

## **Licensed massage therapists in Hawaii**

The State of Hawaii requires massage therapists be licensed. To qualify for a license, massage therapists complete a massage training program, including courses in anatomy, physiology, structural kinesiology and the theory of massage. Information about hygiene, first aid and infection control procedures is also required. Some applicants undergo a supervised apprenticeship. All applicants must pass a state licensing examination.

A massage therapist license is required to perform massage for compensation. (Compensation includes donations and payments “in kind.”)

## **Licensed massage establishments**

Hawaii also licenses massage therapy establishments. A massage establishment is defined as premises occupied and used for the purpose of practicing massage therapy or massage therapy training.

In addition to other things, licensed massage establishments must:

- Comply with State public health and safety requirements (including sanitation), and
- Have a designated, licensed, principal massage therapist in attendance at all times.

The designated principal massage therapist is responsible for the establishment and the conduct of therapists, apprentices, and other persons affiliated with the establishment.

**In Hawaii, both a massage therapist and the massage establishment he or she works at must be licensed.**

## **How do you know if a massage establishment or a massage therapist is licensed?**

Hawaii law requires massage establishments display the establishment license. The licenses and permits of anyone employed by the establishment must also be displayed.

Consumers can also check licensing information by calling (808) 587-4272 or online at [cca.hawaii.gov/rico/license\\_check](http://cca.hawaii.gov/rico/license_check).

## **Can a massage therapist practice massage at my home, in my hotel room, or at my place of business?**

A licensed massage therapist can practice massage at a client’s residence or place of business. The Hawaii Board of Massage requires locations where massage is regularly performed be licensed.

## **Other consumer protections:**

Massage apprentices. Apprentices are trainees and as a consumer, you have the right to know if services are being provided by a licensed massage therapist or an apprentice. A massage establishment must notify you if you are to be massaged by an apprentice. The law also requires apprentices wear name tags stating the apprentice’s name and identifying the individual as an apprentice. Apprentices can only perform massage therapy services under the direct supervision of their sponsoring massage therapist and at their permitted massage establishment.

Advertising by massage therapy establishments and individuals. It is a misdemeanor to advertise or perform massage without a valid license. Advertisements must include a current license number.

Appropriately trained. It’s against the law for a massage therapist to represent they’re trained in a technique they’re not trained to perform.

A professional and sanitary space. All licensed massage establishments are required to follow Hawaii Department of Health sanitation guidelines.

Individual massage rooms should be private but accessible. Consumers who seek the services of massage therapy professionals should feel safe in doing so. Individual massage rooms should be private, but accessible. Use of locks on individual massage room doors is prohibited.

## **HELPFUL TIPS**

**Got license?** Make sure the person performing the massage and the establishment where massage services are being offered are currently licensed.

**Draping.** Draping refers to the technique of uncovering only the part of the body that is being worked on while you’re getting a massage. Draping allows you to be undressed underneath a sheet or towel without being fully exposed. Be sure to discuss your preferences before your session starts.

**Payment.** Discuss payment for your massage therapy in advance, especially if you believe insurance may cover your treatment, you are being covered under workers compensation due to an injury, or if you are seeking treatment for injuries received in an automobile accident. Additional records may be required.

**Talk to me...** Keep the lines of communication open. Discuss what techniques the massage therapist may use in advance and don’t be afraid to ask if you have questions or to say something if you’re experiencing discomfort.

**Report unlicensed activity.** Each year, RICO receives hundreds of tips and complaints about unlicensed massage establishments. Many of these establishments advertise they are licensed or able to provide massage services. Some of these establishments may be offering massage as a means of circumventing the laws that ban prostitution.

Massage therapists are health professionals who are trained to apply scientifically developed massage techniques designed to improve muscle tone and circulation. Licensing is the strictest form of professional regulation, and it is illegal for anyone to work as a massage therapist unless he or she has a license.

When looking for a licensed professional, remember...

- Hawaii law requires massage establishments display the establishment license, and the current licenses and permits of anyone employed by the establishment must also be displayed.

- Consumers can check licensing information by calling (808) 587-4272 or online at [cca.hawaii.gov/rico/license\\_check](http://cca.hawaii.gov/rico/license_check).

RICO regularly investigates unlicensed massage establishments and licensed massage establishments that may be aiding and abetting unlicensed therapists. Establishments that comply with posting requirements help deter unlicensed massage therapists and establishments from operating in the State.

Unlicensed activity and violations of Hawaii's licensing laws are investigated by the Regulated Industries Complaints Office. To check licensing status, for information about hiring a licensed professional, or for information about filing a complaint, call the Consumer Resource Center at 587-4274 or visit the State's website at [cca.hawaii.gov/rico/](http://cca.hawaii.gov/rico/).

## RESOURCES

The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA), and its Regulated Industries Complaints Office (RICO), offer tools, tips, and services you can use to check out an individual or business. Information is available by calling **(808) 587-4272** or online at [cca.hawaii.gov/rico/license\\_check](http://cca.hawaii.gov/rico/license_check).

For information about filing a complaint or to report unlicensed activity, call RICO's Consumer Resource Center at **(808) 587-4272** or visit us online at [cca.hawaii.gov/rico](http://cca.hawaii.gov/rico).

Neighbor island residents can dial the following numbers then 7-4272 followed by the # sign:

Kauai.....	274-3141
Maui.....	984-2400
Hawaii.....	974-4000
Lanai & Molokai.	1-800-468-4644

RICO is the enforcement arm for over forty-five professional boards, commissions, and programs that are administratively attached to the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. RICO receives complaints, conducts investigations, and prosecutes licensing law violations. RICO also prosecutes unlicensed activity through the issuance of citations and by filing civil lawsuits in the Circuit Courts. RICO works to resolve consumer complaints where appropriate and provides consumer education about various issues relating to licensing and consumer protection. RICO also administers the State Certified Arbitration Program (SCAP) for "lemon" motor vehicle claims.

*This brochure is for informational purposes only and not intended for the purposes of providing legal advice. Information provided is subject to change. Printed material can be made available for individuals with special needs in Braille, large print or audio tape. Submit requests to the RICO Complaints and Enforcement Officer at 586-2666.*

# LICENSED MASSAGE ESTABLISHMENTS IN HAWAII



## Regulated Industries Complaints Office

235 S. Beretania Street, Ninth Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
[cca.hawaii.gov/rico](http://cca.hawaii.gov/rico)