



National Registry of  
Emergency Medical Technicians™  
THE NATION'S EMS CERTIFICATION



# NREMT CANDIDATE INFORMATION

PREPARE FOR SUCCESS ON THE  
NREMT COGNITIVE EXAMS

## CONGRATULATIONS

You are about to embark on an exciting and important role in serving your community as an EMS professional. Your certification by the NREMT means that you have met the necessary competencies to practice as an out-of-hospital provider. Your certification is something you should take pride in.

National EMS Certification is based upon successful completion of cognitive (knowledge-based) and psychomotor evaluations. This brochure summarizes critical information regarding the cognitive exam.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE EXAM

The NREMT certification process provides a valid, uniform method to assess the knowledge and skills required for competent practice of EMS professionals throughout their careers.

There are several important concepts to keep in mind:

### **The NREMT, NREMT, and NRP cognitive exams are computer adaptive tests (CAT).**

- CAT is state-of-the-art in high stakes certification testing. It is the most accurate and fair evaluation technology available. CAT is different from most other forms of testing in that each exam adapts to each candidate's ability level. Depending on how a question is answered, the computer determines the difficulty of the next question. Consequently, each candidate's testing experience will be unique.
- There is no minimum percentage of correct questions needed to pass a CAT exam. Exam scores are based on the characteristics of the questions you get right and wrong, not how many you get right.
- Since questions get more difficult as you answer them correctly, you will most likely perceive the exam as very challenging. However, a difficult question for you may be easy for someone else.

- Your exam result is measured against a predetermined competency level.
- Your performance on the previous question determines what question you will receive next. This means you are not able to go back and answer questions or change your answers.
- There is a minimum and maximum number of questions for each exam (EMR 90 – 110, EMT 70 – 120, & Paramedic 80 – 150) however your exam may be a different length than other candidate's. It is important to know that the length of the exam is not an indicator of whether you pass or fail. Your exam will end when:
  1. Your ability has been accurately determined
  2. You have received the maximum number of items
  3. You have run out of time

### **The NRAEMT and Intermediate/99 cognitive exams are linear computer based tests (CBT).**

- A linear CBT exam is a computer version of a paper-and-pencil exam.
- All candidates must complete the maximum number of questions within the allotted time frame (AEMT – 135 & I/99 – 150).
- Unlike CAT exams, candidates who take a linear exam can skip questions, mark questions for review, and go back and change their answers provided time has not expired. There is no penalty for guessing. Any questions that are left blank are scored as incorrect.

### **Helpful Examination Information:**

- All exam questions evaluate your ability to apply knowledge from your course and textbook to the types of tasks and situations that are expected of entry-level EMS professionals. Questions that are answered incorrectly on the exam mean you could choose the wrong assessment or treatment in the field. There are some general concepts to remember about the cognitive exam:
  1. There is only one best answer. The items are written to determine how you would respond when providing patient care. Incorrect responses may be misunderstandings, common mistakes or inefficient approaches that represent less-than-optimal care.

# NREMT CANDIDATE INFORMATION

## Helpful Examination Information continued...

- Examination content reflects the *National EMS Educational Standards*, not local or state protocols. The NREMT avoids questions on specific details that have regional differences. Some topics in EMS are controversial, and experts disagree on the single best approach to some situations. The NREMT avoids testing over controversial areas.
- Due to the CAT exam format, your performance on the previous question determines what question you will receive next. This means you will not be able to go back and answer questions or change your answers. You will be most successful with CAT if you approach each question individually. Do your best on each question and then move on to the next question.
- NREMT exams focus on what providers should do in the field. The exam is not taken from any single textbook or source. The exams are intended to reflect the current accepted practices of EMS. Fortunately, most textbooks are up-to-date and written to a similar standard; however, no single source thoroughly prepares you for the exam. You are encouraged to consult multiple references, especially in areas in which you are having difficulty.

Exam question resources include: the current American Heart Association's *Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care*, ([www.americanheart.org/cpr](http://www.americanheart.org/cpr)), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's *National EMS Education Standards* (<http://ems.gov/EducationStandards.htm>), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Guidelines for the Field Triage of Injured Patients* (<http://www.cdc.gov/fieldtriage/>). Another resource is the NREMT Practice Analysis, which is conducted every five years to determine the actual patient care EMS providers provide.

You do not need to be an experienced computer user or be able to type to take the computer based exam. The computer testing system has been designed so that it can be used by those with even minimal computer experience and typing skills. A tutorial is available to each candidate at the testing center prior to taking the examination.

You may want to visit the NREMT section of the Pearson VUE website for additional helpful information to prepare you for your exam.

<http://www.pearsonvue.com/nremt/>

## ITEM EXAMPLES

To help you understand what to expect from exam questions, we have provided examples of the types of questions entry level providers are expected to answer on the exam. These three questions range in difficulty but are all either at the passing standard or above the passing standard.

