

# **Reiki-ssage and the Illinois Massage Licensing Act**

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# *Foundation for this Information*

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As of January 1, 2005, the State of Illinois requires all massage therapists and professionals who identify their work as a form of massage to have a valid Illinois Massage License. The law also allows for a series of exemptions that limit the scope of the law to affect only certain styles of bodywork. Reiki-ssage is one of those exempt modalities.

For the past five years, Rick and Connie Vrenios and the Reiki Council, the Reiki Council Board of Directors, and several students and graduates have volunteered their time, working extensively to create the best result possible for all of us.

Since the very first Reiki-ssage Workshop in 1998 (long before the movement to create a massage law in Illinois had begun), the workshop, the workshop manuals, and the instructors have been very clear that Reiki-ssage is not massage therapy. The foresight to create a distinct separation from massage therapy has given us the freedom to self-regulate our modality, free from the jurisdiction of the Illinois Massage Board.

The information presented in this packet is based on considerable research by the Reiki Council Board of Directors, its attorneys, and statements made by members of the Illinois Massage Board.

In our effort for accuracy, we have formed our own interpretation of the law, which is extremely clear and straight forward. Then, we have had seven sets of lawyers review the law and our interpretation. In every single case, the lawyers have agreed with our interpretation of the law.

Most recently, a member of the Illinois Massage Board has made statements directly to one of our board members acknowledging the exemption status of Reiki-ssage. This board member is the director of a small massage school and several instructors at the school have reinforced the director's official position regarding Reiki-ssage.

Reiki-ssage is listed on school handouts that identify non-massage bodywork modalities along with the list of modalities that are specifically exempted in the language of the law. The instructors have also stated that they too have heard the director make the comments acknowledging Reiki-ssage as an exempt modality.

It is critical to emphasize the warning of the Reiki Council's primary attorney...

***The law is clearly written and extremely straightforward. However, the Illinois Massage Board is comprised of massage therapists who are not legal experts. The Illinois Department of Professional Regulation is run by human beings. The courts have judges who also happen to be human.***

***To lower your guard in this time, expecting the law to be interpreted and implemented perfectly would be foolish. The language of the law is clearly on our side, but we are dealing with humans through the entire chain. Anything can happen.***

In spite of this suggestion to be vigilant and the lack of written confirmation from the Massage Board, we are extremely optimistic that this transition will be a very positive result for the practice of Reiki-ssage.

# *Exemptions in the Law*

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Below is the text of the law defining the expressed exemptions. The following pages will describe the details of this section of the law. The text is taken directly from the Illinois General Assembly web site and is an exact quote:

<http://www.legis.state.il.us/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=2469&ChapAct=225%20ILCS%2057/&ChapterID=24&ChapterName=PROFESSIONS%20AND%20OCCUPATIONS&ActName=Massage%20Licensing%20Act%20E>

(225 ILCS 57/25)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2012)

Sec. 25. Exemptions.

- (a) This Act does not prohibit a person licensed under any other Act in this State from engaging in the practice for which he or she is licensed.
- (b) Persons exempted under this Section include, but are not limited to, physicians, podiatrists, naprapaths, and physical therapists.
- (c) Nothing in this Act prohibits qualified members of other professional groups, including but not limited to nurses, occupational therapists, cosmetologists, and estheticians, from performing massage in a manner consistent with their training and the code of ethics of their respective professions.
- (d) Nothing in this Act prohibits a student of an approved massage school or program from performing massage, provided that the student does not hold himself or herself out as a licensed massage therapist and does not charge a fee for massage therapy services.
- (e) Nothing in this Act prohibits practitioners that do not involve intentional soft tissue manipulation, including but not limited to Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, Reike, and Therapeutic Touch, from practicing.
- (f) Practitioners of certain service marked bodywork approaches that do involve intentional soft tissue manipulation, including but not limited to Rolfing, Trager Approach, Polarity Therapy, and Orthobionomy, are exempt from this Act if they are approved by their governing body based on a minimum level of training, demonstration of competency, and adherence to ethical standards.
- (g) Practitioners of Asian bodywork approaches are exempt from this Act if they are members of the American Organization of Bodywork Therapies of Asia as certified practitioners or if they are approved by an Asian bodywork organization based on a minimum level of training, demonstration of competency, and adherence to ethical standards set by their governing body.
- (h) Practitioners of other forms of bodywork who restrict manipulation of soft tissue to the feet, hands, and ears, and who do not have the client disrobe, such as reflexology, are exempt from this Act.
- (i) Nothing in this Act applies to massage therapists from other states or countries when providing educational programs or services for a period not exceeding 30 days within a calendar year.
- (j) Nothing in this Act prohibits a person from treating ailments by spiritual means through prayer alone in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination.

