



New Eligibility Requirement for ABPTS Sports Specialist Certification

Venue Coverage Hours

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Requirement Summary:

Effective for 2017 initial certification and recertification candidates, there is a modification to the direct patient care hour eligibility requirement for initial certification and recertification candidates. 100 hours of the direct patient care hour requirement must be documented as athletic venue coverage. Athletic venue coverage may include activities supporting or observing medical care provided in preparation for, during, or following practices, training, or competitions.

Type of Duty	Time	Event
Supporting Medical Care	Preparation (prior)	Practices
Observing Medical Care	During	Training
	Following	Competitions

For initial certification candidates, a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the hours must be performed in association with a contact sport (e.g. basketball, boxing, diving, field hockey, flag or tackle football, ice hockey, lacrosse, martial arts, motocross, rodeo, rugby, ski jumping, soccer, team handball, water polo, and wrestling). The remaining hours may be performed in association with coverage of contact, limited contact (e.g. baseball, gymnastics, etc.) or non-contact sports (e.g. ballet, dance, etc.). A listing of contact, limited contact, and non-contact sports is provided on page 4.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ABPTS and the Sports Specialty Council have waived the mandatory requirement for 2021 exam applicants that 50% of the venue coverage hours must be performed in association with a contact sport. Applicants for this cycle may document the required 100 hours in any combination of contact, limited contact, or non-contact sports to fulfill the venue coverage requirement.

For recertification and MOSC candidates, 100% of hours may be performed in association with any contact, limited contact, or non-contact sports.

Rationale for Requirement:

The Description of Specialty Practice (DSP) for Sports Physical Therapy outlines the key competencies including: Rehabilitation/Return to Activity, Acute Injury/Illness Management, Sports Science, Medical/Surgical Considerations, Injury Prevention, and Critical Inquiry. During the current SCS application process, we require evidence of clinical practice to ensure that the candidate has not only learned the concepts of Sports Physical Therapy but also gains experience in the clinic with these concepts. We ensure that the candidate has been exposed and equipped with the particular concepts of Acute Injury/Illness Management with the emergency care certification requirement of having one of the following:

- Certification as an Athletic Trainer, Certified (ATC) or
- License as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or
- Certification as an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)²

Note that this title was previously an Emergency Responder or First Responder)

What lacks in consistency and clarity is the experience of the candidate with utilization of these designations (ATC, EMT or EMR). With the current application process, there is no

requirement that ensures the candidate actively functions in any of these capacities. This dilemma becomes more apparent, when one looks further into the subdivisions of this Acute Injury/Illness Management competency. These subdivisions include the *Examination, Evaluation, Diagnosis* as well as *Prognosis, Intervention, Outcomes* of the acutely injured or ill athlete. The ability to complete those competencies in the sports physical therapy clinic on the acutely injured or ill athlete is rare. Conversely, the exposure to ensure proficiency not just knowledge of this competency is relatively easily attained on the athletic venue. These points were substantiated with the recent revalidation study, resulting in the 2013 *Sports Description of Specialty Practice*.

The Sports Specialty Council is attempting to rectify this dilemma by requiring SCS candidates to complete athletic venue hours as part of the application process, which will accomplish the following goals:

1. Improve not just the knowledge of this competency but also the application of this knowledge, thus improving the possibility of not just equipping but also developing sports physical therapy specialists in acute injury/illness management.
2. Provide more consistency between the different routes to qualify for SCS application i.e. residency route vs. traditional application. Currently, all credentialed sports physical therapy residency programs requires 200 athletic venue hours.

What Activities Constitute Venue Coverage?

Applicants for specialization certification in sports physical therapy and applicants for re-certification should utilize the following guidance in calculating venue coverage hours. Because each situation is different, there is no specific list of activities that may always be included or excluded as venue coverage. However, a guiding principle to consider for defining venue coverage is: **the activities in which a therapist participates immediately preceding, during or immediately following an official competition or practice athletic events, or tactical athlete and/or military competitions or physical training. This work can be fee based or pro bono.** Time spent providing support of medical or athletic training personnel in any of the stated circumstances may qualify. Hours may be performed in support of primary services provided by a Medical Doctor (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC), or a Physical Therapist that is a board certified Sports Clinical Specialist (SCS).

Physical therapists should check with their state practice act and the regulations of the respective sporting organization to ensure acceptable involvement by the PT.

Some examples of approved venue coverage activities include:

1. Time spent providing injury management and consultation for athletes in venues where athletes practice and compete (e.g. interscholastic, club, intramural, collegiate, Olympic and professional) practices and competitions.
2. Time spent as part of a pre-participation physical medical team for athletes.
3. Time spent providing medical support for running and cycling events (e.g. holiday 5K, organized marathons, triathlons, bike races).

4. Time spent providing care and injury management for tactical athletes/military personnel in combatives training, group physical training evolutions, obstacle course).

Sport classification by contact level¹:

Contact Sports	Limited Contact Sports	Non-contact Sports
Basketball	Baseball	Archery
Boxing	Bicycling	Badminton
Diving	Boarding (skate, snow, and wake/knee)	Body Building,
Field Hockey	Canoeing/Kayaking (white water)	Canoeing/Kayaking (flat water)
Football (flag,tackle)	Canoeing/Kayaking (white water)	Crew/Rowing
Ice Hockey	Cheerleading	Curling
Lacrosse	Cricket	Dancing
Martial Arts	Fencing	Field (discus, javelin, and shot put)
Rodeo	Field Events (pole vault and high jump)	Golf
Rugby	Field Hockey	Orienteering
Ski Jumping	Gymnastics	Power Lifting
Soccer	Handball	Race Walking
Team Handball	Horseback Riding	Riflery
Water Polo	Racquetball	Rope Jumping
Wrestling	Skating (ice, in-line, and roller)	Running
Motocross	Skiing (cross-country, downhill, and water)	Sailing
	Software	Scuba Diving
	Squash	Strength Training
	Ultimate Frisbee	Swimming
	Volleyball	Table Tennis
	Windsurfing/Surfing	Tennis
		Track
		Weight Lifting

¹*Medical Conditions Affecting Sports Participation. Stephen G. Rice and the Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness. Pediatrics 2008;121;841.*

- **Initial certification** eligibility requires candidates to document a minimum of 50 venue coverage hours in contact sports. Another 50 hours minimum may be in contact, limited contact, or non-contact sports. All 100 hours must have been acquired within the past 10 years.
- **Recertification** eligibility requires candidates to document a minimum of 100 venue coverage hours in either contact, limited contact, or non-contact sports acquired within the past 10 years. **MOSC candidates** must submit 33 venue coverage hours in either contact, limited contact, or non-contact sports in each 3-year MOSC cycle.
- Candidates with limited capability to cover organized sporting events (e.g. military PTs, federal PTs employed outside the United States) many submit a request to receive credit for venue coverage hours provided while supporting military physical training or tactical athlete training (e.g. SWAT/FBI physical training).