LEARN · LESSON 2 · ABOUT 8 MINUTES

RBT supervision: the five percent, worked out.

Esta lección en español

Every Registered Behavior Technician must be supervised for a share of the hours they work with clients each month. The share is small. The arithmetic is simple. The failure is almost always the same: nobody added it up until the month was over.

What is the rule?

A **Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)** is the person who delivers the treatment plan a BCBA wrote. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) requires that an RBT be supervised for **at least 5% of the hours they spend providing behavior-analytic services each calendar month.** That supervision must include **at least two face-to-face, real-time contacts** in the month, and **at least one of them must be individual**: one supervisor, one RBT.

Face-to-face can be in the room or on live video. Recorded video does not count. A group contact counts as one contact, but it does not satisfy the individual one.

Why it matters

Supervision is where the RBT's skills actually improve, so the client gets a better technician. It is also a certification condition: an RBT who goes unsupervised can lose the credential, and the supervising BCBA answers for it. Payers ask for the supervision log during audits, and a month with 3.5 hours where 4.2 were required is a finding, however excellent the 3.5 were.

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How to do it yourself, today, free

1. Count the service hours, not the paid hours

The 5% applies to hours spent **providing behavior-analytic services**. Session time with clients counts. Drive time between homes does not. A staff meeting does not. If the RBT is salaried, do not use the paycheck hours; go back to the session notes and add the minutes.

2. Take five percent

Multiply the service hours by 0.05. That is the minimum supervision for the month, in hours. Turn the decimal into minutes so it is real: 0.2 hours is 12 minutes.

3. Check the two contacts

Count the face-to-face contacts. Two or more? At least one of them individual? If the minutes are there but the contacts are not, the month still fails.

4. Check it in the third week, not the fifth

Run the three steps around the 20th, while there is still time to schedule what is missing. A shortfall discovered on the 31st is a shortfall.

Round up, never down. 4.2 hours means 4 hours and 12 minutes at the least. Booking "about four hours" is booking a finding.

A worked example

MADE-UP RBT M. ALVAREZ, MADE-UP MONTH. NO REAL PERSON APPEARS ON THIS SITE.

M. Alvarez's September session notes add up to 84 hours with clients. She had one two-hour group supervision with two other RBTs on the 9th, and one 90-minute individual observation with her BCBA on the 16th.

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Step	Arithmetic	Result
Service hours	From the notes, not the paycheck	84 hours
Five percent	84 × 0.05 = 4.2 hours = 4 h 12 min	**Minimum 4 h 12 min**
Supervision received	2 h group + 1 h 30 min individual	3 h 30 min
Shortfall	4 h 12 min − 3 h 30 min	**42 minutes short**
Contacts	Two contacts, one individual	Met

On the 20th, this is one 45-minute observation to book before the 30th. On the 1st of October, it is a month that cannot be fixed.

Something to keep: the monthly supervision log

Date	Minutes	Individual or group	Client present	Supervisor

Service hours this month _____ × 0.05 = _____ hours minimum = _____ h _____ min.

Supervision received _____ h _____ min. Contacts _____ (need 2). Individual contacts _____ (need 1).

Checked on the _____ (aim for the 20th). Signed, RBT _____

Supervisor _____

Try it

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MADE-UP RBT J. PARK. OCTOBER SERVICE HOURS FROM THE NOTES: 62. SUPERVISION RECEIVED: ONE INDIVIDUAL OBSERVATION OF 1 HOUR 40 MINUTES ON THE 8TH, AND ONE GROUP MEETING OF 1 HOUR 20 MINUTES ON THE 22ND.

Is the month met? If not, by how much, and what would fix it?

– Show the answer

Minimum: 62 × 0.05 = 3.1 hours = 3 hours 6 minutes.

Received: 1 h 40 min + 1 h 20 min = 3 hours exactly. **Six minutes short.** Two contacts, one individual, so the contact rule is met.

Why it still fails: the rule is a minimum, and three hours is under it. Six minutes is a real shortfall, not a rounding error. The fix is one more face-to-face contact before the 31st, and the lesson is to check on the 20th.

Where DRAGEN helps

DRAGENhours does this arithmetic from the session notes for every RBT, every month, and lists who is short and by how many minutes while there is still time to fix it. It is arithmetic, not AI, and it runs on your own computer. The BCBA still reads the list and signs the forms.

Source: the BACB RBT Handbook, supervision requirements, as in force in September 2026. The BACB revises its handbooks; always read the version in force for the month you are checking. Every example on this page is invented. Written by Chase Alexander Hought, M.S., BCBA.

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