



## NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION

### CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB)

*Please visit your examination provider's website OR [www.nictesting.org](http://www.nictesting.org) for the most current bulletin prior to testing.*

---

**The National Nail Technology Theory Examination is the licensure examination for Nail Technicians, which is developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC). This bulletin contains IMPORTANT INFORMATION regarding the examination, including content outline covered by the theory examination, sample questions and answers, and references. The time allowed for the Nail Technology Theory Examination is 90 minutes.**

For each NIC National Theory Examination, there are TWO (2) parts to every Candidate Information Bulletin (CIB) stored as separate documents:

- **Examination Content and Important Instructions** – This provides information about the scope of content covered in the Theory examination and information and guidelines related to administration of the Theory examination.
- **References** – This provides a list of references used to develop and support the content covered in the examination. The references are always the same for the Theory and Practical examinations.

**BE CERTAIN TO DOWNLOAD AND/OR PRINT AND REVIEW BOTH DOCUMENTS THAT MAKE UP THE NIC EXAMINATION CIB.**

**PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY!**

### IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

---

- Do not leave the examination area without permission. Permission must be obtained to leave the examination area for any reason, including restroom usage or at the completion of the examination. Picture ID is required for re-entry into the examination.
  - With the exception of verbal instructions, the proctors and examination administration personnel are not allowed to communicate with candidates.
  - If you have an emergency situation please notify the proctor.
  - The following provides examples of materials and actions that are prohibited during the examination administration:
    - Possession of cellular phones, watches (of any kind), pagers, tablets, computers, projectors, cameras, or any other electronic or recording devices, printed materials, or handwritten notes.
    - Communicating to other candidates or any examiner.
    - Exhibiting disruptive behavior.
- *The above referenced items or actions are not an exhaustive list. Failure to comply with any of these conditions or exhibiting ANY behavior that suggests an effort to cheat will result in your immediate dismissal from the examination and your actions reported to the proper authorities.*

## NAIL TECHNOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Nail Technology Theory Examination. The percentages represent the percentage of items from each domain. The examination is comprised of 110 items, of which 100 items are weighted and contribute to the candidate's final score.

### 1A: Scientific Concepts - Infection Control and Safety Practices (15%)

1. Identify how disease and infection are caused and transmitted
2. Recognize and utilize infection control principles
  - a. Levels of infection control
  - b. Process of infection control (e.g., dispensing products, disposal of materials)
3. Apply blood exposure procedures
4. Identify adverse reactions to products or services
5. Utilize Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
6. Identify ways to prevent work injuries (e.g., ventilation, ergonomics)

### 1B: Scientific Concepts - Anatomy and Physiology (15%)

1. Identify functions, parts, and structure of the:
  - a. nails
  - b. skin
2. Recognize disorders and diseases of the:
  - a. nails
  - b. skin
3. Recognize signs and symptoms of disorders, diseases, and conditions of the:
  - a. nails
  - b. skin
4. Identify bones of the:
  - a. arms and hands
  - b. legs and feet
5. Identify muscles and recognize their functions in the:
  - a. arms and hands
  - b. legs and feet

### 1C: Scientific Concepts - Chemistry of Nail Products (10%)

1. Explain purpose and effects of product ingredients
2. Recognize interaction between chemicals
3. Recognize physical changes
4. Recognize chemical reactions

### 2A: Nail Technology Procedures - Client Consultation and Documentation (5%)

1. Identify elements of a client consultation and documentation
2. Evaluate condition of client's nails and skin
3. Recognize conditions that would prohibit service (contraindications)
4. Determine services or products

2B: Nail Technology Procedures - Nail Service Tools (8%)

1. Identify purpose and function of:
  - a. Nail equipment (e.g., electric file, pedicure basin)
  - b. Nail implements (e.g., nail clippers, cuticle pusher)
  - c. Nail supplies and materials (e.g., cotton, buffer)
  - d. Nail products (e.g., polish, lotion)
2. Follow practices for safe use of tools

2C: Nail Technology Procedures - Nail Service Preparation (5%)

1. Perform set-up of work station service area
2. Perform client and practitioner sanitation

2D: Nail Technology Procedures - Manicure and Pedicure Services (18%)

