



ATHLETIC TRAINER COMPACT

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is the Athletic Trainer Compact?

The Athletic Trainer Compact is a legislative agreement among states which provides a streamlined pathway to interstate practice for licensed athletic trainers. A state must enact the compact model legislation via its legislative process to join.

2. What are the primary benefits of the compact?

- Promotes multistate practice through a streamlined and expedient process
- Strengthens public protection by setting robust safeguards and facilitating greater information sharing among states
- Reduces the burden of maintaining multiple licenses, by syncing renewal dates and avoiding duplicative continuing education requirements

3. When and why do licensed athletic trainers need to engage in interstate practice?

- Changes of residence by an athletic trainer. This is a particularly frequent occurrence among military spouses.
- Employment opportunities across state lines – including providing services for a sports team or sports team event.
- Continuity of care opportunities when either a patient or provider relocates.

4. How does the Athletic Trainer Compact work?

The Athletic Trainer Compact streamlines the traditional licensure process by establishing uniform eligibility criteria for states to join and for athletic trainers to use the compact. The compact eligibility criteria are reflective of the licensure uniformity that already exists among states, as well as prevailing compact law.

Athletic trainers who are licensed in one compact member state can practice in another member state by obtaining a compact privilege. The eligibility for a privilege to practice is confirmed by the exchange of data from the athletic trainer's state of qualifying licensure and the compact data system. Since the athletic trainer's eligibility is pre-determined through existing data sets, an athletic trainer can be issued a privilege to practice within the same day as applying, assuming all criteria is met.

5. Is the Athletic Trainer Compact similar to other licensure compacts?

Yes, the Athletic Trainer Compact uses the prevailing 'privilege to practice' model and is similar in form and function to other professional licensure compacts such as the PA Compact, Respiratory Care Interstate Compact, and the Occupational Therapy Compact.

6. What is a compact privilege?

A compact privilege is the legal authorization for an athletic trainer to practice in another compact member state where they are not licensed. An athletic trainer must hold an active and unencumbered license in their state of qualifying licensure (which must be a compact member state) and meet additional eligibility criteria to be eligible for a compact privilege.

7. Who can use the compact?

The primary requirements are for an athletic trainer to have an unencumbered license from a compact member state and have active BOC certification. If an athletic trainer does not have current BOC certification, there is an alternative pathway available through the compact by completing a number of requirements laid out in the compact.

8. When can licensed athletic trainers use the compact and get privileges to practice?

Once the compact has been enacted in at least seven states, the Athletic Trainer Compact Commission will be established to begin the work of operationalizing the compact for licensees. It typically takes 18 - 24 months for a compact commission to complete the operationalization process and begin issuing privileges to practice.

9. What does a compact privilege allow an athletic trainer to do in a remote state?

States retain their sovereignty over the practice of athletic trainers within their borders. An athletic trainer providing care in a remote state under a compact privilege will function within the scope of practice the same as individuals who are licensed in that state. Just as they are currently required to do if engaging in interstate practice, it is the athletic trainer's responsibility to know what they are authorized to do in the remote state based on that state's practice act.

10. How much will a compact privilege cost?

The compact member states will set up the fee structure once the compact reaches its activation threshold. The fee structure will include the option for both a compact commission fee and a compact member fee.

While the Athletic Trainer Compact is not currently active, for licensure compacts that are similar in model to the athletic trainer compact, the collective fee for a compact privilege is typically equivalent or less than the fee for a license.

11. What is a state of qualifying licensure?

A state of qualifying licensure refers to the compact member state in which an athletic trainer holds a license that meets the compact eligibility requirements. For instance, the license must be active, unencumbered, and issued by a state that satisfies the other criteria set forth in the compact. The qualifying license is what compact member states will recognize to grant a privilege to practice in their state.

12. How will the compact impact licensure requirements?

The Athletic Trainer Compact is an alternative, voluntary pathway to practice and will have no direct impact on a state's requirements for a single state license or scope of practice.

13. How will states know who is practicing in their state through the compact?

Just as state regulators can currently see who has a license in their state, regulators will also be able to know who has compact privileges to practice in their state. Athletic trainers need to obtain individual compact privileges in each state where they want to practice. States will have access to the compact's data system and will be able to view this information as needed.