(Source: P.A. 92-860, eff. 6-1-03.)

# *The Reiki Exemption*

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The Illinois Massage Act provides a full exemption for the practice of Reiki and other forms of energywork. The wording reads...

***(e) Nothing in this Act prohibits practitioners that do not involve intentional soft tissue manipulation, including but not limited to Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, Reike, and Therapeutic Touch, from practicing.***

The single limitation within this exemption is that no intentional soft tissue manipulation may be incorporated into the practice of Reiki or other styles of "pure" energywork.

Even though the word Reiki is spelled incorrectly, the law describes the type of work that is exempt. The Reiki Council continues to work with state representatives and state senators to have this spelling corrected out of respect to our profession.

# *The Reflexology Exemption*

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The Illinois Massage Act provides a partial exemption for the practice of traditional Reflexology. The wording reads...

*(h) Practitioners of other forms of bodywork who restrict manipulation of soft tissue to the feet, hands, and ears, and who do not have the client disrobe, such as reflexology, are exempt from this Act.*

The limitation that arises out of this exemption is that the definition of Reflexology's scope of practice is inappropriately restrictive. According to the law, the practice of Reflexology must not include any work to the ankle or lower legs, nor can it include any work to the wrist or forearms.

**Therefore, only Licensed Massage Therapists may practice the true scope of Reflexology. That's right! Most massage therapists receive 4 hours or less of combined theory and hands-on training and few ever have to prove comprehension or competency, yet they are free to practice the full scope of Reflexology and can call what they do Reflexology. Certified Reflexologists engage in as much as 100 hours of training, 100 hours of documented practice sessions, plus they must pass a Certification exam. In Illinois, it is a punishable crime for them to practice their work as they have been trained.**

Fortunately, massage therapists did not create a full monopoly on true Reflexology. Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioners also have the ability to by-pass this limitation. The practice of Reiki-ssage is a full-body hands-on system, and Reiki-Reflex is a component of the Reiki-ssage System and the Reiki-ssage Certification Training Program.

The Reiki-Reflex System, exclusively when practice by a Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioner, may include the full scope of influence from below the knee to the foot, below the elbow to the hands, or restricted to the ears under the Reiki-ssage exemption.

If you have received Reiki-Reflex training, but are not a Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioner, you **must** limit your work to the hands, feet, and ears exclusively!

When the Reiki Council contacted every Reflexology school and professional association, the rare few who did respond stated, "We don't get involved in that sort of thing. We expect our students and graduates to keep themselves informed about the law and fully comply with it regardless of their training."

We find this position appalling, so the Reiki Council is the lone voice working to correct the definition of Reflexology to include the hands, wrists, and forearms (below the elbow), the feet, ankles, and legs (below the knee), and the ears.

# *The Reiki-ssage Exemption #1*

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The Illinois Massage Act provides a clear, primary exemption protecting the rights of Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioners. The wording reads...

***(f) Practitioners of certain service marked bodywork approaches that do involve intentional soft tissue manipulation, including but not limited to Rolfing, Trager Approach, Polarity Therapy, and Orthobionomy, are exempt from this Act if they are approved by their governing body based on a minimum level of training, demonstration of competency, and adherence to ethical standards.***

Let's break this exemption down into its component parts to clarify each element.

***Practitioners of certain service marked bodywork approaches...***

Reiki-ssage is a Registered Service Mark with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. It was filed with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on January 9, 2000. It was finalized and registered on June 4, 2002 and it is Registration Number 2575091. Unquestionably, we meet this standard.

