

Mobile X-Ray Tech Vetting Guide

How to verify credentials, ensure compliance, and avoid unqualified portable imaging providers

- ✓ ARRT certification and state licensing requirements explained
- ✓ Step-by-step credential verification process
- ✓ 10 red flags that indicate an unqualified mobile imaging provider
- ✓ Sample vetting questionnaire you can send to providers

Understanding Mobile X-Ray Certifications

The American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) administers the primary national certification for radiologic technologists. More than 75% of states also require separate state licensure. Understanding the certification landscape helps you verify that any mobile X-ray provider entering your facility meets professional standards.

Certification Hierarchy

Level	Certification	What It Proves
National Standard	ARRT R.T.(R) — Registered Technologist in Radiography	Completed accredited program, passed national exam, meets ethics standards
State License	State radiologic technologist license (varies by state)	Authorized to practice in specific state; may require ARRT as prerequisite
Advanced	ARRT R.T.(R)(CT), R.T.(R)(MR) — Additional modalities	Cross-trained in CT, MRI, or other modalities beyond radiography
Specialty	Limited X-ray Machine Operator (LXMO)	Some states allow limited-scope operators for specific body parts only

Additional Relevant Certifications

Certification	Issuing Body	Purpose
BLS (Basic Life Support)	AHA / Red Cross	Required for all patient-facing healthcare workers
ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support)	AHA	Sometimes required for hospital-based mobile work
CRT (Certified Radiologic Technologist)	State-specific (e.g., California)	State certification that may differ from or supplement ARRT
NMTCB / CNMT	Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board	For techs who also perform nuclear medicine procedures

ARRT Certification Requirements

Requirement	Details
Education	Graduate of JRCERT-accredited radiography program (typically 2-year associate or 4-year bachelor's)
Ethics	Must meet ARRT Standards of Ethics; background check including criminal history and regulatory actions
Examination	200-question national exam covering radiation protection, equipment operation, image production, patient care, and procedures
Renewal	Annual renewal; 24 CE credits every 2-year biennium
Continuing Qualification Requirements (CQR)	Structured education every 10 years to ensure ongoing competency
Discipline	ARRT can revoke or suspend for ethics violations, substance abuse, criminal convictions

State Licensing — Key Facts

Category	States
States requiring ARRT + state license	California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, and ~35 others
States accepting ARRT as sole credential	~10 states use ARRT certification in lieu of separate state exam
States with NO licensing requirement	Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, Idaho, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Virginia, Wyoming
States with limited-scope operator permits	~30 states allow LXMOs for specific exams (chest, extremities) under physician supervision

Even in states without licensing requirements, CMS (Medicare) requires that all personnel operating portable X-ray equipment be qualified under applicable federal and state laws. "No state license required" does NOT mean "anyone can operate the machine."

Mobile X-Ray Provider Requirements (CMS Conditions of Participation)

Federal Requirements for Portable X-Ray Suppliers

CMS Conditions for Coverage (42 CFR §486) set specific requirements for portable X-ray suppliers who bill Medicare. Even non-Medicare work follows these standards as the industry baseline.

Required Compliance Items

Requirement	Details
Physician supervision	A qualified physician must oversee the portable X-ray operation
Personnel qualifications	Techs must meet state requirements OR hold ARRT certification
Equipment standards	FDA-registered equipment meeting 21 CFR §1020.31 radiation safety standards
Radiation safety program	Written safety manual, ALARA protocols, dosimetry monitoring for all techs
Quality assurance	Regular equipment calibration and image quality testing
Order requirements	Each exam must have a valid, signed physician order with clinical indication
Records retention	All exam records retained per state and federal requirements (typically 5-7 years)
Insurance	Professional liability (malpractice) and general liability coverage

CMS Enrollment

Any mobile X-ray supplier billing Medicare must be enrolled as a Specialty 63 (Portable X-ray Supplier) with CMS. Ask for the provider's Medicare supplier number — this is a baseline legitimacy check.

How to Verify Credentials

Step-by-step verification process

Request the technologist's ARRT certification number and current registration status.

Verify through ARRT's online verification portal (arrt.org). Search by name or ARRT ID to confirm active registration, discipline, and certification category (R.T.(R) for radiography).

Check state licensing. In licensing states, verify through the state's radiation control program or health department (e.g., California: CDPH Radiologic Health Branch; Texas: DSHS; New York: DOH).

Verify the provider company's CMS enrollment as a Specialty 63 portable X-ray supplier. Request their Medicare supplier number and NPI.

Request proof of liability insurance — both professional liability (malpractice) and general liability. Minimum coverage: \$1M per occurrence / \$3M aggregate.

Ask to see the company's radiation safety manual and most recent equipment calibration records.

ARRT verification is free and instant online. There is no reason to skip this step. If a technologist claims ARRT certification but cannot be verified, do not allow them to image patients at your facility.