14. Does the licensee need to complete CE in every state where they practice?

Practitioners must still complete the continuing education requirements to maintain their license from their state of qualifying licensure. However, they do not need to complete continuing education in the remote states where they hold compact privileges.

15. What is the compact commission?

The compact commission is an interstate government agency established by the compact which is comprised of one delegate from each member state. The compact commission writes rules and establishes the data system infrastructure to administer and implement the compact.

The compact commission is not a licensing board. It cannot affect state licensing requirements or act against a licensee.

16. When will the compact be finalized?

The model compact legislation is finalized and available to states for consideration and enactment in 2026.

17. How many licensure compacts exist?

As of 2025, there are 21 licensure compacts:

- Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC)
- Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC)
- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Compact (APRN Compact)
- EMS Compact
- The Physical Therapy Compact (PT Compact)
- The Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT)
- Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC)
- The Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact (OT Compact)
- The Counseling Compact
- Social Work Compact
- Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact (ITMC)
- Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact
- Interstate Massage Compact (IMpact)
- Cosmetology Compact
- PA Compact
- Dietitian Compact
- School Psychology Compact
- Respiratory Care Interstate Compact
- Podiatry Compact
- Athletic Trainer Compact
- Esthetician Compact

18. How is the compact different from other state licensure portability policies, including universal licensure recognition laws (ULR)?

Other state licensure portability policies typically require a review by a state licensing board to determine substantial equivalency between the state's licensure requirements and an athletic trainer's existing license and qualifications. In the athletic trainer compact, the equivalency is predetermined through the terms of the compact and the information submitted by compact member states to the compact data system. Therefore, the time to be granted an authorization to practice would be far less than the average time to licensure through other state pathways.

In addition, other licensure portability policies just help facilitate licensure for an athletic trainer into one state. If an athletic trainer is wanting to practice in more than one state, they must navigate the disparate processes for licensure set by each state. This creates a burden even if they are pursuing licensure through a licensure portability law. Through the Athletic Trainer Compact, there is uniform eligibility criteria and processes by which an athletic trainer can receive an authorization to practice in another compact member state.

Further, the compact creates two-way reciprocity by benefiting both existing and prospective licensees in a compact member state.

Lastly, unlike other licensure portability laws, an athletic trainer does not have to meet continuing education requirements and track different renewal cycles if they are accessing interstate practice through the compact.

19. To receive a compact privilege, do athletic trainers need to already have a FBI criminal background check completed?

Yes, to be eligible, an Athletic Trainer's (AT) State of Qualifying Licensure must have completed the FBI criminal background check requirement before the AT is eligible to apply for compact privilege to practice.

20. Do states need to have a FBI background check system in place for all licensees before enacting the compact?

No. States do not necessarily need to have a background check system in place for all licensees prior to enacting the compact. Nor does the compact require states to implement a background check policy for licensees who do not wish to participate in the compact.

However, the AT Compact requires that states must have procedures in place for FBI criminal background checks as a condition for the compact qualifying license an AT will use to access the compact. Therefore, while a state might enact the compact, it cannot participate fully (such as granting compact qualifying licenses and granting or receiving privileges to practice) until the background check component is implemented.

21. What should a state do if it does not currently require a criminal background check to license its Athletic Trainers?

A state must first obtain FBI approval to conduct criminal background checks, which must use fingerprints or other biometric data as required by the compact. States that do not currently perform these checks should start the authorization process now, since it often includes enacting legislation outside of the compact model legislation and because the FBI approval process can take 6-12 months for once it has received a request from a state. States should also coordinate with their State Identification Bureau, typically housed within the state's primary law enforcement agency, for guidance on the process.

States have discretion in determining how to implement a criminal background check requirement into their licensing procedures for ATs.

As approved by the FBI, the state could implement the requirement as the following:

- 1) Implement a criminal background check requirement for all ATs applying for a license or at least for all ATs opting into applying for a compact qualifying license.
- 2) Integrate the background check requirement into the licensing process—either as a part of initial licensure, during licensure renewal, or another manner tied to licensure.

Regardless of what part of the process a state chooses, the AT Compact requires that an AT must have first fulfilled the FBI criminal background check requirement prior to applying for a compact privilege to practice and have been deemed eligible to participate after the qualifying state regulatory authority reviews the results of that FBI criminal background check. AT Compact member states do not share the results of the FBI criminal background check with each other, member state only mark the AT eligible or ineligible based on many factors, the FBI criminal background check being one.