



# **Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer (CMLSO)**

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**



**Board of Laser Safety®**  
**Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer Program**

***Policies & Procedures Manual***

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**Introduction**

***Certification***

As the use of lasers continues to grow in both popularity and applications, so too will the growing demand for trained laser safety professionals. Board of Laser Safety (BLS) certification will enhance the credibility of a designated Laser Safety Officer and validate that these individuals serving in the field of laser safety have agreed to adhere to high standards of safety and professional practice.

Certification demonstrates that an individual has met certain requirements of professional experience and has successfully completed an examination designed to test knowledge in the field of laser safety. Holders of BLS certification may identify themselves as a Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer or a CMLSO. **It should be emphasized that a certificate awarded by the BLS does not constitute a license to practice, nor does it guarantee that a CMLSO meets any federal, state or other requirements related to the practice of laser safety.**

There are two steps involved in becoming a Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer. First, an individual must provide information demonstrating he or she meets certain educational prerequisites and work experience. Second, the individual must pass an examination demonstrating his/her knowledge in the area of laser safety.

Certification and certification maintenance will identify and distinguish laser safety officers among those involved in laser safety practices.

***Information on the Board of Laser Safety***

The BLS was incorporated in September 2002 as a nonprofit organization affiliated with the Laser Institute of America (LIA), a California nonprofit corporation.

The mission of the BLS is to provide a means for improvement in the practice of laser safety by providing opportunities for the education, assessment and recognition of laser safety professionals.

To achieve this objective, The BLS (1) offers examinations to individuals who have met the qualifications of education and experience; (2) acknowledges individuals who have passed the examination by issuing a certificate and allowing them to use the title of “Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer” and the CMLSO acronym after his/her name; (3) requires each CMLSO to maintain his/her certification by obtaining certification maintenance points in laser safety; and (4) maintains and publishes a roster of CMLSOs for public knowledge.

All applications for CMLSO submitted to the BLS are reviewed without consideration of age, sex, religion, race, disability or national origin. BLS reserves the right to revise, update and amend its applications, examinations, policies and other material related to the certification program at any time.

## **Laser Safety and the Laser Safety Officer**

### ***Laser Safety***

Laser safety can be defined as optimizing the safe design and use of laser equipment to further the use of laser technology with minimum risk to safety and health.

### ***Laser Safety Officer (LSO)***

From the ANSI Z136.1 standard, the Laser Safety Officer is “one who has the authority to monitor and enforce the control of laser hazards and effect the knowledgeable evaluation and control of laser hazards.” Depending on the extent and number of laser installations, the position of LSO may or may not be a full time position.

### ***Responsibilities of an LSO***

Listed below are specific responsibilities of an LSO as outlined in the ANSI Z136.3-2011 *American National Standard for Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care*. In addition to specific responsibilities listed here, additional recommendations are referenced in the ANSI Z136.1-2014 *American National Standard for Safe Use of Lasers*, normative Appendix A. Note that performing one or more of these responsibilities does not constitute eligibility for certification (see application requirements on page 2 of this document). LSO responsibilities, as defined above, include:

- **Classification.** Ensure the proper classification of all lasers and laser systems in the HCF in accordance with the federal regulations, and the correct classification label is affixed.
- **Hazards Evaluation.** Affect a hazard analysis of laser treatment areas, including the NHZs as provided by the HCLS manufacturer’s safety information, and a determination of their adequacy. The LSO, or a designee, shall immediately inform the surgeon of imminent danger from a laser hazard.
- **Control Measures.** Ensure that control measures as prescribed by the HCLS manufacturer or other sources are in effect; recommend or approve substitute or alternate control measures when the primary ones are not feasible or practical, and periodically audit the control measures in use.
- **Procedural Approvals.** Ensure that standard operating procedures (SOPs), alignment procedures, and other required procedures that may be a part of the requirements for administrative and procedural control measures are followed.  
These procedures should include, for example, maintenance, service and perioperative checklists used by operating personnel.
- **Protective Equipment.** Ensure that protective equipment to assure personnel safety, as recommended by the manufacturer or the LSO, is available, in good working order and is used correctly.

