



O-2526-16 MASSAGE THERAPY ESTABLISHMENTS

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 2, 2025

Background

- Need for Regulations – Public Health, Safety, and Welfare
- Norman Police have noted an uptick in establishments opening in Norman purporting to be massage therapy and/or bodywork services establishments that are really a cover for prostitution, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and money laundering.
 - On average, over 100 massage parlor ads for locations in Norman appear on known prostitution websites each month
 - Unsuspecting clients have gone in for massages and been propositioned and even sexually assaulted
- Stings and offender arrests don't solve the problem – Business continues to operate despite arrests



Background

- State law licenses massage therapists, but not massage therapy establishments, making it more challenging to identify legitimate establishments vs. criminal establishments.
- Cities only had authority to regulate zoning, until the passage of SB644, effective November 1, 2025, which allows us to also now implement licensing requirements.
- After discussions with NPD and local massage therapists, a concern was raised that other establishments performing bodywork services, an area which is completely unregulated by state law, may also serve as a front for similar illegal behavior.
- Ordinance O-2526-16 creates a licensing requirement for massage therapy and bodywork services establishments in Norman and eliminates problematic and outdated zoning ordinance language
 - Allows the City to shut down businesses engaged in prostitution, human trafficking, drug trafficking and money laundering



License Required

- Beginning April 1, 2026, all massage therapy and bodywork services establishments will be required to be licensed (\$50 initial fee; \$25 for renewals)
- Licenses will not be granted when:
 - Applicant has been convicted of certain felonies related to force, violence, sexual misconduct, drugs or weapons ,
 - Applicant knowingly makes false, misleading or fraudulent statements in the application
 - Applicant has had a massage establishment, massage therapist, or similar license denied, revoked or suspended by the City or any other state or local jurisdiction in the last 5 years
 - Applicant is under 18 years of age.



Definitions

- Massage therapy – incorporates the definition of “massage therapy” from state law for consistency
- Bodywork Services - any service offered for compensation or gratuity involving manipulation, pressure, or movement of the human body, including, but not limited to, reflexology, acupressure, Thai bodywork, shiatsu, or similar modalities, regardless of whether a state practitioner license is required.
- Massage therapy or bodywork establishment: any establishment having a source of income or compensation derived from the practice of massage therapy or bodywork services as defined in this section and which has a fixed place of business.



Licensing Requirements

- Sanitary Working Environment
 - Area where massages or bodywork services are provided must be kept clean
 - Client contact items/work areas cleaned and disinfected between sessions
 - Clean and laundered sheets and towels
 - Observe CDC universal precautions if exposed to blood or bodily fluids
 - No treatment of area with open cuts, lesions or signs of infection



Licensing Requirements

- **Business Operations**

- Posting of Prices – displayed at business or on website; if prices vary based on types of treatment provided, posting shall indicate it.
- Records Required – maintain appointment book for three years – name of patron, time, date and place of service, service provided. Maintain confidentiality except in limited circumstances. Obtain consent form prior to providing treatment.
- Employee Register - Licensed massage therapists only if providing massage therapy
- Appropriate clothing – provider should be clean, fully clothed, and professional in dress and appearance
- Operating hours limited to 8am – 10pm; can request other hours as part of license
- Advertising not misleading
- Minors only with written consent or presence of parent/legal guardian



Licensing Requirements

- **Business Operations (continued)**
 - No alcoholic beverages without an ABLE license
 - Cubicles, booths, etc - no locked internal doors for service areas
 - No person can reside or sleep overnight at an establishment
 - No treatment of area with open cuts, lesions or signs of infection
- **Professional conduct –**
 - No contact with sexual or genital areas, unless part of a legitimate treatment plan for which the provider has training
 - No exposure of private areas by provider
 - Protect client's privacy with draping
 - Ensure employees engage only in professional conduct



Enforcement

- Enforcement effort will focus on two things -
 - Advertisements for unlicensed facilities/illegal behavior at establishments
- Complaints
- Violations
 - Notify the Clerk and the City Attorney; Clerk gives licensee 5 days to comply; license revocation after hearing by license review board
 - Criminal Charge - \$50 - \$750 and/or 60 days
 - Injunctive Relief – District Court –shut the business down



Modification to Zoning Code

- Business license required for adult entertainment businesses
- Zoning Code defines “Adult entertainment uses” – definition has not been updated since 1980’s
 - “Adult entertainment uses” are currently allowed in certain zoning districts with the grant of a special use.
 - Includes definitions for “massage parlors” and “sexual encounter centers”
 - Both definitions include the payment of consideration or gratuity in exchange for sexual contact
 - This runs afoul of State statutes criminalizing prostitution
 - There are no existing business licenses granted to adult entertainment businesses that include massage parlors or sexual encounter centers
 - O-2526-16 strikes “massage parlors” and “sexual encounter centers” from the definition of Adult Entertainment Uses
 - Planning Commission recommended approval 7-0 at its November meeting





QUESTIONS?