

Training Memo: Instructor Guidelines for HeartCode® BLS Virtual Skills



Date of Release	August 3, 2023
Effective Date	September 1, 2023
Purpose	The American Heart Association is providing updated guidelines to AHA BLS Training Centers and Instructors for conducting virtual skills for AHA BLS provider-level courses using HeartCode BLS.
General Information	<p>This Training Memo replaces and supersedes the “Training Memo: Change to Virtual Training Options for AHA Provider Courses,” released on April 7, 2023, and the updated guidance to the Training Network issued on May 4, 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This memo provides updated guidelines, effective September 1, 2023, for those AHA BLS Training Centers and Instructors who wish to continue offering a virtual skills option for BLS Provider Courses using HeartCode BLS.• Also, effective September 1, 2023, there will be no allowance for virtual skills for advanced healthcare provider courses (ACLS, PALS, PEARS, ACLS EP).• Virtual training will remain an option for Heartsaver-level courses, following the guidance outlined in the current (2020 Guidelines) Heartsaver Instructor Manual.
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Instructor Guidelines for HeartCode BLS Virtual Skills

- AHA requirements for conducting BLS training, as described in the course Instructor manual and Training Center Agreement, must be fulfilled. Videos, hands-on skills practice, and testing are required as outlined in the HeartCode BLS Virtual Skills Agenda for Initial Providers and the HeartCode BLS Virtual Skills Agenda for Renewal.
- Class size should not exceed a ratio of 3 students to 1 Instructor. Combined courses are prohibited.
- Instructors cannot have in-person students at the same time as virtual students.
- Virtual skills testing must be done individually. One-to-one skills testing (1 Instructor:1 student) must be done via virtual breakout rooms or individual virtual testing appointments.
- The Instructor who is conducting BLS virtual skills training must be aligned with a Training Center and be current in BLS.
- Instructors teaching HeartCode BLS Virtual Skills must be monitored teaching at least 1 virtual course with each instructor renewal. This observation must be completed by the Training Center Faculty and can be done virtually. A monitoring checklist must be documented.
- Instructors teaching both in-person and virtual classes must be monitored both in person and virtually by a Training Center Faculty. A monitoring checklist must be documented for both types of courses.
- Instructors who teach only virtual skills classes will only be required to be monitored virtually.
- Upon request, the Training Center must provide course rosters to the AHA for all classes conducted with virtual training.
- Before taking HeartCode BLS Virtual Skills, the student must complete the HeartCode BLS online portion. The Instructor must see and confirm the student's HeartCode BLS online completion certificate before conducting HeartCode BLS virtual skills sessions with that student.
- It is acceptable for BLS courses to have only 1 student for activities that normally require 2 or more students. In this case, the student verbally provides instruction on what the second rescuer (or team members) should be doing in the scenario-based learning and testing stations specified in the course lesson plans.
- An AHA Instructor will observe skills practice and testing via live video.
- The sound and camera positioning for virtual testing must be adequate for the instructor to accurately assess high-quality CPR, including feedback from the feedback device, student hand position, manikin chest rise, and other required elements. Virtual skills testing should not be used if the Instructor is unable to

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adequately assess high-quality CPR skills performance. See Figure 1 for proper positioning.

- A sustained loss of Internet connection, visibility, and/or audio will require rescheduling the skills practice and testing. The required skills practice and testing must be completed or the session will need to be rescheduled.
- The student must have all the required equipment on-site for their virtual skills practice and testing. It is not acceptable for the Instructor to retain the equipment and ask the student to verbally describe the skills.

Equipment List for Students

Course Materials

- Course agenda (digital)

Checklists

- Skills testing checklists (digital)
- Course evaluation (digital)

Reference Material

- *BLS Provider Manual*

Equipment

- AED trainer with adult pads and pediatric pads: 1 per student
- Adult manikin: 1 per student
- Infant manikin: 1 per student
- Child manikin (optional): 1 per student
- Pocket mask: 1 per student
- Disposable mouthpiece: 1 per student
- Bag-mask device (appropriate sizes for each manikin used): 1 per student
- Stopwatch: 1 per student
- Manikin cleaning supplies (eg, antibacterial wipes, alcohol pads)
- Smartphone, tablet, and/or laptop computer with camera
- Additional desktop or laptop computer
- Metronome, set at 110 beats per minute, on a separate device (available free online)

Equipment List for Instructors

Course Materials

- Course roster: 1 per class
- Course agenda: 1 per Instructor
- Lesson plans: 1 per Instructor

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- Course video: 1 per class

Checklists

- Skills testing checklists: 1 each per student

Reference Materials

- *BLS Instructor Manual*: 1 per Instructor
- *BLS Provider Manual*: 1 per Instructor

Equipment

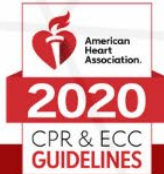
- Stopwatch: 1 per Instructor
- Smartphone, tablet, and/or laptop computer with camera: 1 per Instructor
- Additional desktop or laptop computer: 1 per Instructor
- Metronome, set at 110 beats per minute, on a separate device (available free online)

Helpful Tips and Tricks

- Students and Instructors should be in a quiet area with limited distractions.
- Students should position their manikins on the floor at an angle to the camera to allow the Instructor to see the feedback device, compression rate and depth, chest rise, and pulse checks. See Figure 1 for proper positioning.
- The student or the Instructor is required to use a metronome set at 110 beats per minute. The Instructor and the student must be able to hear the metronome. If you are using your phone for virtual skills, you will need a secondary device to use the metronome.
- Suggested platforms for virtual skills include but are not limited to GoogleMeet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and WebEx.
- For optimal viewing of virtual skills, double-click the video of the student who is testing to make the video image larger.
- Students and Instructors must adjust their audio settings for background noise suppression to ensure that they can hear the manikin clicks and the metronome. Set noise suppression to low or off. The following provides app-specific directions for how to do this:
 - Google Meet
 - Laptop/computer:
 1. Locate More options, which is indicated by 3 vertical dots.
 2. Select Settings.
 3. Click Audio.
 4. Make sure Noise cancellation is off.
 - iPhone/iPad:

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tap the screen and select More options, which is indicated by 3 vertical dots.2. Tap Settings.3. Make sure Noise cancellation is off. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Android:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tap the screen and select More options, which is indicated by 3 vertical dots.2. Tap Settings.3. Make sure Noise cancellation is off.• Zoom<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laptop/computer:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Click on the ^ (up arrow) next to the microphone icon in the bottom-left corner of the Zoom Meeting window.2. Select Audio Settings.3. Locate Audio Profile.4. Set background noise suppression to low.• Phone/tablet:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tap the < (left arrow) button in the top-left corner of your phone screen.2. Select Meetings.3. Locate Use Original Audio and move the slider button to the right (the slider will be green when the setting is on).• Microsoft Teams<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laptop/computer:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Click on the More button in the top tool bar of the meeting window.2. Select Settings.3. Select Device settings.4. Locate Noise suppression.5. Set to Off.• Phone/Tablet: Noise suppression is not available through the phone app.• Webex<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laptop/computer:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Click on the v (down arrow) next to the microphone Mute/Unmute button.2. Turn off Webex smart audio. You may need to click on Noise removal to disable.
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- iPhone/iPad:

1. Tap the ellipsis  for more options.
2. Locate Webex Smart Audio and move the slider button to the left. It should be gray to indicate that the setting is off. If it is blue, it is on.

- Android:


1. Tap the ellipsis  for more options.
2. Locate Webex Smart Audio and move the slider button to the left to turn it off.

Figure 1. Proper positioning of the student and equipment during virtual skills testing.