- **Signs and Labels.** Ensure that the wording on area signs and equipment labels is in accordance with section 4.7 of the ANSI Z136.3 standard.
- **Facilities and Equipment.** Prior to use, approve the HCLS installation and equipment to ensure that it is consistent with the manufacturer's safety recommendations appearing in the manufacturer's labeling. Modification of existing facilities shall be reviewed by the LSO (or a safety consultant). Modification to the equipment shall meet the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) requirements and have a safety analysis submitted by the user, the LSO (or a consultant), and a copy retained on file by the LSO. The LSO shall ensure that periodic maintenance and service is carried out by qualified technical assistants.
- **Training.** Ensure appropriate safety education and training is provided to all personnel associated with lasers such as staff, technicians, students and other health care personnel (HCP).
- **Medical Surveillance.** Ensure those individual staff members' personnel categories for medical surveillance is established.

### **Board of Laser Safety Code of Professional Conduct**

This code provides principles of professional conduct for Laser Safety Officers certified by the BLS. As a requirement of being certified, such persons act professionally, safely and in accordance with this code.

Certified Medical Laser Safety Officers shall:

1. Practice the profession using their knowledge and skill for the enhancement of safety and health of people whose lives and well-being may depend on their professional judgment.
2. Strive to increase or improve their self-development, competence, professional knowledge and skills in the area of laser safety.
3. Perform services and assignments only in the areas of their competence.
4. Act in the best interests of public health and safety.
5. Avoid conflicts of interest.
6. Be honest and impartial and act responsibly to uphold the integrity of the profession while serving the public, employees, employers and clients with fidelity.
7. Counsel the public, employees, employers and clients regarding potential health and safety risks to avoid unsafe practices and injury.
8. Obey all federal and state laws applicable to the profession.

## Application Requirements

In order for an individual to qualify to take the CMLSO examination, the following requirements must be met:

1. Candidates must have a 4-year degree from an accredited institution or be a licensed medical professional **or** have a 2-year AS degree or high school diploma **and** advanced education and training in their individual area of practice.
2. Candidates must have a minimum of one (1) year of experience with laser safety **or** acting as LSO, having performed the specific responsibilities outlined in the ANSI Z136.3 *American National Standard for Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care*.
3. Candidates must provide two (2) professional reference statements or letters of recommendation from the applicant's supervisor, and/or other knowledgeable person(s), stating that the applicant has performed the specific responsibilities of an LSO.
4. Candidates must provide a certificate of completion of a BLS approved Laser Safety Officer Course. In special cases, this requirement may be waived by the BLS upon application with supporting documentation.

## Application Procedures

### *New Applicants*

Each new application must be completed in full. If any part of the application is incomplete, it will automatically be returned to the applicant. Applications may be obtained by contacting the BLS or by visiting the BLS website at [www.lasersafety.org](http://www.lasersafety.org). A non-refundable fee of \$50.00 must accompany the application. Any application submitted without the appropriate fee will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant.

The BLS will advise each applicant in writing<sup>1</sup> of his/her eligibility to sit for the CMLSO examination. In the case of CMLSO examinations offered by a BLS partner, applicants will be notified by the partner offering the examination.

During the application review process, the BLS may request further information from the applicant. All such requests will be made in writing and all such applications will be identified as pending. Pending applications will not be processed until all requests for additional information are addressed to the satisfaction of the BLS. In addition, BLS may independently verify or audit any information received.

### *Retaking the Examination*

An applicant who wishes to retake the exam due to cancellation or failure must notify the BLS in writing within the two (2) year period of notification of acceptance to sit for the examination. Applicants may only retake the examination one (1) time during the 2-year period. There is a \$100.00 fee to retake the exam.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of these policies and procedures, the term "in writing" refers to paper or electronic media.

An applicant who has not taken the examination during the 2-year period forfeits his/her eligibility acceptance and must reapply following new applicant procedures, which includes payment of a new application fee.

## **Policies**

### ***Application Deadlines***

All applications for the CMLSO examination must be postmarked no later than two weeks prior to the exam date.

### ***Exam Dates & Delivery Method***

Exam dates, locations and delivery method (paper and pencil, web, computer, etc.) are administrative decisions and at the discretion of the BLS staff. There will be a minimum of two (2) paper and pencil exam dates per year, in the spring and fall. Other exam dates throughout the year may be added at the discretion of the BLS staff.

### ***Confidentiality***

In general, BLS employees, volunteers and contracted partners shall keep confidential, and not release, information contained in an individual's application, examination and related material without the applicant's consent, or as provided below. Specifically, no BLS employees, volunteers or contracted partners are authorized to reveal the name of any individual who has applied to take the examination, except: 1) as designated by the individual in writing; 2) to necessary staff, legal consultants or others with a need to know; 3) when verifying references provided by the applicant; 4) as required by law or these procedures; or 5) in the course of providing a list of examinees to exam site proctors. Names of certified individuals will be made publicly available.

