



Edwin M. Lee
Mayor

Barbara Garcia MPA
Director of Health

Rajiv Bhatia MD, MPH
Director

December 07, 2011

San Francisco Massage Establishment Operators:

Re: New State Exemptions to Massage Permit Requirements

I am writing to inform you of changes to State laws, effective on January 1, 2012, that will affect the regulation of massage practitioners and massage establishments in San Francisco. Changes to the law establish conditions under which San Francisco massage establishments may be exempt from local requirements for permits, license fees, and certain operating conditions required under the San Francisco Health Code.

Under current law, San Francisco requires businesses operating as massage establishments in the city to obtain a permit from the Department of Public Health, to pay annual license fees, to employ only licensed massage practitioners, and to maintain operating conditions specified in the Health Code. Practitioners must be licensed by the Department of Health unless they are certified by the state-authorized Massage Therapy Organization.

Assembly Bill 619, recently chaptered as law, established the California Massage Therapy Council and revised the requirements for certification of massage practitioners. The new law will continue to exempt practitioners licensed by the Council from additional San Francisco massage license requirements. In addition, the new law will exempt both individuals who are certified practitioners and massage establishments which employ or use only certified practitioners from local massage establishment permit and license fee requirements.

In order to identify which establishments are exempt and as allowed by state law (Sec. 4612(b)(2)(B)), the Department will be requiring that establishments that meet the criteria for the exemption complete and file the attached declaration, along with copies of the certificates for all practitioners providing services for the establishment. We request that this declaration be renewed annually and updated within 30 days from when there is a change in the practitioners providing services. In addition, under State law, massage establishments or businesses claiming this exemption must maintain on their business premises evidence for review by Department inspectors demonstrating that all persons providing massage services are certified. The Department will monitor this latter requirement periodically.

The Department will continue to enforce reasonable health and safety requirements in all massage establishments. Questions about the changes in rules can be addressed to, Principal Inspector Johnson Ojo at (email: johnson.ojo@sfdph.org).

Thank you for your consideration,

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