1. Perform procedures for basic manicure and/or pedicure service
  - a. Trim and shape nails
  - b. Soak
  - c. Cuticle maintenance
  - d. Cleanse nails
  - e. Buff nails
  - f. Exfoliate
  - g. Perform basic massage
    1. Identify mechanics of massage movements
      - a. Effleurage
      - b. Petrissage
      - c. Friction
      - d. Tapotement
    2. Recognize effects of massage types
      - a. Effleurage
      - b. Petrissage
      - c. Friction
      - d. Tapotement
  - h. Completion of service
2. Recognize purpose and procedures for add-on services
  - a. Paraffin
  - b. Masks and essential oils
  - c. Gel polish
  - d. Thermal (e.g., stone, towel)

2E: Nail Technology Procedures - Perform Application Maintenance and Removal Procedures for Nail Enhancement Services (20%)

1. Nail tip
2. Acrylics
3. Light-cured gels
4. Powder dip

2F: Nail Technology Procedures - Perform Post-Service Procedures (4%)

## NAIL TECHNOLOGY SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC Nail Technology Theory Examination. Each question is followed by four answer options. Only one option is correct. Correct answers (keys) are listed following the sample questions.

1. Pumice stone is used in pedicuring as
  - a. an abrasive.
  - b. a bleach.
  - c. a lubricant.
  - d. an astringent.
2. What is the **FIRST** step in performing a manicure?
  - a. Shape the nails
  - b. Soften the cuticles
  - c. Clean under free edge
  - d. Remove old polish
3. Where should all manicuring cosmetic supplies be kept when not being used?
  - a. On a clean shelf
  - b. On the manicuring table
  - c. In a clean manicuring kit
  - d. In clean, closed containers
4. Which one of the following is a condition in which the cuticle splits around the nail?
  - a. Hangnails
  - b. Pterygium
  - c. Onychophagy
  - d. Onychorrhexis
5. Nerves and blood vessels are found in the nail
  - a. bed.
  - b. wall.
  - c. plate.
  - d. grooves.
6. An antiseptic is used in manicuring to
  - a. bleach the nails.
  - b. treat minor cuts.
  - c. smooth corrugated nails.
  - d. give the nails a high sheen.
7. After each use, manicuring implements should be
  - a. wiped with a towel.
  - b. wiped with a tissue.
  - c. cleansed and disinfected.
  - d. placed in dry storage.

8. For which one of the following are oil manicures recommended?
- a. Leuconychia
  - b. Split nails
  - c. Brittle nails
  - d. Prevention of infection
9. What is the actively growing part of the nail?
- a. Lunula
  - b. Matrix
  - c. Mantle
  - d. Free edge
10. What should be applied to a split in the nail before wrapping it?
- a. Top coat
  - b. Base coat
  - c. Adhesive glue
  - d. Nail hardener

|   |
|---|
| <b>KEY: 1: A, 2: D, 3: D, 4: A, 5: A, 6: B, 7: C, 8: C, 9: B, 10: C</b> |
|---|



## NATIONAL-INTERSTATE COUNCIL OF STATE BOARDS OF COSMETOLOGY (NIC) REFERENCES

This list provides the references used to develop and support the content covered in the NIC  
Theory and Practical examinations.

The references are always the same for the Theory and Practical examinations.

### **NAIL TECHNOLOGY**

#### **REFERENCES**

*Milady Standard Nail Technology 8<sup>th</sup> Edition + Foundations*

2020, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition

ISBN: 9780357446867

Contact: [Info@Milady.com](mailto:Info@Milady.com)

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

*Nails – Exhibits of Art*

2007, 2.1 Edition

CLIC International

2014

Pottsville, PA 17901

*Salon Fundamentals Nails*

2013, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 10<sup>th</sup> printing, June 2013

Pivot Point International, Inc.