## **Fees**

### ***Payment of Fees***

Fees are non-refundable except where stated. Acceptable forms of payment are MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover and check. All fees must be paid in U.S. dollars; checks must be drawn on a U.S. bank.

### ***Application Fee***

A non-refundable application processing fee of \$50.00 must accompany each application. An applicant whose application is not accepted may reapply within two (2) years of the original application date without paying another application fee. After the 2-year period, if an applicant wishes to reapply, he/she must once again submit an application fee with the application.

### ***Examination Fee***

Once an applicant has been accepted, he/she will be notified by the BLS in writing as to when and where he/she is expected to take the examination. The applicant must submit the examination fee of \$200.00 at least two (2) weeks prior to the examination. Any applicant who

has not paid will not be permitted to sit for the examination. Additional fees apply to computer-based exams taken at international locations, including Canada.

### ***Cancellations***

Applicants who send notification of cancellation in writing to the BLS more than 30 days prior to the examination may request a refund of the examination fee. For those applicants who wish to postpone taking the examination, it would be in their best interest to reschedule within the 2-year period of acceptance. Failure to reschedule the examination within this 2-year period will result in reapplication.

### ***Rescheduling Fee***

If the applicant is unable to take the scheduled examination, he/she may request to reschedule the examination. Applicants who request to reschedule an examination more than 30 days prior to the examination date may apply the examination fee to a future exam within the 2-year period of acceptance, without incurring the rescheduling fee. Requests to reschedule an examination less than 30 days notice prior to an examination date are subject to a rescheduling fee of \$50.00. In some circumstances, this rescheduling fee may be waived. For consideration, petitions must be made in writing to the BLS and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Recertification Fee***

A recertification fee of \$150.00, accompanied by a completed Certification Maintenance (CM) worksheet, with supporting documentation as necessary, is due triennially (every third year). Recertification fees should be postmarked no later than January 31<sup>st</sup> after the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the CM cycle. Failure to submit the CM worksheet and recertification fee will result in “*Inactive Status*,” as discussed in more detail on page 13. A CMLSO who turns in his/her form after the January 31<sup>st</sup> deadline must also submit a \$50.00 late fee.

## **Rights and Privileges**

### ***Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer (CMLSO)***

A person who is certified by the Board of Laser Safety will receive an individually numbered certificate. That person may then use the designations “Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer” or “CMLSO” in accordance with BLS policies, so long as he/she is in good standing with the BLS.

A person who is not certified, who has let his/her certification expire, or is not in good standing may not use the designations “Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer” or “CMLSO.”

### ***Disclaimer***

Certification does not constitute a license to practice and is not a substitute for compliance with government, agency or other requirements. BLS cannot, and does not, guarantee, warrant, endorse or otherwise make representations with regard to an individual applicant or CMLSO’s ability or performance. BLS expressly disclaims any and all liability, costs or damages, including, but not limited to, direct, indirect or consequential damages that may result from the certification program or the actions of a BLS Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer.

## **Examination Information**

### ***Message to Examinees***

This information can help you prepare for the CMLSO exam. However, use of this information by itself will not be adequate for preparation for the exam. A CMLSO Examination Reference Guide may be obtained by contacting the BLS or by visiting [www.lasersafety.org](http://www.lasersafety.org).

### ***Examination Procedures***

Registration for an exam will begin ½ hour to one (1) hour prior to the exam start time. For example, for an examination that is scheduled to begin at 9:00am local time, registration will open no later than 8:30am local time. Exam times will be posted on the website and included in the attendee's letter of admission. Each examinee must provide a picture ID such as a driver's license or a state identification card, in addition to bringing his/her letter of admission from the BLS.

The examination is made up of 100 multiple-choice questions. The questions are grouped into areas of practice. Each question has four (4) possible answers from which to choose. The total allotted time to take the examination is three (3) hours.

All exam booklets, answer sheets and No. 2 pencils will be provided at the time of the examination. Personal computers are not permitted in the examination. Books, manuals, notes or other reference materials may not be brought into the exam room.

Materials will be inspected on-site, and proctors can refuse to allow examinees to bring certain calculators or other materials into the examination room. If you have any questions about what types of calculators or other materials are permitted, please contact the BLS in advance.

### ***Examination Content***

There are eight (8) areas of practice on the subject matter of laser safety. Each area of practice is broken down into tasks performed by an LSO. To assist you in understanding the subject matter, the areas of practice and related tasks are provided here.