10 Red Flags of an Unqualified Mobile X-Ray Provider

1 **No ARRT certification or state license.**

The technologist cannot produce an ARRT number or state license number. This is the most basic credential — no exceptions.

2 **No CMS supplier enrollment.**

The company bills Medicare but cannot provide a valid Specialty 63 supplier number. This is a compliance risk that can expose your facility.

3 **No radiation safety program.**

Cannot produce a written radiation safety manual, doesn't use dosimetry badges, or cannot show equipment calibration records.

4 **Outdated or uncalibrated equipment.**

Equipment hasn't been calibrated within the past year, or the provider uses analog film systems instead of digital (CR/DR) technology.

5 **No physician supervision documentation.**

Cannot identify the supervising physician or produce evidence of physician oversight of the portable X-ray operation.

6 **Refuses to upload images to your PACS.**

Insists on delivering images only via CD or USB. Modern mobile X-ray providers should integrate with your facility's PACS/EMR.

7 **No liability insurance or won't provide certificates.**

Refuses to show proof of professional liability and general liability coverage. Your facility is exposed if an incident occurs.

8 **Inconsistent or unexplained pricing.**

Lump-sum billing that doesn't itemize transportation, technical, and professional components. Often a sign of overbilling or unbundling violations.

9**High repeat/retake rates.**

Consistently returning for retakes suggests poor technique, inadequate training, or malfunctioning equipment. Industry standard retake rate is under 5%.

10**No background checks on personnel.**

Cannot confirm that technologists have undergone criminal background checks and drug screening. These individuals enter patient rooms in your facility.

When Credentials Matter Most (Decision Matrix)

Two-column layout

REQUIRE FULL ARRT + STATE LICENSE + CMS ENROLLMENT WHEN

- Medicare/Medicaid patients (mandatory for reimbursement)
- Skilled nursing facilities under CMS survey oversight
- Hospital overflow or ED surge imaging
- Home health patients with complex medical conditions
- Any patient population where images may be used for surgical planning
- Facilities subject to Joint Commission or state health department surveys
- Correctional facilities with government contracts

CREDENTIALS STILL IMPORTANT BUT ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY WHEN

- Private-pay assisted living facilities in non-licensing states
- Employer-sponsored occupational health screenings (pre-employment chest X-rays)
- Even here: verify ARRT certification, liability insurance, and equipment calibration

Cost comparison

Factor	Fully Credentialed Provider	Low-Cost / Uncredentialed
Per-visit rate	\$100-\$250	\$75-\$150
ARRT certified techs	Yes	May not be
Medicare billable	Yes	Likely not
Liability insurance	\$1M/\$3M standard	May be minimal or none
Equipment calibration	Annual + documented	Unknown
PACS integration	Standard	Unlikely
Regulatory risk to your facility	Low	High

Factor	Fully Credentialed Provider	Low-Cost / Uncredentialed
CMS survey exposure	None	Significant

Sample Vetting Questionnaire

Mobile X-Ray Provider Vetting Questionnaire — Send This Before Contracting

Copy and send these questions to any mobile X-ray provider you're considering. Their answers will tell you everything you need to know.

1. Credentials & Licensing

- Are all technologists ARRT-certified (R.T.(R))?. Provide ARRT registration numbers.
- Are all technologists licensed in our state? Provide state license numbers.
- Is your company enrolled as a CMS Specialty 63 portable X-ray supplier? Provide Medicare supplier number.
- What is your company NPI number?

2. Equipment & Technology

- What portable X-ray equipment do you use? (Brand, model, digital CR or DR?)
- When was each unit last calibrated? Provide calibration certificates.
- Do you use PACS-compatible DICOM imaging? Can you upload directly to our PACS?
- What is your standard image turnaround time for radiologist reads?

3. Radiation Safety & Compliance

- Do you have a written radiation safety program? Can we review it?
- Do all techs wear dosimetry badges with regular monitoring?
- What is your ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Achievable) protocol?
- What is your repeat/retake rate over the past 12 months?

4. Insurance & Risk

- What are your professional liability (malpractice) coverage limits?
- What are your general liability coverage limits?
- Do you carry workers' compensation insurance?
- Will you add our facility as an additional insured on your policy?

5. Operations & Service

- What are your standard service hours? What is your after-hours/STAT response time?

- What is your cancellation policy and fee structure?
- Do you provide itemized invoices breaking out TC, PC, and transportation separately?
- What is your process for handling equipment failure during a visit?

6. Personnel

- Do all technologists undergo criminal background checks and drug screening?
- What is your technologist training and competency assessment program?
- What is your average technologist tenure? Annual turnover rate?
- Can you provide 2-3 facility references?

BedsideImaging

BedsideImaging

The most comprehensive directory of mobile X-ray technologists in the United States

Find providers at bedsideimaging.com