***...that do involve intentional soft tissue manipulation...***

Reiki-ssage is a hands-on approach that intentionally manipulates skin, muscle, and connective tissue. Clearly, we meet this standard.

***...including but not limited to Rolfing, Trager Approach, Polarity Therapy, and Orthobionomy, are exempt from this Act...***

The key to this statement is "Including but not limited to". The list of specifically exempted modalities is included to demonstrate the spirit of the law.

***...if they are approved by their governing body...***

The Reiki Council has been authorized as the exclusive governing body regulating the practice of Reiki-ssage. The Reiki Council has been charged with establishing the requirements for certification, the training and certification of instructors, the regulation of all classes, the regulation of the examination process, the grievance policy, and every other necessary procedure associated with professional self-regulation.

***...based on a minimum level of training,...***

Reiki-ssage requires a specific 200-hour training program with a specific series of required classes and a specific set of learning objectives and time requirements for each class. We have had medical doctors, chiropractors, psychologists, nurses, massage therapists go through the course. Regardless of previous experience or degrees, all students must complete all elements defined in the Reiki-ssage program.

***...demonstration of competency,...***

Reiki-ssage Certification requires the successful completion of a comprehensive written and practical exam to demonstrate minimum competency.

***...and adherence to ethical standards.***

The Reiki Council has a written code of ethics and standards of practice document available. The Council also has a four-member grievance board to manage complaints.

**Reiki-ssage meets or exceeds every requirement for this exemption!**

# *The Reiki-ssage Exemption #2*

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The Illinois Massage Act provides a second exemption protecting the rights of Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioners. The wording reads...

***(g) Practitioners of Asian bodywork approaches are exempt from this Act if they are members of the American Organization of Bodywork Therapies of Asia as certified practitioners or if they are approved by an Asian bodywork organization based on a minimum level of training, demonstration of competency, and adherence to ethical standards set by their governing body.***

Reiki is a Japanese therapeutic modality that in some cases is performed with direct hands-on connection. There are many definitions of the word "bodywork", but here are some definitions available...

*(Definition - alt-med-ed.com) "Bodywork is a general term for any system of movement, touch and sometimes deep massage designed to help you improve your body's structure and function. Each of the individual models have their own respective capabilities. These models are often incorporated into other alternative therapies, especially some of the body energy and mind/spirit therapies."*

*(Definition – wholelifepages.com) "Bodywork refers to the utilization of multi-therapies including massage, deep tissue manipulation, movement, energy balancing, acupressure, reflexology, rolfing and many others to help reduce pain, soothe muscles, stimulate blood circulation and promote relaxation and healing. It may also include emotional or energetic healing work."*

*(Definition – mothernature.com) "The term bodywork refers to numerous "touch" therapies, including massage, acupressure, deep tissue manipulation, and movement awareness. Some of these therapies physically manipulate body structures, while others are based on the manipulation of the body's "energy fields." Bodywork therapies are designed to enhance the overall functioning and structure of the human body by stimulating circulation, promoting deep relaxation, and reducing pain.*

As these definitions make clear, bodywork is a broad term, and Reiki fits within the scope of that term. Reiki-ssage is an evolution of Reiki, and it contains strong foundations from this oriental system of healing. Just as there are American systems of Shiatsu that are covered by this exemption, Reiki-ssage is entitled to the same protections.

The Reiki Council is an Asian Bodywork Organization. In 1997, we formed the Reiki Council as a membership organization. On January 1st, 2000, we became the first U.S. membership organization with the strength of membership to offer professional liability insurance to our members.

Members of the Reiki Council Professional Association, who are also Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioners, are entitled to this second exemption and the right to practice their craft as they have been trained to do so. Under this provision, Reiki-ssage is further clarified as NOT massage therapy, but a distinct and different system of bodywork.