#### **Area of Practice I – Lasers & Optics Fundamentals – 13%**

- Task 1 – Definitions
- Task 2 – Properties of Laser Light
- Task 3 – Laser Output
- Task 4 – Laser Types & Wavelengths
- Task 5 – Electromagnetic Spectrum
- Task 6 – Laser Components & Delivery Systems
  - a. How Lasers Work

#### **Area of Practice II – Laser Tissue Interactions – 13%**

- Task 1 – Photoacoustic (Electromechanical)
- Task 2 – Photoablative
- Task 3 – Photothermal
- Task 4 – Photochemical

**Area of Practice III – Laser Beam Hazards of Eye & Skin – 16%**

- Task 1 – Effects on the Eye
  - a. Structure and Function of the Human Eye
  - b. Optical Gain of the Eye
  - c. Parameters Needed to Determine Maximum Permissible Exposure (MPE)
  - d. Retinal Effects
  - e. Corneal Effects
- Task 2 – Effects on the Skin
- Task 3 – Specular and Diffuse Reflections

**Area of Practice IV – Non-beam Hazards Associated with Lasers – 11%**

- Task 1 – Laser Generated Airborne Contaminants (LGAC)
- Task 2 – Compressed Gasses
- Task 3 – Laser Dyes and Solvents
- Task 4 – Electrical Hazards
- Task 5 – Fire Hazards
- Task 6 – Explosion Hazards

**Area of Practice V – Regulations and Standards – 15%**

- Task 1 – Knowledge of ANSI Z136.1 *American National Standard for Safe Use of Lasers*
- Task 2 – Working knowledge of ANSI Z136.3 *American National Standard for Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care*
- Task 3 – Regulatory Agencies
  - a. 1040.10 - 21 CFR Subchapter J – Federal Laser Product Performance Standard (FLPPS)
  - b. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (General Duty Clause)
  - c. Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)/Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC)
- Task 4 – IEC 60825-1 Safety of Laser Products

**Area of Practice VI – Laser Hazard Classification & Controlled Areas – 13%**

- Task 1 – Laser Hazard Classification
- Task 2 – Nominal Hazard Zone
- Task 3 – Laser Treatment Control Area (LTCA)

**Area of Practice VII – Procedural Control Measures – 12%**

- Task 1 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Task 2 – Controlled Access
  - a. Laser Warning Signs & Labels
  - b. Laser Protective Barriers and Curtains
  - c. Authorized Personnel
- Task 3 – Test Firing/Calibration
- Task 4 – Control of Fire Hazards
- Task 5 – Standby and Emergency Off Controls
- Task 6 – Footpedal Controls

- Task 7 – Key Control
- Task 8 – Smoke Evacuation
- Task 9 – Electrical Hazard Controls

**Area of Practice VIII – Administrative Control Measures – 7%**

- Task 1 – Policies and Procedures
  - a. Airway Management Protocols
  - b. Service and Maintenance
- Task 2 – Education & Training
- Task 3 – Laser Audits
- Task 4 – Accident Investigation
- Task 5 – Documentation
- Task 6 – Duties and Responsibilities of an LSO

***Scoring/Grading***

Each examinee will be notified in writing within twenty (20) business days after a paper and pencil examination whether or not he/she passed the exam. Computer-based examinees receive their score immediately following completion of the exam. The score to pass the examination is established by the BLS and Comira. Scores may be nullified in the event that the BLS determines that cheating or other irregularities have occurred.

***Examination Preparation***

This examination is multiple-choice consisting of 100 questions. Each question has a possibility of four (4) answers. Here are a few strategies to consider prior to beginning the examination:

- Allow yourself time to answer all questions.
- Answer the questions you are sure of first, then go back and answer the remaining ones.
- Answer all questions, even if you are unsure of the answer. An educated guess is better than no guess at all.
- If you are unsure of an answer, your first instinct is usually the correct one.

***References***

The CMLSO Examination Reference Guide can be downloaded from [www.lasersafety.org](http://www.lasersafety.org) or may be obtained by contacting the BLS.

## **Maintaining Certification**

***Certification Maintenance***

After an individual has passed the certification examination, he/she will be sent a certificate, CMLSO wallet card and CMLSO lapel pin, as well as a letter on certification maintenance and CMLSO CM Manual. Maintaining certification is an important and vital part of becoming a CMLSO. As the industry and technology changes, so must the knowledge of a CMLSO.

