

## CPR & Emergency Cardiovascular Care

As of October 6, 2016

### Course Information

**Q: What is the AHA's PALS ILT Course?**

A: The PALS Course, updated to reflect the *2015 AHA Guidelines Update for CPR and ECC*, is the AHA's advanced pediatric life support course. The goal of the PALS Course is to improve the quality of care provided to seriously ill or injured children, resulting in improved outcomes.

This classroom, Instructor-led course teaches the important concepts of a systematic approach to pediatric assessment, basic life support, PALS treatment algorithms, effective resuscitation, and team dynamics.

**Q: What is the format of the PALS ILT Course?**

A: The PALS Course is conducted by an AHA PALS Instructor in a classroom setting, supported by video. The course uses a series of simulated pediatric emergencies to reinforce the important concepts of a systematic approach to pediatric assessment, basic life support, PALS treatment algorithms, effective resuscitation and team dynamics. The course offers life-like skills animations, team dynamics role play, and scenarios appropriate to different types of providers (prehospital and in-hospital).

During the course, skills are taught in a combination of large-group sessions with videos and Instructor direction, and in small-group learning and testing stations using case-based scenarios with a manikin and Instructor feedback. During skills practice and testing, students are required to function as both a team leader and a team member to learn team dynamics. The course is designed to include both the cognitive portion of training and the psychomotor component of thorough skills practice and testing.

**Q: Specifically, what content is taught in the PALS Classroom Course?**

A: The new PALS Course contains key changes reflecting science from the *2015 AHA Guidelines Update for CPR and ECC*. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Perform high-quality Child CPR AED and Infant CPR per AHA BLS recommendations
- Differentiate between patients who do and do not require immediate intervention
- Recognize cardiopulmonary arrest early and begin CPR within 10 seconds
- Apply team dynamics
- Differentiate between respiratory distress and failure
- Perform early interventions for respiratory distress and failure
- Differentiate between compensated and decompensated (hypotensive) shock
- Perform early interventions for the treatment of shock
- Differentiate between unstable and stable patients with arrhythmias
- Describe clinical characteristics of instability in patients with arrhythmias
- Implement post-cardiac arrest management

**Q: What is different about the 2015 PALS Course versus the 2010 PALS Course?**

A: The 2015 PALS Course is updated to reflect the *2015 AHA Guidelines Update for CPR and ECC*. Other key changes include:

- New Educational Design
  - Learning Objectives
  - Instructor Tips
  - Instructor Actions: Icons
  - Instructor Notes

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- Course Flexibility
  - Optional Lessons
  - Instructor-Led Practice
  - Instructor-Led Discussions
- Mandatory Precourse Self-Assessment with minimum passing score of 70%
- New Case Discussion Videos
- New Case Scenarios (“Megacode”)
- New Lesson Plans
  - Tailored to support instruction of the PALS Course, the PALS Update Course, and the HeartCode® PALS blended learning course
  - Learning objectives specific to the objectives that students need to learn in each lesson
  - An Instructor Tips section has been added, which includes helpful tips for each lesson
  - Lesson Plans now organized by video segment
  - Icons are used throughout the Lesson Plans to help direct the Instructor throughout the lesson
- Updated Instructor and Provider Manuals
- Course Exam
  - Open Resource
  - 50-question exam

### Target Audience

**Q: Who is the target audience for the PALS Course?**

**A:** The AHA’s PALS Course is for healthcare providers who either direct or participate in the management of respiratory and/or cardiovascular emergencies and cardiopulmonary arrest in pediatric patients. This includes personnel in emergency response, emergency medicine, intensive care, and critical care units such as physicians, nurses, paramedics, and others who need a PALS course completion card for job or other requirements.

### PALS Course Completion Requirements

**Q: What are the course completion requirements for the PALS Course?**

**A:** The minimum course completion requirements include:

- Participation in the classroom course, including completion of all learning stations
- Completion of the open-resource written exam with a minimum score of 84%
- Passing the 1- and 2-Rescuer Child BLS With AED and 1- and 2-Rescuer Infant BLS Skills Tests
- Passing 2 PALS core case scenarios (1 cardiac and 1 respiratory or shock) as a team leader, providing appropriate medical treatment and demonstrating effective team dynamics

The 12 required case scenarios are:

- Upper Airway Obstruction
- Lower Airway Obstruction
- Lung Tissue Disease
- Disordered Control of Breathing
- Hypovolemic Shock
- Obstructive Shock
- Distributive Shock
- Cardiogenic Shock
- Supraventricular Tachycardia

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- Bradycardia
- Asystole/PEA
- VF/Pulseless VT

Required skills stations include:

- Child CPR and AED
- Infant CPR
- Management of Respiratory Emergencies
- Rhythm Disturbances/Electrical Therapy
- Vascular Access

**Q: Are students required to act as a team leader in the two core case scenarios in order to pass the PALS Course?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Does successful completion of the PALS Course result in an AHA course completion card?**

A: Yes. Students who successfully complete the requirements of the PALS Course will receive an AHA PALS Provider course completion card (available in print or eCard), valid for two years.