**Become A Member of the Reiki Council Professional Association to make yourself eligible for this second exemption!**

# Title Protection

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While Reiki-ssage meets the requirements for exemption, the Illinois Massage Licensing Act mandates a few simple rules that keeps you out of the reach of the Massage Board. **Claiming ignorance is not an acceptable excuse. Failing to comply jeopardizes the rights of all Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioners practicing in the State of Illinois!**

## 1. The Three Deadly Words...

The Illinois Massage Licensing Act offers Licensed Massage Therapists title protection. It is a sort of pseudo-trademark on three word combinations that only Licensed Massage Therapists may use to identify their profession or to promote their work.

### **Sec. 30. Title protection.**

**(a) Persons regulated by this Act are designated as massage therapists and therefore are exclusively entitled to utilize the terms "massage", "massage therapy", and "massage therapist" when advertising or printing promotional material.**

**(b) Anyone who knowingly aids and abets one or more persons not authorized to use a professional title regulated by this Act or knowingly employs persons not authorized to use the regulated professional title in the course of their employment, commits a violation of this Act.**

**(c) Anyone not authorized, under the definitions of this Act, to utilize the term "massage", "massage therapy", or "massage therapist" and who knowingly utilizes these terms when advertising commits a violation of this Act.**

**(Source: P.A. 92-860, eff. 6-1-03.)**

The Three Deadly Words are... **Massage, Massage Therapy, and Massage Therapist**

Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioners may not use these words. Including these words in conversation, on brochures and flyers, on business cards, on gift certificates moves you into an area in which a consumer may file a complaint of practicing massage without a license.

To circumvent this issue, you may use terms such as... bodywork, body therapy, touch therapy, soft tissue manipulation, hands-on therapy, hands-on bodywork, hands-on body therapy, and other non-"massage" words.

This mandate is not only for your protection. It is to protect the right to practice for **ALL** Reiki-ssage Practitioners. If there are enough complaints of misuse of these regulated words, the Massage Board may incorrectly interpret that action as meaning that we are, in fact, intentionally practicing massage therapy.

**Protect Everyone's Right to Practice.  
Inform the Reiki Council if you see improper marketing  
of Reiki-ssage!**



# *Certified, In Good Standing*

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To practice Reiki-ssage professionally, you must be a Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioner, and you must remain in good standing with the Reiki Council. The "professionally" means to claim or imply that you are no longer a student and you charge for your services.

People who are still progressing through the training program must identify themselves as a student and may not **Charge A Fee** for your work. The Reiki Council does not object to voluntary contributions and gratuity to help pay for your education, but this may not be a "standard fee for service" relationship.

Individuals who lose their good standing through consumer complaints and the action of the Reiki Council Grievance Board will have their right to practice revoked until such time that it is reinstated by the Board.

# *Local Regulation*

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Because Reiki-ssage is not regulated by the State of Illinois, it may be subject to local regulation varying from town to town. This is the one downside to receiving the exemption.

The Reiki Council cannot be responsible for researching the requirements of every town in the state. This is your responsibility. If you gather information that might be useful for others and want to share that with the Reiki Council so we can make it known to others, please forward it to us. This helps everyone be more successful.

Also, you may not need a therapist license, but you will need a business license if you are an independent business -- this might include situations where you are an independent contractor working at an established business.

# Grandfather Clause

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In a rare few cases, Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioners may qualify for a massage license. Below is the exact text of the law outlining the conditions in which a Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioner can qualify for a license. We expected more individuals to qualify, but a condition in the law limits the number.

(225 ILCS 57/20)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2012)

Sec. 20. Grandfathering provision.

(a) For a period of one year after the effective date of the rules adopted under this Act, the Department may issue a license to an individual who, in addition to meeting the requirements set forth in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a) and subsection (b) of Section 15, produces proof that he or she has met at least one of the following requirements before the effective date of this Act:

(1) has been an active member, for a period of at least one year prior to the application for licensure, of a national professional massage therapy organization established prior to the year 2000, which offers professional liability insurance and a code of ethics;

(2) has passed the National Certification Exam of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork and has kept his or her certification current;

(3) has practiced massage therapy an average of at least 10 hours per week for at least 10 years; or

(4) has practiced massage therapy an average of at least 10 hours per week for at least one year prior to the effective date of this Act and has completed at least 100 hours of formal training in massage therapy.