### ***Details of Certification Maintenance Points (CM Points)***

- Ten (10) CM Points must be obtained over the course of each 3-year cycle.
- The CM cycle starts on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year following the year in which the individual passed the examination and ends on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- For continuing education, teaching and conference categories, the CM point breakdown is as follows:
  - < 2 hours = ¼ CM point
  - 2 hours to 4 hours = ½ CM point
  - 4 hours to 6 hours = ¾ CM point
  - > 6 hours = 1 CM point
- Contact hours do not directly translate into CM points.
- An updated list of courses and activities eligible for CM Points will be maintained by the BLS. You can obtain a listing by contacting the BLS or visiting [www.lasersafety.org](http://www.lasersafety.org).

### ***CM Point Categories***

1. Laser Safety Experience, i.e., your job – category maximum of 3 CM points total<sup>2</sup>. One CM point per year for professional practice of laser safety to be certified in writing by CMLSO’s supervisor. Refer to page 2 of this manual for specific responsibilities of an LSO.
2. Attendance<sup>3</sup> and successful completion of laser safety specific education and training – category maximum of 7 CM points total. See point breakdown under “*Details of Certification Maintenance Points (CM Points)*.”
3. Writing of laser safety or laser application related articles published external of your organization in the form of peer-reviewed journals, proceedings, periodicals, books and book chapters, 1 CM point per article. Published magazine or newsletter submissions (print or online) will be accepted at ½ CM point per article – category maximum of 3 CM points total.
4. Membership in a laser safety-related professional/technical organization or society, e.g., AORN, ASLMS, AIHA, LIA – category maximum of 3 CM points total, 1 CM point given per year of membership.
5. Teaching laser safety courses or laser safety in a course external from your organization, i.e., not a part of your primary job responsibilities – category maximum of 3 CM points total. See point breakdown under “*Details of Certification Maintenance Points (CM Points)*.”
6. Active participation in laser safety standards or regulations committees external of your organization, i.e., at the regional, state, national or international level – category maximum of 3 CM points total. For example, a CMLSO could earn 1 CM point per year for being an active member of ANSI ASC Z136 or one of its subcommittees.
7. Attendance at laser safety or application related professional conferences or meetings – category maximum of 4 CM points total. CM points are determined based on length of laser safety and laser application sessions attended. For example, a CMLSO could earn 1CM point for each day of attendance at the International Laser Safety Conference (ILSC®). See

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<sup>2</sup> For each category, maximum number of points total means per the 3-year cycle.

<sup>3</sup> Attendance means online, electronic or in person.

point breakdown under “*Details of Certification Maintenance Points (CM Points).*” Please attach a session outline or conference program when you submit your CM Worksheet for the BLS to determine CM points. If you attend a conference hosted by anyone other than the LIA, please take a Conference Verification Form<sup>4</sup> with you to obtain event attendance verification.

8. Presentations or poster papers at laser safety professional conferences or meetings, e.g., ILSC, ASLMS annual conference or the LSO Workshop – category maximum of 2 CM points total, ½ CM point given per presentation.
9. Writing CMLSO exam questions – category maximum of 2 CM points total, ¼ CM point awarded for each accepted question.
10. Other Activities – Points may be claimed for laser-related activities, such as professional certifications (e.g., CNOR = ½ CM point) or reviewing laser safety or laser application related journal articles. Please complete the Journal Article Verification Worksheet<sup>5</sup>. Article titles and access information will be delivered via the *BLS News & Review* e-newsletter and/or the BLS website – category maximum of 2 CM points total.
11. A CMLSO who is unable to achieve the 10 CM points required over the 3-year cycle and wishes to maintain his/her certification may retake the CMLSO exam. The following limitations apply: (a) the exam must be taken and passed prior to the end of the 3-year cycle, i.e., before the December 31<sup>st</sup> expiration date, (b) payment for the exam is due prior to retaking the exam; however, the application process and \$50.00 fee will be waived, and (c) the individual has not participated on a BLS Review Board or proctored an exam during the 3-year cycle. The ability to take the exam in lieu of submitting points for renewal is available only in year three of the individual’s CM cycle.

If the individual does not pass the exam, he/she is no longer certified. If the individual wishes to become certified again, he/she must reapply (submit application, application fee, and references), take and pass the exam, i.e., start over as new.

A current list of sample conferences ancillary to laser safety and a list of laser-related professional/technical organizations and societies may be obtained by contacting the BLS or visiting [www.lasersafety.org](http://www.lasersafety.org).

### ***Dual Certification***

If an individual has achieved both the CLSO and CMLSO designations, each designation must be renewed at the end of its 3-year CM cycle regardless of the other designation cycle date. The number of CM points and renewal fee required for recertification of a designation remains consistent.