[www.pivot-point.com](http://www.pivot-point.com)

Contact: [info@pivot-point.com](mailto:info@pivot-point.com)

847-886-0500, Ext. 7399

*Tammy Taylor Guide to Manicuring and Advanced Nail Technology – Edition III*

2022, Edition III

ISBN: 978-0-578-25977-2 (Instructor)

ISBN: 978-0-578-25978-9 (Student)

Tammy Taylor Nails, Inc. Established 1983

Santa Ana, CA 92705

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

Contact: [Education@tammytaylornails.com](mailto:Education@tammytaylornails.com)

800-938-2669 Ext. 323

*Today's Class: Nail Technician*

2016

Melior, Inc.

<https://www.todaysclass.com/index.html>

[877-224-0435](tel:877-224-0435)

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES**

*Nails – Exhibits of Art*

2007, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition

Author: Randy Rick

CLIC International

2014

Pottsville, PA 17901



## NATIONAL-INTERSTATE COUNCIL OF STATE BOARDS OF COSMETOLOGY (NIC) REFERENCES

This list provides the references used to develop and support the content covered in the NIC  
Theory and Practical examinations.

The references are always the same for the Theory and Practical examinations.

### **NAIL TECHNOLOGY**

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES (CONT.)**

*Salon Fundamentals Nails*

2011, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 7<sup>th</sup> Printing, October 2011

Pivot Point International, Inc.

[www.pivot-point.com](http://www.pivot-point.com)

Contact: info@pivot-point.com

847-886-0500, Ext. 7399



# National Nail Technology Written Practical Examination CIB

National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC)

Effective: September 01, 2025



## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB) . . . . .   | 3  |
| IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS . . . . .   | 4  |
| General . . . . .  | 4  |
| Standardized Administration . . . . .  | 4  |
| Prohibited Items . . . . .   | 5  |
| NAIL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CON-<br>TENT OUTLINE . . . . .               | 6  |
| Domain Details . . . . .   | 6  |
| NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMI-<br>NATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS . . . . .     | 9  |
| NATIONAL-INTERSTATE COUNCIL OF STATE BOARDS OF COS-<br>METOLOGY (NIC) REFERENCES . . . . . | 12 |
| Standard . . . . .   | 12 |



## CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB)

### EXAMINATION CONTENT AND IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

*Please visit your official examination provider website OR [www.nictesting.org](http://www.nictesting.org) for the most current bulletin prior to testing.*

The National Nail Technology Written Practical Examination is a licensure examination for Nail Technology, developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC).

This bulletin contains IMPORTANT INFORMATION regarding National Nail Technology Written Practical Examination content and administration for core services and additional sections and references.

This bulletin contains information applicable to the 2025 update of this exam.

The time allowed for this examination is 90 minutes.

*PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY.*

For each NIC National Written Practical Examination, there are multiple parts to every Candidate Information Bulletin (CIB):

- **Important Instructions and Examination Content Domain Sections** – This provides information and guidelines related to administra-

## ***IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS***

---

tion of the Written Practical examination and information about the scope of content covered in the Written Practical examination.

- **References** – This provides a list of references used to develop and support the content covered in NIC examinations. References will be the same for Theory, Practical, Written Practical, and Additional Sections for each exam.

***BE CERTAIN TO REVIEW ALL PARTS OF THIS NIC EXAMINATION  
CIB CAREFULLY!***

## **IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

### **General**

- Do not leave the examination area without permission. Permission must be obtained to leave the examination area for any reason, including restroom usage or at the completion of the examination. *Picture ID is required for re-entry into the examination.*
- All examinations are administered in a testing environment.

### **Standardized Administration**

Due to standardization of the NIC National Examinations, proctors and examiners are required to adhere to the following standards:

- With the exception of verbal instructions, proctors and examination administration personnel are NOT allowed to speak with candidates.
- If a candidate experiences an emergency situation, they may notify the proctor by raising their hand.

## *IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS*

---

### **Prohibited Items**

- The following provides examples of materials and actions that are prohibited in the examination room during the examination administration:
  - Possession of cellular phones, watches (of any kind), pagers, tablets, computers, projectors, cameras, or any other electronic or recording devices, printed materials, or handwritten notes.
  - Purses, bags, coats, hats, and any other personal items not directly needed to complete the examination, are not allowed.
- Communicating to other candidates or any examiner.
- Exhibiting disruptive behavior. The above referenced items or actions are not an exhaustive list.