(b) An applicant who can show proof of having engaged in the practice of massage therapy for at least 10 hours per week for a minimum of one year prior to the effective date of this Act and has less than 100 hours of formal training or has been practicing for less than one year with 100 hours of formal training must complete at least 100 additional hours of formal training consisting of at least 25 hours in anatomy and physiology by January 1, 2005.

(c) An applicant who has training from another state or country may qualify for a license under subsection (a) by showing proof of meeting the requirements of that state or country and demonstrating that those requirements are substantially the same as the requirements in this Section.

(d) For purposes of this Section, "formal training" means a massage therapy curriculum approved by the Illinois State Board of Education or the Illinois Board of Higher Education or course work provided by continuing education sponsors approved by the Department.

(Source: P.A. 92-860, eff. 6-1-03; 93-524, eff. 8-12-03; 93-908, eff. 8-11-04.)

# *Qualifying for a License*

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There are three possible options for receiving a massage therapy license using the grandfather clauses.

#1. Member of Massage Therapy Association

*(1) has been an active member, for a period of at least one year prior to the application for licensure, of a national professional massage therapy organization established prior to the year 2000, which offers professional liability insurance and a code of ethics;*

People who became professional (not student) members of the IMA Group or the ABMP before June 1, 2002 are automatically eligible for licensure.

*(4) has practiced massage therapy an average of at least 10 hours per week for at least one year prior to the effective date of this Act and has completed at least 100 hours of formal training in massage therapy.*

If you have been working professionally and have an average of 10 hours per week for a year (Prior to June 1, 2003), you have a strong chance to qualify for a license.

*(b) An applicant who can show proof of having engaged in the practice of massage therapy for at least 10 hours per week for a minimum of one year prior to the effective date of this Act and has less than 100 hours of formal training or has been practicing for less than one year with 100 hours of formal training must complete at least 100 additional hours of formal training consisting of at least 25 hours in anatomy and physiology by January 1, 2005.*

If you would like a massage therapy license, you may qualify by locating a massage therapy program that offers a 100 hour supplemental training program. There are several schools in the area that offer this.

# *More on Grandfathering*

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July 12, 2004

## **UPDATED NOTICE REGARDING THE LICENSING OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS**

The Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) will begin licensing Massage Therapists on January 1, 2005. Below is additional information for individuals currently practicing as massage therapists. This notice is being provided for informational purposes only and may change as a result of legislation or the rulemaking process.

### Rulemaking Process

Proposed rules have been filed with the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) to implement the new law and to develop licensing applications and instructions. Both the general public and the General Assembly, through JCAR, can have input prior to adoption. Individuals may review these rules on the Department's Web site [www.idfpr.com](http://www.idfpr.com).

### Grandfather Requirements

Please note that licensing applications are not currently available and the Department is unable to accept any documentation regarding an applicant's credentials at this time. Individuals who wish to apply should continue to check the Department's Web site [www.idfpr.com](http://www.idfpr.com), for updates.

According to the Massage Licensing Act, under the grandfather provision the Department may issue a license to anyone who meets the following criteria:

? Has applied in writing on the prescribed forms and has paid the required fee;  
? Is at least 18 years of age and of good moral character; and  
? Has met at least one of the following requirements prior to the effective date of the Act, June 1, 2003:

- 1) for a period of at least one year, has been an active member of a national professional massage therapy organization established prior to the year 2000, which offers professional liability insurance and a code of ethics;
- 2) has passed the National Certification Exam of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork and has kept his or her certification current;
- 3) has practiced massage therapy an average of at least 10 hours per week for at least 10 years; or
- 4) has practiced massage therapy on average of at least 10 hours per week for at least one year prior to June 1, 2003 and has completed 100 hours of formal training in massage therapy.

There are additional grandfather provisions established in the law pertaining to additional formal training requirements which you may review in the Massage Licensing Act at 225 ILCS 57/20 (b)(c) and (d).