CM points obtained for a specific activity cannot be used for both certifications. Similar activities within the same category could be used, one per designation (e.g. conference, membership see below for example). A CM worksheet should be completed for each certification and submitted to the BLS.

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<sup>4</sup> Both CM Point Request Form (for event host) and Conference Verification Form (for individuals) may be downloaded from [www.lasersafety.org](http://www.lasersafety.org).

<sup>5</sup> The Journal Article Verification Worksheet may be downloaded from [www.lasersafety.org](http://www.lasersafety.org).

### ***Dual Certification Example***

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Total CM Points</b>
CLSO	Job Experience	3 (1 per year)
	LIA Member	3 (1 per year)
	ILSC 2011	4 (1 per day of conference)
CMLSO	ILSC 2013	4 (1 per day of conference)
	AORN Member	3 (1 per year)
	ASC Z136 Participation	3 (1 per year)

### ***Renewing Certification***

It is the responsibility of the CMLSO to submit CM forms<sup>6</sup> and recertification fees on time. Notices will be sent out only as a reminder to recertify. All CM forms must be postmarked by January 31<sup>st</sup> after the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Failure to recertify by January 31<sup>st</sup> will result in “*Inactive Status.*” To restore status, CM forms accompanied with the recertification fee and a late fee of \$50.00 will be accepted up to and including May 31<sup>st</sup>. After that time, it will be necessary to retake the exam to become active again, which includes reapplying, resubmission of reference letters, and payment of the \$50.00 application fee, in addition to payment of the exam fee.

CM forms should include all supporting documentation. The BLS may or may not ask for additional supporting documentation when reviewing a CM form. Once a CM form has been reviewed and accepted by the BLS, a letter stating certification has been maintained will be sent to the CMLSO. If there are any questions with the CM form, the BLS will contact the CMLSO for clarification. The CMLSO then has sixty (60) days to resolve the situation with the BLS. If the situation is not resolved, the CMLSO will go to “*Inactive Status.*”

### ***Applying for CM Credit***

Organizations or individuals may apply for CM credits. The CM Point Request Form may be downloaded from [www.lasersafety.org](http://www.lasersafety.org).

If an organization believes it offers products and services that are beneficial to the continuing education of CMLSOs, it may submit its offerings to the BLS for consideration.

If an individual attends a training course, or participates in an activity that is currently not approved for CM points, he/she may submit the information to the BLS for consideration of points toward Certification Maintenance. It is preferable this information be submitted to the BLS at the time of the activity for documentation purposes.

CM forms may be downloaded from [www.lasersafety.org](http://www.lasersafety.org) or obtained by contacting the BLS. Completed forms should be sent directly to the BLS with all supporting documentation for consideration. Approval of CM points is an approximate one-month process. Only activities that contribute to continuing education in the area of laser applications and/or laser safety will be considered.

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<sup>6</sup> “Forms” in this context refers to CM worksheet, Conference Verification Form, Journal Article Verification Worksheet and CM Point Request Form, as applicable.

If/when an activity is approved by the BLS for CM points, it will be assigned a unique BLS approval code and the number of CM points assigned.

## **Change in CMLSO Status**

### ***CMLSO***

Active CMLSOs maintain certification every three (3) years by earning at least 10 CM points, and by paying the recertification fee. Notices will be sent out only as a reminder to recertify. All CM forms must be postmarked by January 31<sup>st</sup> after the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Failure to submit the recertification documentation and fee will result in “*Inactive Status*.” Current mailing address/contact information is the sole responsibility of the CMLSO.

### ***Inactive Status***

“*Inactive Status*” means a CMLSO may no longer use the rights and privileges outlined by the BLS in this document until he/she has obtained “*Active Status*” again. During the grace period (February 1<sup>st</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup> after the 3<sup>rd</sup> year), an inactive CMLSO may become active again by submitting applicable CM forms along with the \$150.00 recertification fee and \$50.00 late fee (before June 1<sup>st</sup> after the 3<sup>rd</sup> year). After that time, it will be necessary to retake the exam to become active again, which includes reapplying, resubmission of reference letters, and payment of the \$50.00 application fee, in addition to payment of the exam fee.

### ***Revocation of Certification***

The BLS may revoke certification if there is evidence of intent to deceive on an application or CM form, examination fraud, recertification process, violation of the responsibilities of an LSO, or violation of the law. Any person for whom such action is contemplated shall have the right to appear before the BLS Commission.

### ***Disciplinary Procedures for Revocation of Certification***

The Board of Laser Safety (BLS) was incorporated as a nonprofit organization affiliated with the Laser Institute of America (LIA) for the evaluation of individuals who wish to enter, continue and/or advance in the profession of laser safety through the certification process.