Failure to comply with any of these conditions or exhibiting ANY behavior that suggests an effort to cheat will result in immediate dismissal from the examination and the candidates' actions reported to the proper authorities.

## **NAIL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE**

### **Domain Details**

The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Nail Technology Written Practical Examination. The percentages represent the percentage of items from each domain. The examination contains 55 items, of which 45 items are weighted and contribute to the candidate's final score. The Core Domain Sections are based on the national job analysis.

#### **I. WORK AREA AND CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (11%)**

##### **A. Elements include:**

1. Disinfects all work areas completely with product that is EPA-registered disinfectant that is bactericidal, virucidal, and fungicidal
2. Sanitizes hands
3. Universal products are labeled in English
4. Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in correct containers throughout section

#### **II. BASIC WATER MANICURE AND POLISH APPLICATION (15%)**

##### **A. Elements include:**

1. Manicure products are labeled in English
2. Implements and supplies are visibly clean
3. Performs a basic water manicure
4. Prepares nails and applies colored polish that is distinguishable from the nail plate.

*NAIL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT  
OUTLINE*

---

5. Final appearance of the manicure
6. Final appearance of polish application
7. Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in correct containers throughout section

III. WORK AREA AND NEW CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (11%)

A. Elements include:

1. Disinfects all work areas completely with product that is EPA-registered disinfectant that is bactericidal, virucidal, and fungicidal
2. Sanitizes hands
3. Universal products are labeled in English
4. Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in correct containers throughout section

IV. FULL-WELL NAIL TIP APPLICATION AND BLENDING (16%)

A. Elements include:

1. Nail tip application and blending products are labeled in English
2. Implements and supplies are visibly clean
3. Prepares for nail tip application
4. Selects full-well tip and attaches to nail plate of assigned finger
5. Trims, shapes, and blends nail tip
6. Final appearance of finished nail tip
7. Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in correct containers throughout section

V. SCULPTURED NAIL (16%)

A. Elements include:

1. Sculptured nail products are labeled in English
2. Implements and supplies are visibly clean
3. Prepares nail plate for sculptured nail

*NAIL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT  
OUTLINE*

---

4. Sculpts a nail to extend beyond the free edge of assigned finger
5. Shapes, contours and finishes sculptured nail
6. Final appearance of sculptured nail
7. Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in correct containers throughout section

VI. REMOVAL OF SCULPTURED NAIL (15%)

A. Elements include:

1. Sculptured nail removal products are labeled in English
2. Implements and supplies are visibly clean
3. Removes sculptured nail
4. Smooths and finishes the natural nail
5. Final assessment of sculptured nail removal
6. Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in correct containers throughout section

VII. BLOOD EXPOSURE PROCEDURE (16%)

A. Elements include:

1. Blood exposure supplies and materials are labeled in English
2. Removes materials from the first aid kit
3. Supplies and materials are visibly clean
4. Candidate wears gloves
5. Cleans injured area with antiseptic
6. Covers with dressing that is absorbent and secured
7. Disposes of all contaminated supplies

*NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION  
SAMPLE QUESTIONS*

---

**NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN PRACTICAL  
EXAMINATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