### Preparing to Take the PALS Course

**Q: Are there prerequisites for taking the PALS Course?**

A: Before taking PALS, students should have a mastery of infant and child BLS skills. Students should also

- Be able to recognize a variety of heart rhythms
- Be familiar with different types of airway management tools and how they are used
- Have knowledge of the drugs commonly used in the PALS algorithms and flowcharts
- Understand the Systematic Approach Algorithm and the “evaluate-identify-intervene” sequence

**Q: What resources are available to help prepare students for the PALS Course?**

A: The AHA has created the PALS Student Website at [www.heart.org/eccstudent](http://www.heart.org/eccstudent). The site allows students and Instructors access to the online, mandatory PALS Precourse Self-Assessment along with additional resources and videos listed above. To access the AHA Student Website, students and Instructors will need an access code, which is provided on page ii of the *PALS Provider Manual* and *PALS Instructor Manual*. The PALS Student Website contains the following resources:

- Mandatory Precourse Self-Assessment
- Precourse Preparation Checklist
- Systematic Approach video
- Management of Respiratory Distress and Failure video
- Management of Arrhythmias video
- Management of Shock video

**Q: What materials must a student have to take the PALS Course?**

A: To take the PALS Course, each student must have access to his/her own *PALS Provider Manual* (print or eBook formats available) before, during, and after the class.

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### PALS Precourse Self-Assessment

**Q: What is the PALS Precourse Self-Assessment?**

**A:** The Precourse Self-Assessment is an online tool that evaluates a student's knowledge in 3 sections: rhythm identification, pharmacology, and practical application. Students complete the assessment *before the course* to help evaluate their proficiency and determine the need for additional review and practice before the course. All students must complete the Precourse Self-Assessment and achieve a score of at least 70% before taking the PALS Course. Students may attempt the Precourse Self-Assessment as many times as they need to in order to achieve a minimum score of 70%. Upon successful completion of the Precourse Self-Assessment, students must print their completion certificate and bring it with them to class.

### Course Length

**Q: Approximately how long does the PALS Course take to complete?**

**A:** Approximate course completion times are listed below. Times are based on a recommended ratio of 6 students to 1 Instructor to 1 manikin or station (NOTE: the CPR and AED and Management of Respiratory Emergencies stations require 1 Instructor and 2 manikins for 6 students per station). Using different ratios will result in increased course completion times.

- Full course: 13 hours 40 minutes, plus additional time for breaks and lunch
- Update with all optional stations: 8 hours 20 minutes, plus additional time for breaks and lunch
- Update without optional stations: 6 hours 20 minutes, plus additional time for breaks and lunch

### Continuing Education

**Q: Are continuing education (CE/CME/CEH) credits offered for the PALS ILT Course?**

**A:** The AHA has applied for continuing education for the PALS Course. Specific language will be added as soon as it is available.

### Course Materials

**Q: What new materials are available for the PALS Course?**

**A:** Materials for the classroom course, updated to reflect the *2015 AHA Guidelines Update for CPR and ECC*, include:

#### Student/Provider Materials

- 15-1058 *PALS Provider Manual*, includes PALS Pocket Reference Card (15-1046)
- 15-3120 *PALS Provider Manual eBook*, includes PALS Digital Reference Card (15-3121)
- 15-1046 PALS Pocket Reference Card
- 15-3121 PALS Digital Reference Card

#### Instructor Materials

- 15-1051 PALS DVD Set (2 discs)
- 15-1047 *PALS Instructor Manual* (includes Lesson Plans, Instructor CD, divider page tabs, testing case scenarios, ECG rhythm cards)
- 15-3122 PALS Instructor Manual eBook
- 15-1048 PALS Instructor Package, includes:
  - *PALS Provider Manual* (15-1058)
  - *PALS Instructor Manual* (15-1047)
  - 2 PALS DVD Sets (15-1051)