Those certified (referred to as “CMLSOs”) have successfully completed the required certification process, which includes meeting certain educational requirements, passing a certification examination, verifying professional knowledge, and demonstrating experience in the profession. BLS CMLSOs subscribe to a Code of Professional Conduct established by the BLS.

Successful candidates are granted certification by the BLS and may hold themselves out to the public as such. In order to maintain and enhance the credibility of the BLS certification program, the BLS has adopted Administrative Procedures to allow consumers, and others, to bring complaints concerning a CMLSO’s conduct to the BLS. In the event of a violation of the Code of Professional Conduct or other substantive requirements of the certification process by a CMLSO, the CMLSO may be reprimanded or the CMLSO’s certification status may be suspended or terminated. The grounds for sanctions under the Administrative Procedures are as follows:

- Conviction of a felony or other crime of moral turpitude under federal or state law in a matter related to the practice of, or qualifications for, professional activity.
- Gross negligence or willful misconduct in the performance of professional services, or other unethical or unprofessional conduct based on demonstrable and serious violations of the Code of Professional Conduct.
- Fraud or misrepresentation in the application or maintenance of association membership, professional accreditation or other professional recognition or credential.

The BLS will ensure that information concerning the complaint process, as developed by the BLS, will be available to consumers and the public at appropriate locations. The Administrative Procedures apply to all complaints or inquiries received about a BLS CMLSO.

It should be emphasized that actions taken under these Administrative Procedures do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate federal, state or local government agencies may be made about the conduct of the CMLSO in appropriate situations. Individuals initially bringing complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of this process, although notification of actions taken will be provided.

## **Administrative Procedures**

### ***BLS Commission***

The BLS Board of Commissioners, herein after referred to as the “BLS Commission” is responsible for the implementation of the Administrative Procedures. The BLS Commission is composed of eight individuals elected or appointed in accordance with the BLS Bylaws. The BLS Commission Chair presides at all meetings of the BLS Commission and is specifically responsible for ensuring that these Administrative Procedures are implemented and followed.

All BLS volunteers, staff and other individuals engaged in investigations or decisions with respect to any complaint under these Administrative Procedures may be indemnified and defended by the BLS against liability arising from BLS related activities to the extent provided by law.

### ***Complaints***

Complaints may be transmitted in any manner by any individual or entity, but must be in writing. Inquiries or submissions other than complaints may be reviewed and handled by the BLS Commission at its discretion.

Upon receipt and preliminary review of a submission involving the BLS certification program or the Code of Professional Conduct, the BLS Commission Chair may conclude, in his/her sole discretion, that the submission (1) contains unreliable or insufficient information, or (2) is patently frivolous or inconsequential. In such cases, the BLS Commission Chair may determine that the submission does not constitute a valid and actionable complaint that would justify bringing it before the BLS Commission for investigation and a determination of whether there

has been a violation of the Code of Professional Conduct or other substantive requirements of the certification process. If so, the submission is disposed of by notice from the BLS Commission Chair to its submitter, if the submitter is identified. All such preliminary dispositions by the BLS Commission Chair are reported to the BLS Commission and the BLS Executive Director.

If a submission is deemed by the BLS Commission Chair to be a valid and actionable complaint, the BLS Commission shall see that written notice is provided to the CMLSO whose conduct has been called into question and to that individual's employer, if applicable. The BLS Commission Chair also shall ensure that the individual submitting the complaint receives notice that the complaint is being reviewed by the BLS Commission.

### ***Review of Complaint***

For each submission involving an alleged violation of the Code of Professional Conduct that the BLS Commission Chair concludes is a valid and actionable complaint, the BLS Commission authorizes an investigation into its specific facts or circumstances to whatever extent is necessary in order to clarify, expand or corroborate the information provided by the submitter.

Both the individual submitting the complaint and the CMLSO who is the subject of the investigation (or his or her employer) may be contacted for additional information with respect to the complaint. The timeline for providing such additional information shall be established by the BLS Commission. At its discretion, the BLS Commission may contact such other individuals who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.

All investigations and deliberations of the BLS Commission are conducted objectively, without any indication of prejudice, and in confidence, with all written communications sealed and marked "Personal and Confidential". An investigation may be directed toward any aspect of a complaint that is relevant or potentially relevant. Formal hearings are not held and the parties are not expected to be represented by counsel, although the BLS may consult its own counsel.

