

## Healthcare Practitioners and Technicians

### Pharmacy Technicians

**Pharmacy Technicians** assist pharmacists in preparing prescriptions, providing customer service, and performing administrative duties. Pharmacy technician's responsibilities vary depending on the rules and regulations of the state that they practice in. Typically, they receive prescription requests from the patient or directly from the doctor's office and verify that the information on the script is complete and accurate. Once verification has been completed the technician will prepare the prescription by retrieving, counting, pouring, weighing, measuring, and sometimes mixing the medication. The pharmacy technician will then label the appropriate container with patient, medication, and cost information, and place the medication in the container. Once the prescription has been filled the pharmacist checks it before it is given to the patient.

If a pharmacy technician works in a hospital, nursing home, or assisted-living facility, they have additional responsibility which may include preparing sterile solutions, delivering medications directly to nurses and physicians, and recording prescription information in the patient's chart. Pharmacy technicians also prepare insurance claim forms and direct any questions regarding drug information to the pharmacist.

Pharmacy technicians work in clean, well lit, and ventilated areas and spend most of their time on their feet. Lifting heavy boxes and using step stools to retrieve items on high shelves is common. They usually work a standard 40 hour week. Working hours vary depending on the facility and include days, nights, weekends, and holidays. Those who work in hospitals are pharmacies that are open 24 hours may be required to work nights and holidays. Most pharmacy technicians worked part time.

### Education/Training

#### *How to Obtain:*

There are no national requirements for pharmacy technicians, but requirements vary from state to state. Some states require a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Pharmacy technician education programs are available to community colleges, vocational schools, hospitals, and the military. These programs range from six months to two years. After completion, students receive a diploma, certificate, or an associate's degree, depending on the program.

Most states require pharmacy technicians to register with the State Board of Pharmacy. Eligibility requirements vary from state to state, but most require a GED and an

application fee. In New York State, there is no mandatory registration for the New York State Board of Pharmacy.

Private certifications are available on a volunteer basis for career advancement. The Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) and the Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ExCPT) administer national certification examinations. Many employers will reimburse the cost of the exams. Additionally, New York State does not require either certification.

Requirements for the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- No felony convictions of any kind
- No drug related or pharmacy related convictions, including misdemeanors
- Technicians must be recertified every two years
  - Recertification requires: 20 hours of continuing education within the 2-year certification period
- No denial, suspension, revocation, or restriction of registration or licensure, consent order or other restriction by any State Board of Pharmacy. No admission of misconduct or violation of regulations of any State Board of Pharmacy.

Requirements for the Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- No felony convictions of any kind
- Technicians must be recertified every two years
  - Recertification requires: 20 hrs continuing education within a 2-year period

*More Information on Certification:*

- Pharmacy Technician Board:  
<https://www.ptcb.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home1>
- Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians:  
<http://www.nationaltechexam.org/>

*Average Costs:*

The cost of the Requirements for the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board exam is \$129, without including the cost of additional study aids.

The cost of the Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians exam is \$105\* without including the cost of additional study aids.

Costs of continuing education vary.