

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROTOCOL

Frequently, the Board is asked questions about the protocol that must be submitted when a person applies for licensure and that must be maintained in order to practice. Below you will find several of the most commonly asked questions and the answers for them. As always, feel free to contact the Board if your question is not addressed.

1. Can I be licensed as an athletic trainer in the state of North Carolina if I do not have a protocol signed by a physician?

Yes, you can be licensed but cannot legally practice as an athletic trainer unless you have submitted a protocol that is signed by a physician.

2. Why does the law require a protocol?

When the law was written seven years ago it was necessary to include a means of assuring physician involvement for those practicing as an athletic trainer in this state. By definition the athletic trainer is an ancillary health care provider who should align him/herself with a physician to provide a medical team approach to treating the physically active population.

3. What are the most common problems that cause a protocol to be rejected by the North Carolina Board of Athletic Trainer Examiners?

First and foremost is the omission of an emergency plan. The protocol must include a plan that is agreed upon by the athletic trainer and the physician which states how an emergency will be handled. Another common omission, believe it or not, is the absence of the physician signature.

4. How often does the protocol need to be updated?

Any time there is a change in place of employment or a change in the relationship between the physician and the athletic trainer a new protocol should be filed with the NCBATE. Similarly, if there is a change in the specific contents of the protocol, e.g. standing orders for the treatment of a head injury due to new research, a revised protocol should be submitted.

NOTE: Ideally the protocol should be revised at least annually by the athletic trainer, their staff and the physician for accuracy.

5. Can a physician withdraw his/her agreement to a protocol?

Yes, a physician may withdraw his/her agreement to a protocol by submitting his/her desire to do so in writing to the NCBATE which will forward said withdrawal to the NC Board of Medical Examiners (as the original protocol is filed with both Boards upon submission for athletic trainer licensure application). This should be done when there is a change in the physician's involvement with that athletic trainer.

NOTE: Ideally the athletic trainer maintains a good working relationship with his/her physician through good communication, continuing education and the implementation of commonly accepted practices.