1. Your patient fell while skateboarding and has a painful, swollen, deformed lower arm. You are unable to palpate the radial pulse. You should immediately
  - a. apply cold packs.
  - \*b. align the arm with gentle traction.**
  - c. splint the arm in the position found.
  - d. ask the patient to try moving the arm.
2. Your patient is a disoriented 86 year old male who has a history of terminal brain cancer. He fell out of bed and complains of severe right hip pain. His wife called 9-1-1 for assistance in putting him back to bed. She tells you that he has DNR orders and that she does not want him transported. You should initially
  - a. ask to see the DNR orders.
  - \*b. explain why he needs to be transported.**
  - c. have her sign a refusal form.
  - d. call for law enforcement back-up.
3. You are called to a scene where law enforcement officers have detained a man who they thought was drunk. They called you because he has a history of diabetes. You administer oral glucose and within a minute the patient becomes unresponsive. You should
  - a. remain at the scene under law enforcement authority and request ALS back-up.
  - b. leave the glucose in place, complete a primary survey and transport.
  - c. open his airway with an oropharyngeal airway and ventilate him.
  - \*d. suction his mouth and begin transport.**

## PEARSON VUE IS THE NREMT TEST PROVIDER

The NREMT selected Pearson VUE as its exclusive test provider. Pearson VUE is the world's largest assessment and testing business. They have an extensive network of testing centers and extensive experience in delivering high-stakes computer based tests. You will take the exam at one of two types of Pearson VUE testing centers:

1. Pearson Professional Centers (PPCs) are testing centers that are owned and operated by Pearson. They are located in most urban areas.
2. Pearson VUE Testing Centers (PVTs) have a contractual relationship with Pearson VUE and are typically found in smaller towns and rural areas. PVTs are used to increase the access to EMS testing in rural areas.

In some cases, the closest Pearson VUE test center is located in another state. Candidates can test at any authorized Pearson VUE test center in the United States at a convenient date, time and location. The exam delivery process is the same regardless of where it is taken.

## EXAM SECURITY

The NREMT takes exam security issues very seriously. Stringent security policies and procedures are in place to protect the content of exams and maintain the security of all data concerning the candidate and the testing session. Some of the security measures are designed to ensure that the candidate taking the exam is the person he or she claims to be and that everybody takes the exam in a uniform and unaided fashion.

As part of the exam experience, you may be required to:

- show identification as described in your ATT (Authorization to Test) letter
- have your identity verified by a digital security device (infrared palm reader)
- sign in electronically

- have your picture taken
- store all belongings in a locker prior to entry into the exam room
- be recorded (by audio and/or video) during the exam

Your ATT letter contains important information about what to bring and not bring to the exam site. Be sure to read your ATT letter carefully for specific information about what to expect to ensure that you are not turned away on the day of your exam.

## PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

Here are a few simple suggestions that will help you to perform to the best of your ability on the examination.

- Study your textbook thoroughly and consider using the accompanying workbooks to help you master the material.
- Thoroughly review the current American Heart Association's *Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care*. You will be tested on this material at the level of the exam you are taking.
- The National Registry does not recommend a particular study guide but recognizes that they can be useful. Study guides may help you identify your weaknesses, but should be used carefully. Some study guides have many easy questions leading some candidates to believe that they are prepared for the exam when more study is warranted. If you choose to use a study guide, we suggest that you do so a few weeks before your actual exam. You can obtain these from your local bookstore or library. Use the score to identify your areas of strength and weakness. Re-read and study your notes and materials for the areas you did not do well in.
- The National Registry is not able to determine specific deficiencies that you may have. Please review the information in this brochure with your program director or instructor. If they have further questions, please have them contact the Examinations Department.

## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE EXAM

- Do not try to study the night before the exam. If you come across a topic you do not think you know well, there will not be enough time to study. This will only create a stressful situation.
- Get a good night's sleep.

## THE DAY OF THE EXAM

- Eat a well-balanced meal.
- Arrive at the test center at least 30 minutes before the scheduled testing time. The identification and examination preparation process takes time. You may also need this time to review the tutorial on taking a computer based test. Arriving early will reduce stress.
- Be sure to have the proper identification as outlined in your confirmation materials before you head to the test center.
- You will not be able to take the exam if you do not have the proper forms of ID.
- Relax, thorough preparation and confidence are the best ways to reduce test anxiety.

## DURING THE EXAM

- Take your time and read each question carefully. The exam is constructed so most people will have plenty of time to finish. Most successful candidates spend about 30 – 60 seconds per item reading each question carefully and thinking it through.
- Less than 1% of the candidates are unable to finish the exam. Your risk of misreading a question is far greater than your risk of running out of time.
- Don't get frustrated. Because of the adaptive nature of the exam, everyone will think their exam is difficult. The CAT algorithm is adjusting the exam to your maximum ability level, so you may feel that all the items are difficult. Focus on one question at a time, do your best on that question and move on.

## AFTER THE EXAM

- Examination results are not released at the test center or over the telephone.
- Your examination results will be posted to your NREMT account usually within 2 business days following the completion of the examination provided you have met all other requirements of registration.
- Log into your account and click on 'Check Initial Entry Application Status' to view your exam results.

If you do not pass your exam, you may apply to retest 15 days after your last exam. This waiting period works to your advantage by providing you with time to study prior to retesting.

We hope the information contained in this booklet is beneficial in helping you understand and prepare for the cognitive portion of your NREMT exam. We look forward to having you join the rest of the nation's EMS professionals who are dedicated to protecting and serving the public. Thank you for your desire to become part of the EMS community. We wish you success in earning your national EMS certification.

## NCCA ACCREDITATION

As a commitment to excellence, NREMT exams are backed by accreditation from The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), which is the accreditation arm of Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). The NCCA is recognized as an authority on accreditation standards for professional certification organizations and programs. NCCA accreditation means that the standards set by the NREMT have been reviewed by the NCCA and deemed credible for ensuring the health, welfare and safety of the public. In addition, this assures that you are getting a fair and accurate assessment of your competency. For more information on accreditation visit NCCA's website at <http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/ncca>.

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