Frequently Asked Questions: American Red Cross

Note: If you need certification for a job or for school, always check with them first, as to which certification you need.

1) CPR/AED for the Lay Responder (Valid 2 years) (Adult-Child-Infant):
This is usually a 7–8 hour course, depending on class size.
This can be broken up into segments, such as Adult CPR/AED, Child CPR/AED plus Infant CPR. If you only need to know skills for one specific age group, this might be the level for you.

Topics covered include:

- Checking a conscious & unconscious adult, child and/or infant
- Conscious & unconscious choking adult, child and/or infant
- Giving rescue breaths
- Using a face shield to prevent disease transmission
- Use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
- CPR for adult, child and/or infant
- Adult CPR/AED covers skills for use on victims ages 12 and up
- Child CPR/AED covers skills for use on victims ages 1-11
- Infant CPR covers skills for use on victims under age 1

Who needs this level?

- Childcare providers
- Many home health workers
- Construction workers
- Office workers
- Anyone in a profession that does not require use of CPR/AED on a regular basis
- People who are just generally interested in skills that could save lives

2) CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer (Valid 2 years)
This is usually a 9–10 hour course, depending on class size.

Equivalent to the American Heart Association’s BLS (Basic Life Support), also called CPR/AED for the Healthcare Provider or CPR/AED for Lifeguards
This class includes skills for all age groups from infants to adults that cannot be broken down into segments.

Topics covered include:

- Checking a conscious & unconscious victim
- Conscious & unconscious choking
- Rescue breathing
- One- and two-rescuer CPR
- Usage of a bag valve mask (BVM or Ambu bag)
- Using a pocket mask to prevent disease transmission
- Use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
Who needs this level?

- Persons employed at hospitals
- Nurses
- EMTs
- Many students entering the medical field (e.g. Nursing, occupational therapy)
- Lifeguards
- Anyone who needs to know skills specific to the professional curriculum (e.g. two-rescuer CPR)

1. **For how long is my American Red Cross certification valid?**

CPR/AED and First Aid certifications are valid for two years; Lifeguarding/First Aid certifications are valid for two years. Although the American Red Cross CPR/AED and First Aid Courses are valid for two years, be aware of State and Local Department of Health regulations. In NYS, Lifeguards must re-certify in CPR/AED annually.

2. **My American Red Cross certification is about to expire, or has already expired. How can I renew my certification?**

For most Red Cross courses, you can take a Review or Challenge course to renew your certification. A Review course consists of a review of the material in the program, followed by a test. A Challenge course is a testing session only, and there is no review or teaching component. See the review and challenge course guidelines specific to your certification below:

**Lay Responder First Aid & CPR/AED and CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer (CPR/AED for Lifeguards & CPR/AED for the Health Care Provider):**

**Review Courses:**
To be eligible to participate in a review course, the participant must possess a current American Red Cross certificate (or equivalent) for the course being conducted. Those without a certificate may not participate in the review course option. Individuals may participate in a review course up to 12 months after the expiration of their certificate. During this additional 12 months, the Red Cross considers the certification card to be expired. Individuals whose certificates are past the recognized 12-month validity period may not participate in a review course. They can participate only in a full course or a challenge course.

**Lifeguarding/First Aid:** This is usually a 3-4 day class.
Review Courses
Lifeguards must present a current American Red Cross Lifeguard certificate in order to be eligible to participate in the Lifeguarding/First Aid Review course.

Challenge Courses
Those who have a current Lifeguarding/First Aid certification or a certification that has expired by no more than 12 months may take a challenge course.

3. I am a nurse/doctor, but am not currently certified in CPR. Since CPR is integrated into my professional training and "on-the-job" experience, why can't I take the Review course to become certified?

Review courses are for currently certified individuals only. However, you can take a Challenge course to become certified.

4. I took CPR a few years ago. Can I take a Review course?

No. In order to take a Review course, your certification must be current or expired within one year.

5. I took CPR with the American Heart Association. Can I take an American Red Cross Review course?

You can if the certification is within the first year of issue since the American Heart Association certifications are valid for two years while the American Red Cross requires annual recertification.

6. Is CPR certification from a Red Cross chapter in another country recognized here in the United States? What about Lifeguard certification?

Certifications from Red Cross chapters in other countries are not recognized by the American Red Cross. If an individual with another country’s Red Cross certification feels that he/she can pass a written and a skills test, it is possible to take a Challenge course to gain an American Red Cross certification.

7. I lost my certification card. What should I do?

Contact American Red Cross.