may cause minor delays in service and we recommend that you use email for the quickest response. The TSBPA has also responded to COVID-19 by granting extensions, adopting an emergency rule revision, cancelling the June swearing-in ceremony, and hosting a virtual May Board meeting.

Extensions

- **Fingerprinting:** If you need to be fingerprinted to meet the new legislative requirement, you may decide to delay your appointment until the heightened safety guidelines have been relaxed. Your license will not be held if your fingerprints are not completed by the end of your upcoming renewal month.
- **Continuing Professional Education (CPE):** Continuing professional education (CPE) extensions will be automatically granted **through August 2020** for **May, June, and July** individual license renewals. However, we still encourage you to complete your CPE as soon as possible. If your in-person CPE courses are being delayed or canceled, please consider online CPE providers and options to bridge any near-term gaps in needed credits.

If your 2021 license renewal is due in:	Your CPE is due by the end of:
March	June 2020
April	July 2020
May, June, or July	August 2020
August	August 2020

- **License Renewal Payments:** Payment processing will proceed without interruption. We encourage you to make your requisite renewal payments prior to the end of your renewal month.
- **CPA Exam Credit Extensions:** All Texas CPA Exam candidates with one or more credits on the CPA Exam that will expire on or before June 30, 2020, will be granted a 90-day extension of the credit to September 30, 2020.
- **20Q2 Testing Window Extension:** The National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) invoked an emergency CPA Exam testing window to extend the 20Q2 testing window from June 10, 2020, to June 30, 2020. Additionally, NASBA will extend all NTSs expiring between April 1 – June 30, 2020, until September 30, 2020, and Prometric will waive all rescheduling fees.

Emergency Rule Revision to Qualified Accounting Courses

The TSBPA adopted an emergency rule revision to **Rule 511.57 Qualified Accounting Courses**. The rule revision has temporarily eliminated the requirement for candidates to take at least 15 of their 30 semester credit hours of upper division accounting courses from classes held in-person during the spring 2020 semester. The Board made the decision to adopt this emergency rule revision because many universities moved classes online amid COVID-19 concerns.

The Board adopted the revision at its March 12, 2020 Board meeting. This change is effective immediately but will not apply retroactively. The emergency rule revision is good for 120 days and may be extended for an additional 60 days by Board action. At its May 14, 2020 meeting, the Board will consider permanently eliminating the required classroom hours; thereby permitting all advanced accounting classes to be taken online at a Board-recognized educational institution in order to qualify to take the CPA Exam.

June 13, 2020, Swearing-In Ceremony Canceled

After careful consideration and in light of the ongoing efforts to curb the expansion of COVID-19, the Board has decided to cancel the June 13, 2020 Swearing-in-Ceremony. Candidates who were eligible to attend were sent further communications regarding their CPA certificates, which they will receive in the mail. The distinguished Texas CPAs who have maintained their licenses for 50 years will be mailed a certificate of achievement to commemorate this important milestone. Stay tuned for updates and please be responsive to subsequent communications as we continue our process of printing and distributing Texas CPA certificates and 50-year licensee certificates of achievement.

We appreciate your understanding during these difficult times. Online services are available 24/7 at www.tsbpa.texas.gov and remain the best source of information from the Board and provide tools for managing your individual and firm license renewals. We will be providing up-to-date information at www.tsbpa.texas.gov and also on our Facebook and Twitter accounts, so please check back often. ■