# *How Do I Protect Myself?*

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- Comply with the Title Protection Requirement
- Protect the integrity of YOUR professional title by using the ® symbol after the word Reiki-ssage. This symbol indicates that the word Reiki-ssage® is a protected term by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and it help to reinforce the uniqueness of Reiki-ssage. This symbol communicates that only individuals who are authorized by the governing body of Reiki-ssage may use this term to describe their work.
- Retain this booklet as a reference to manage any challenges.
- Pass along information about any news, challenges, or other information to the Reiki Council so we may keep everyone up to date.
- Become a Member of the Reiki Council to ensure your right to the second exemption and to have access to future information.
- Be listed on the [www.reiki-ssage.com](http://www.reiki-ssage.com) web site to make clear your status publicly. Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioners need only to request this listing via e-mail. Go to [www.reiki-ssage.com](http://www.reiki-ssage.com) and review the "Find A Practitioner" page. E-mail us the exact wording that you would like to appear in each section of your listing. It's that easy!

If you don't want your contact information posted publicly, it is still a good idea to be listed. Your listing can be as simple as:

**John Doe**

**Glen Ellyn, IL**

**Certified Reiki-ssage Practitioner  
Reiki Master/Teacher**

Having a public listing gives you the ability to say to anyone who questions your status, you can simply direct them to the [www.reiki-ssage.com](http://www.reiki-ssage.com) web site and look for your listing.

# *The Importance of Membership*

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The strength of our right to practice becomes even greater as a group. We reopened the membership organization as an opportunity to further protect your rights. The process of researching and investigating the law and any future changes takes time and money. The professional association is the best way to support our efforts to protect your rights.

Membership gives you...

- A direct information source for any changes in the law.
- The strength of a group to stand united in protection of our rights.
- The confidence of a second exemption to protect your rights.
- A community network to support each other's success in practice.
- The power of a strong, established, and recognizable name endorsing your skill and integrity.
- An optional listing on the Reiki Council web site.
- Professional Members become a part of our referral network.
- The use of Reiki Council Membership Logos on all your advertisements and flyers. Professional membership reflects a higher level of credibility and professionalism in the eyes of consumers.

Becoming a member is easy. You go to the [www.reikicouncil.com](http://www.reikicouncil.com) web site and either apply directly on our secure server or you can download and print the application and submit it by mail or fax.

# *Available Resources*

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As with any profession, staying up-to-date with the current information affecting your professional practice is YOUR responsibility. Complying with all the rules connected with the law is YOUR responsibility. To help you do this, information resources are available.

## **Reiki Council**

Glen Ellyn: 630-926-5891

[www.reikicouncil.com](http://www.reikicouncil.com)

[www.reikissage.com](http://www.reikissage.com)

The Reiki Council is the exclusive governing body for the practice of Reiki-ssage and Reiki-Reflex by authority of Rick and Connie Vrenios, the creators and trademark owners of the systems. All participants of the **Reiki-ssage and the Law** meeting are welcome to contact the Reiki Council with questions.

Current members of the Reiki Council will receive updated information impacting the practice of Reiki-ssage as it becomes available into the future through the membership newsletter. As part of our commitment to those who are committed to professional practice, we will support you to the best of our ability and resources. Those who choose not to be members of the Reiki Council and choose not to participate in the meeting may direct all questions to the Illinois Division of Professional Regulation.

In addition, the [www.reikissage.com](http://www.reikissage.com) web site will provide information resources such as an FAQ page and Information Update pages. Because we have a professional practice and extensive teaching commitments, we have limited time to answer each individual's questions. We will do our best, but we will frequently direct you to the web site in answer to common questions. **Our suggestion is that you search the FAQs first.** All questions must be submitted via e-mail to be listed on the FAQ page. We will post new questions and answers first to simplify the search process.

## **Illinois Division of Professional Regulation**

Springfield: 217-785-0800

Chicago: 312-814-4500

[www.ildpr.com](http://www.ildpr.com)

The Illinois Division of Professional Regulation is the governmental department overseeing the Illinois Massage Board. They are the authority on the requirements for licensure regarding the practice of massage therapy. The [ildpr.com](http://ildpr.com) web site contains links to the complete text of the law, massage therapist license applications, the rules, and any updates.