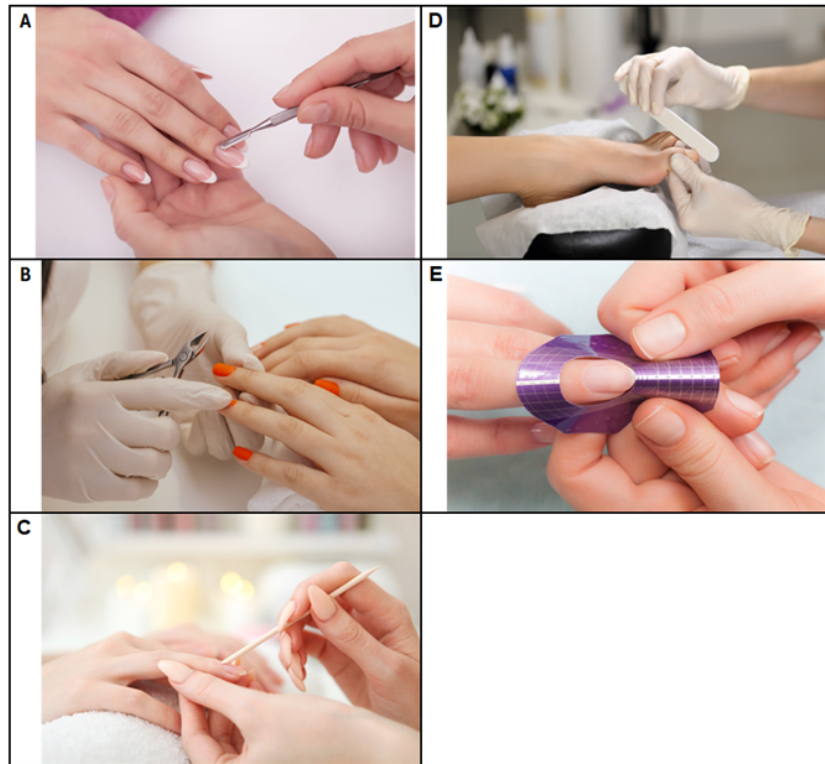
The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC National Nail Technology Written Practical Examination. Each question is followed by four answer options. Only one option is correct. Correct answers (keys) are listed along with the sample questions.

1. During a gel polish manicure, the client says they are having an allergic reaction, although they had not disclosed any allergies on the client consultation form. What should the practitioner do?
  - A. Discard the product
  - B. Diagnose the cause
  - C. Discontinue use of the product
  - D. Cleanse the nails with alcohol
2. What is the FIRST step in performing a manicure?
  - A. Shape the nails
  - B. Soften the cuticles
  - C. Clean under free edge
  - D. Remove old polish
3. A client appears with a yellow-green spot under an artificial nail. What is the cause of this problem?
  - A. Tinea
  - B. Corrugations
  - C. Carcinogen
  - D. Bacteria
4. Please select all images of multi-use items.

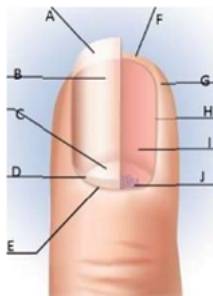


*NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION  
SAMPLE QUESTIONS*

---



5. Select the lunula in the image provided.



*NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY WRITTEN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION  
SAMPLE QUESTIONS*

---

Table 1: Answer Key

| Item | Key  |
|------|------|
| 1    | C    |
| 2    | D    |
| 3    | D    |
| 4    | A, B |
| 5    | C    |

## **NATIONAL-INTERSTATE COUNCIL OF STATE BOARDS OF COSMETOLOGY (NIC) REFERENCES**

This list provides the references used to develop and support the content covered in the NIC National Nail Technology examinations. References will be the same across exam types for each exam. Candidates are responsible for using these most updated versions of references, as these editions were used to reference test material.

### **Standard**

*Milady Standard Nail Technology 8th Edition + Foundations*

Copyrighted 2020

2020, 8th Edition

ISBN: 9780357446867

Contact: Info@Milady.com [www.Milady.com](http://www.Milady.com)

*Pivot Point Fundamentals: Nails, (101N - 107N); ©2022 Pivot Point International, Inc.*

Copyrighted 2022

1st Edition, 1st Printing, December 2022

ISBN 978-1-957642-06-2

Pivot Point International, Inc. <https://www.pivot-point.com/shop/>

Contact: [info@pivot-point.com](mailto:info@pivot-point.com); 847-886-0500

*Tammy Taylor Guide to Manicuring and Advanced Nail Technology – Edition III*

Copyrighted 2022

2022, Edition III

*NATIONAL-INTERSTATE COUNCIL OF STATE BOARDS OF  
COSMETOLOGY (NIC) REFERENCES*

---

ISBN: 978-0-578-25977-2 (Instructor) ISBN: 978-0-578-25978-9 (Student)

Tammy Taylor Nails, Inc. Established 1983 [www.tammytaylornails.com](http://www.tammytaylornails.com)

Contact: [Education@tammytaylornails.com](mailto:Education@tammytaylornails.com) ; 800-938-2669 Ext. 323

Copyright 2025 National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology,  
Inc.