

# EMS Program Background Check & Licensure FAQ

## VVC EMT & Paramedic Students

This FAQ explains **common reasons a student may fail a background check**, be **ineligible for clinical placement**, or be **denied certification or licensure** as an EMT or Paramedic in California. These rules are established by state law and enforced by the California EMS Authority and Local EMS Agencies (LEMSAs). They are **not discretionary decisions by the college or EMS program**.

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## 1. Why does the EMS program require a background check?

Background checks are required to:

- Protect **patient safety and public trust**
- Meet **state licensure requirements**
- Allow students access to **clinical sites, ambulances, and hospitals**
- Ensure eligibility for **state certification (EMT) or state licensure (Paramedic)**

If you cannot pass a background check, you may be **unable to complete clinical or field requirements**, which means you cannot complete the program.

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## 2. Can I complete the EMS program if I fail the background check?

In most cases, **no**.

Even if classroom participation is possible, students who fail a background check may be:

- Denied access to clinical sites
- Denied ambulance ride-outs
- Barred from patient contact
- Ineligible for state certification or licensure

This results in **failure or dismissal from the program**, regardless of academic performance.

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### 3. What offenses automatically disqualify a Paramedic license in California?

The California EMS Authority **must deny or revoke** a Paramedic license if an applicant:

- Has committed **any sexually related offense** requiring registration under Penal Code §290
- Has been convicted of **murder, attempted murder, or murder-for-hire**
- Has **two or more felony convictions**
- Is currently on **parole or probation for any felony**

There is **no discretion** in these cases unless extraordinary circumstances are approved at the state level.

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### 4. What offenses can disqualify me based on timeframes?

Certain convictions result in denial based on **how recently they occurred**:

#### Felony convictions

- Any felony conviction with release from incarceration **within the past 10 years**
- Manslaughter or involuntary manslaughter with release **within the past 15 years**

#### Drug-related misdemeanors

- **Two or more drug-related misdemeanors** within the past 5 years (use, possession, sale, or transportation of narcotics or dangerous drugs)

#### Violence-related misdemeanors

- **Two or more misdemeanors** involving force, violence, threats, or intimidation within the past 5 years

#### Theft-related misdemeanors

- **Any theft-related misdemeanor** within the past 5 years
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## 5. What offenses may still result in denial even if they are older?

The EMS Authority **may deny or revoke** licensure for:

- Fraud or intentional dishonesty for personal gain within the past 7 years
- Required registration under Health & Safety Code §11590

These cases are evaluated individually and often involve documentation, disclosure, and review.

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## 6. Do dismissed, sealed, or expunged cases count?

Possibly.

- **Expungement does not guarantee eligibility**
- **Failure to disclose** prior convictions is itself grounds for denial
- Some clinical sites and EMS agencies evaluate **arrest history**, not just convictions

Always disclose **exactly as instructed** on applications. Omissions are viewed as dishonesty.

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## 7. Do out-of-state convictions count?

Yes.

Equivalent convictions from other states are treated the **same as California offenses**, regardless of how the other state classifies them.

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## 8. What if I was convicted as a juvenile?

These standards apply only to convictions where the individual was **prosecuted as an adult**. Juvenile adjudications are generally handled differently, but disclosure requirements still apply depending on the question asked.

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## 9. Can I still become licensed if I have a disqualifying history?

In limited cases:

- The EMS Authority Director may grant a license if **extraordinary circumstances** exist
- This is rare and **not guaranteed**
- Approval at the program level does **not** override state authority

Students should **not assume** an exception will be granted.

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## 10. Does the EMS program decide licensure eligibility?

No.

The EMS program:

- Enforces clinical and educational requirements
- Requires background clearance for participation

The **California EMS Authority** makes the final decision on certification and licensure.

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## 11. What is my responsibility as a student?

You are responsible for:

- Reviewing licensure eligibility **before enrolling**
  - Disclosing all required information truthfully
  - Understanding that tuition, time, and effort **are not refunded** due to background or licensure denial
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## 12. Who should I contact if I am unsure about my eligibility?

If you have concerns:

- Consult an **attorney familiar with EMS licensure**
- Contact the **California EMS Authority** directly for clarification

- Do this **before enrolling** in an EMS course

Program faculty cannot provide legal advice or override state decisions.

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## **Final Reminder**

Passing this program requires more than academic success. EMS professionals are entrusted with lives, medications, access to private spaces, and public confidence. Licensure standards reflect that responsibility.

If you have questions, ask early. Waiting until clinical placement or graduation is usually too late.