### ***Determination of Violation***

Upon completion of an investigation, the BLS Commission should make a determination if there has been a violation of the Code of Professional Conduct or of other substantive requirements of the certification process. If the BLS Commission finds a violation, an appropriate sanction should be imposed. If the BLS Commission determines that a violation has not occurred, the complaint is dismissed with notice to the CMLSO, the CMLSO's employer and the individual or entity who submitted the complaint; a summary report is also made to the BLS Commission and the BLS Executive Director.

In certain circumstances, the BLS Commission may consider that the CMLSO who has violated the Code of Professional Conduct should be offered an opportunity to submit a written assurance that the conduct in question has been terminated and will not recur. If such an offer is extended, the CMLSO at issue must submit the required written assurance within thirty (30) days of receipt of the offer, and the assurance must be submitted in terms that are acceptable to the BLS Commission. If the BLS Commission accepts the assurance, notice is given to the CMLSO's employer (if applicable) and to the submitter of the complaint.

### ***Sanctions***

Any of the following sanctions may be imposed by the BLS Commission upon a CMLSO whom the BLS Commission has determined to have violated the Code of Professional Conduct, although the sanction applied must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of the conduct of the member and deterrence of similar conduct by others:

- written reprimand to the CMLSO;
- suspension of the CMLSO certification for a designated period; or
- termination of the CMLSO's certification from the BLS.

For each of these three sanctions, a summary of the determination and the sanction with the CMLSO's name is published by the BLS.

Reprimand in the form of a written notice from the BLS Commission Chair normally is sent to a CMLSO who has received his/her first substantiated complaint. Suspension normally is imposed on a CMLSO who has received two substantiated complaints. Termination normally is imposed on a CMLSO who has received two substantiated complaints within a 2-year period, or three or more substantiated complaints. At its discretion, the BLS Commission may impose any of the sanctions, if warranted, dependent upon specific case.

A CMLSO whose certification has been terminated may not be considered for BLS certification again in the future. If certification is terminated, any and all certificates or other materials requested by the BLS must be returned promptly to the BLS.

### ***Appeal***

Within thirty (30) days from receipt of notice of a determination by the BLS Commission that a member violated the Code of Professional Conduct, the affected CMLSO may submit to the BLS in writing a request for an appeal. Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the BLS Commission Chair establishes an appellate body consisting of at least three, but not more than five, individuals. This Appeal Board may review one or more appeals, upon request of the BLS Commission Chair. The Appeal Board may be composed of CMLSOs, but must include at least one individual who is not. No current members of the BLS Commission may serve on the Appeal Board; further, no one with any personal involvement or conflict of interest may serve on the Appeal Board.

The Appeal Board may only review whether the determination by the BLS Commission of a violation of the Code of Professional Conduct was inappropriate because of (1) material errors of fact, or (2) failure of the BLS Commission to conform to published criteria, policies or procedures. Only facts and conditions up to and including the time of the BLS Commission's determination as represented by facts known to the BLS Commission are considered during an appeal. The appeal shall not include a hearing or any similar trial-type proceeding. Legal counsel is not expected to participate in the appeal process, unless requested by the appellant and approved by the BLS Commission. The BLS and Appeal Board may consult BLS legal counsel.

The Appeal Board conducts and completes the appeal within ninety (90) days after receipt of the request for an appeal. Submissions are made according to whatever schedule is reasonably established by the Appeal Board. The decision of the Appeal Board either affirms or overrules the determination of the BLS Commission, but does not address a sanction imposed by the BLS Commission. The decision of the Appeal Board, including a statement of the reasons for the decision, is reported to the BLS Commission and the BLS Executive Director. The Appeal Board decision is binding upon the BLS, the affected CMLSO, and all other persons involved in the appeal.

### ***Resignation***

If a CMLSO who is the subject of a complaint voluntarily surrenders his or her BLS certification at any time during the pendency of a complaint under these Administrative Procedures, the complaint is dismissed without any further action by the BLS Commission, the BLS or an Appeal Board established after an appeal. The entire record is sealed and the individual may not reapply for certification by the BLS. However, the BLS may communicate the fact and date of resignation, and the fact and general nature of the complaint that was pending at the time of the resignation, to or at the request of a government entity engaged in the administration of law. Similarly, in the event of such resignation, the CMLSO's employer and the person or entity who submitted the complaint are notified of the fact and date of resignation and that BLS has dismissed the complaint as a result.



The mission of the BLS is to provide a means for improvement in the practice of laser safety by providing opportunities for the education, assessment, and recognition of laser safety professionals.

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