

Active vs. Inactive Chiropractic Licenses in California

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The California Board of Chiropractic Examiners (BCE) recognizes two license statuses for a Doctor of Chiropractic (DC): **active**, which permits practice, and **inactive**, a non-practicing status that preserves the license without permitting any practice activity. Both statuses are described below, along with a significant regulatory change taking effect October 1, 2026.

Active License

An active license is the default, practicing status. It allows a DC to perform the full scope of chiropractic practice defined in the Board's regulations (16 CCR §302), including:

- Spinal and joint manipulation/adjustment, including related muscle and connective tissue work
- Therapeutic modalities (heat, cold, massage, ultrasound, exercise, physical therapy techniques, etc.)
- Diagnosis and treatment of conditions, diseases, or injuries within the chiropractic scope of practice
- Recommending vitamins, food supplements, and foods for special dietary use (per Business & Professions Code §4057)
- Use of X-ray, thermography, and diagnostic ultrasound for diagnostic purposes

Renewal requirements: Active licenses renew annually, in the licensee's birth month. The current renewal fee is **\$336**. Renewal requires completion of **24 hours of continuing education** per cycle (2 hours in ethics/law, 4 hours in specified clinical or coding subjects, 18 hours in any Board-approved category, with a maximum of 12 hours completed via distance learning).

Inactive License

An inactive license is a non-practicing status governed by Business and Professions Code §§700–704 — the general framework for inactive healing-arts licenses (this is a different statute from §462, which governs inactive status for most other licensing boards but expressly excludes healing arts boards like the BCE).

How it works

- Any current active-license holder in good standing (not suspended, revoked, or otherwise punitively restricted) may apply and pay the normal renewal fee to convert to inactive status (BPC §701(b)).
- Inactive licenses renew on the **same annual cycle and at the same fee** as active licenses (BPC §703) — the Board has not set a reduced inactive fee.
- **No continuing education is required** to renew an inactive license (BPC §703(a)).
- To convert back to active status, the licensee pays the renewal fee and completes CE equivalent to one renewal period (24 hours) (BPC §704).

What an inactive licensee cannot do

Under BPC §702, the holder of an inactive license may not (a) engage in any activity for which an active license is required, or (b) represent that they hold an active license.

Regulatory update effective October 1, 2026: The statutory language above — “engage in any activity for which an active license is required” — has historically been vague, and the Board has noted that many licensees mistakenly believed only hands-on adjustments/manipulations were off-limits while inactive. To close that gap, the Board adopted a new regulation, **16 CCR §310.3, “Practice of Chiropractic Prohibited with Inactive License”** (filed June 26, 2026; effective October 1, 2026). It specifies that an inactive licensee may not:

- Direct, perform, or provide the core scope-of-practice activities in 16 CCR §302(a)(1)–(3) and (5)–(7) — manipulation/adjustment, therapeutic modalities, treatment/diagnosis within chiropractic scope, supplement recommendations, or use of diagnostic imaging equipment
- Conduct, direct, perform, or recommend an evaluation, physical examination, or diagnostic imaging
- Render an assessment, diagnosis, interpretation, prognosis, clinical impression, conclusion, or recommendation
- Create, direct, monitor, or update a treatment or care plan or clinical order

In short: even supervisory, advisory, or consultative chiropractic activity is now explicitly off-limits for inactive licensees — not just hands-on treatment.

Side-by-Side Summary

	Active License	Inactive License
Can practice chiropractic?	Yes — full scope of practice	No — no clinical, diagnostic, or treatment-related activity
Annual renewal fee	\$336	\$336 (same as active; no reduced fee set by Board)
Continuing education to renew	24 hours per cycle	None required
To (re)activate	N/A — default status	Pay renewal fee + complete 24 hours of CE
Governing law	16 CCR §302; Chiropractic Initiative Act §12	Bus. & Prof. Code §§700–704; 16 CCR §310.3 (eff. 10/1/2026)

Sources

- License Renewal – Board of Chiropractic Examiners
- Continuing Education – Board of Chiropractic Examiners
- Fee Schedule 2023 (PDF)

- [Chiropractic Rules & Regulations \(PDF\)](#)
- [2026 BCE Sunset Review Report \(PDF\)](#)
- [Proposed Regulations – 16 CCR §310.3 page](#)
- [16 CCR §310.3 Proposed Regulatory Text \(PDF\)](#)
- [16 CCR §310.3 Initial Statement of Reasons \(PDF\)](#)
- [Business and Professions Code §700 \(FindLaw\)](#)
- [Business and Professions Code §701 \(FindLaw\)](#)
- [Business and Professions Code §702 \(FindLaw\)](#)
- [Business and Professions Code §703 \(FindLaw\)](#)
- [Business and Professions Code §704 \(FindLaw\)](#)
- [Business and Professions Code §462 \(FindLaw\)](#)

This document summarizes publicly available information from the California Board of Chiropractic Examiners and the California Business and Professions Code as of August 2026. It is provided for general informational purposes and is not legal advice; verify current requirements directly with the Board before relying on this summary for compliance purposes.