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- PALS Posters (15-1049)
- PALS Emergency Crash Cart Cards (15-1050)

### Supplemental Materials

- 15-1049 PALS Posters (set of 10)
- 15-1046 PALS Pocket Reference Card
- 15-3121 PALS Digital Reference Card
- 15-1050 PALS Emergency Crash Cart Cards

### Cards

- 15-1807 PALS Provider Course Completion Card (3-card sheet)
- 15-3006 PALS Provider eCard
- 15-1806 PALS Instructor Card (3-card sheet)

**Q: Why are there 2 DVD Sets included in the PALS Instructor Package?**

A: The Instructor package includes 2 DVD Sets to provide more flexibility for Instructors in the way the course is run. Each set includes the PALS Course DVD and the PALS Update Course and HeartCode PALS DVD.

**Q: What is included on the Instructor CD that comes with the *PALS Instructor Manual*?**

A: The CD includes the following resources:

- Precourse materials (equipment list, sample agendas, sample precourse letters)
- Practice case scenarios
- Testing case scenarios
- Lesson Plans for full and update courses, as well as for HeartCode PALS
- Skills testing checklists
- Course progress checklists
- Algorithms and flowcharts
- Team dynamics debriefing tool
- Team role labels, and more

**Q: Are the contents of the Instructor CD also be posted to the [AHA Instructor Network](#)?**

A: Forms, checklists and some other tools found on the Instructor CD are posted to the AHA Instructor Network under Courses > PALS > Course Resources. Lesson Plans, algorithms, and flowcharts are not posted to the AHA Instructor Network.

### Teaching the PALS Course

**Q: Who can teach the PALS Course?**

A: AHA PALS Instructors may teach this course.

**Q: What materials are necessary to teach PALS?**

A: To teach the PALS Course, PALS Instructors, at a minimum, must have their own *PALS Instructor Manual* and PALS Course DVD Set. However, for added convenience and cost savings, it is recommended that Instructors have the full PALS Instructor Package.

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**Q: What resources are available to help Instructors understand the new PALS Course and materials?**

**A:** The AHA developed the PALS Product & Course Orientation (P&CO) to help PALS Instructors understand the new, 2015 Guidelines PALS Course design and teaching strategies, and to quickly get up to speed on the latest updates to the course materials. The orientation is available free of charge to Instructors through the [AHA Instructor Network](#).

The P&CO provides PALS Instructors

- Information about new course materials, course curriculum updates, and how the changes impact the way you will teach the PALS Course
- Details, clarification, and direction on various course formats
- Specifics about new PALS course materials
- Steps to incorporate new updates into various course settings

While all PALS Instructors are strongly encouraged to complete the P&CO before teaching the new course, it is not required. Viewing the P&CO is most helpful if Instructors have new course materials in-hand while viewing.

**Q: From a logistical perspective, how should rooms be set up for training and testing, and what should be the ratio of students to instructors to manikins?**

**A:** The PALS Course can be taught to a large group in one large room with smaller breakout rooms for practicing and testing. The large room should comfortably hold at least 20 people. The smaller rooms must hold up to 8 people (7 students and 1 instructor) along with the required manikins and equipment. The PALS Course ratio should be 6 students to 1 instructor to 1 manikin. Note: the CPR and AED and Management of Respiratory Emergencies stations require 6 students to 1 instructor to 2 manikins.

**Q: What is the difference between the structured debriefing portion of the PALS Course and the Structured and Supported Debriefing Online Course?**

**A:** The structured debriefing portion of the PALS Course does not teach the Instructor how to debrief; it is simply a tool that can be used during a debriefing.

### Purchasing Materials/Finding Classes

**Q: Where can I purchase new PALS Course materials?**

**A:** AHA training materials can be purchased from any of AHA's three [Distributors](#). eBooks and digital materials can also be purchased at <http://eBooks.heart.org>.

**Q: How do I find a PALS Course in my area?**

**A:** To find a class near you, please use the Find a Course tool at [www.heart.org/findacourse](http://www.heart.org/findacourse).

### Product Support

**Q: Whom should I contact if I have problems with PALS materials?**

**A:** For problems with PALS Course materials, customers should contact the [AHA Distributor](#) from whom they purchased the materials.

### Translations

**Q: Will PALS be translated? When will translated editions be available?**

**A:** For information on translations of PALS Course materials, please visit <http://international.heart.org>.