

WASHINGTON STATE MASSAGE PRACTITIONER PRACTICE ACT EXERPS**RCW 18.108.005****Intent -- Health care insurance not affected.**

The legislature finds it necessary to license the practice of massage and massage therapy in order to protect the public health and safety. It is the legislature's intent that only individuals who meet and maintain minimum standards of competence and conduct may provide services to the public. This chapter shall not be construed to require or prohibit individual or group policies or contracts of an insurance carrier, health care service contractor, or health maintenance organization from providing benefits or coverage for services and supplies provided by a person licensed under this chapter.

RCW 18.108.010**Definitions.**

In this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires, the following meanings shall apply:

- (1) "Board" means the Washington state board of massage.
- (2) "Massage" and "massage therapy" mean a health care service involving the external manipulation or pressure of soft tissue for therapeutic purposes. Massage therapy includes techniques such as tapping, compressions, friction, Swedish gymnastics or movements, gliding, kneading, shaking, and fascial or connective tissue stretching, with or without the aids of superficial heat, cold, water, lubricants, or salts. Massage therapy does not include diagnosis or attempts to adjust or manipulate any articulations of the body or spine or mobilization of these articulations by the use of a thrusting force, nor does it include genital manipulation.
- (3) "Massage practitioner" means an individual licensed under this chapter.
- (4) "Secretary" means the secretary of health or the secretary's designee.
- (5) "Massage business" means the operation of a business where massages are given.
- (6) "Animal massage practitioner" means an individual with a license to practice massage therapy in this state with additional training in animal therapy.

RCW 18.108.070**Qualifications for license.**

The secretary shall issue a massage practitioner's license to an applicant who demonstrates to the secretary's satisfaction that the following requirements have been met:

- (1) Effective June 1, 1988, successful completion of a course of study in an approved massage program or approved apprenticeship program;

- (2) Successful completion of an examination administered or approved by the board; and
- (3) Be eighteen years of age or older.

In addition, applicants shall be subject to the grounds for denial or issuance of a conditional license under chapter 18.130 RCW.

The secretary may require any information and documentation that reasonably relates to the need to determine whether the applicant meets the criteria for licensure provided for in this chapter and chapter 18.130 RCW. The secretary shall establish by rule what constitutes adequate proof of meeting the criteria. The board shall give an appropriate alternate form of examination for persons who cannot read or speak English to determine equivalent competency.

RCW 18.108.230

Animal massage practitioner -- Endorsement -- Training requirements -- Rules.

- (1) A massage practitioner licensed under this chapter may apply for an endorsement as a small or large animal massage practitioner upon completion of one hundred hours of training in either large or small animal massage. Training must include animal massage techniques, kinesiology, anatomy, physiology, first aid care, and proper handling techniques.
- (2) An applicant who applies for an endorsement within the first year following July 22, 2001, may submit documentation of a minimum of fifty hours of training with up to fifty hours of practical experience or continuing education, or a combination thereof, to fulfill the requirements of this section.
- (3) Massage therapy of animals does not include diagnosis, prognosis, or all treatment of diseases, deformities, defects, wounds, or injuries of animals. For the purposes of this section, massage for therapeutic purposes may be performed solely for purposes of patient well-being.
- (4) A person licensed and endorsed under this section may hold themselves out as an animal massage practitioner.
- (5) The board may adopt rules to implement this section upon consultation with the Washington state veterinary board of governors and licensed massage practitioners with training in animal massage.