



National Nail Technology Theory Examination
CIB

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

Effective Date: September 01, 2025 Revision Date: March 01, 2026

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CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB)

EXAMINATION CONTENT AND IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Please visit your official examination provider website OR www.nictesting.org for the most current bulletin prior to testing.

The National Nail Technology Theory 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 Theory Examination content and references.

The time allowed for this examination is 90 minutes.

PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY.

For each NIC National Theory 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 administration of the Theory examination and information about the scope of content covered in the 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.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

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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:

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- If a candidate experiences an emergency situation, they may notify the proctor by raising their hand.

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.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

– 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 THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Domain Details

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 contains 110 items, of which 100 items are weighted and contribute to the candidate's final score.

- I. Scientific Concepts - Infection Control and Safety Practices (15%)
 - A. Identify how disease and infection are caused and transmitted
 - B. Recognize and utilize infection control principles
 - 1. Levels of infection control
 - 2. Process of infection control (e.g., dispensing products, disposal of materials, use of single- or multi-use implements)
 - C. Apply blood exposure procedures
 - D. Identify adverse reactions to products or services
 - E. Recognize safe handling and storage of chemicals
 - F. Utilize Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
 - G. Identify ways to prevent work injuries (e.g., ventilation, ergonomics)
- II. Scientific Concepts - Anatomy and Physiology (15%)
 - A. Identify functions, parts, and structure of the:
 - 1. nails
 - 2. skin
 - B. Identify functions and structure (e.g., bones, muscles, and joints) of the:
 - 1. arms and hands
 - 2. legs and feet

NAIL TECHNOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

- C. Recognize signs, symptoms, and cause of disorders, diseases, and conditions of the:
 - 1. nails
 - 2. skin
- III. Scientific Concepts - Chemistry of Nail Products (10%)
 - A. Explain purpose and effects of product ingredients
 - B. Recognize interaction between chemicals
 - C. Recognize physical changes
 - D. Recognize chemical reactions
 - E. Identify common ingredients that may cause harm
- IV. Nail Technology Procedures- Pre-service process (5%)
 - A. Client consultation
 - 1. Identify elements of a client consultation and documentation
 - 2. Analyze condition of client's nails and skin
 - 3. Recognize conditions that would prohibit service (contraindications)
 - 4. Determine services or products
 - B. Work area preparation
 - 1. Perform set-up of work station service area
 - 2. Perform client and practitioner sanitation
- V. Nail Technology Procedures - Nail Service Tools (13%)
 - A. Identify purpose and function of:
 - 1. Nail equipment (e.g., electric file, pedicure basin)
 - 2. Nail implements (e.g., nail clippers, cuticle pusher)
 - 3. Nail supplies and materials (e.g., cotton, buffer)
 - 4. Nail products (e.g., polish, lotion)
 - B. Follow practices for safe use of tools, supplies, and equipment

NAIL TECHNOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

VI. Nail Technology Procedures - Manicure and Pedicure Services (18%)

A. Perform procedures for basic manicure and/or pedicure service

1. Trim and shape nails
2. Soak
3. Cuticle maintenance
4. Cleanse nails
5. Buff nails
6. Demonstrate knowledge of basic massage procedures
 - a. Knowledge of safe application of massage manipulation
 - b. Recognize mechanics and effects of massage types
 - i. Effleurage
 - ii. Petrissage
 - iii. Friction
 - iv. Tapotement
7. Remove massage product
8. Polish nails
9. Completion of service

B. Perform procedures for add-on services

1. Paraffin
2. Exfoliate
3. Thermal (e.g., stone, towel)

VII. Nail Technology Procedures - Perform Application Maintenance and Removal Procedures for Nail Enhancement Services (20%)

A. Nail tip

B. Acrylics

C. Soft, hard, hybrid gels

NAIL TECHNOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

D. Powder dip

VIII. Nail Technology Procedures - Perform Post-Service Procedures (4%)

A. After care and client education

B. Cleaning and disinfection

*NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION SAMPLE
QUESTIONS*

**NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY THEORY EXAMI-
NATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC National Nail Technology Theory 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. 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. Nerves and blood vessels are found in the nail
 - A. bed.
 - B. wall.
 - C. plate.
 - D. grooves.
5. 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.

NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY THEORY EXAMINATION SAMPLE
QUESTIONS

6. 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.
7. For which one of the following are oil manicures recommended?
 - A. Leuconychia
 - B. Split nails
 - C. Brittle nails
 - D. Prevention of infection
8. What is the actively growing part of the nail?
 - A. Lunula
 - B. Matrix
 - C. Mantle
 - D. Free edge
9. 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

Table 1: Answer Key

Item	Key
1	A
2	D
3	D
4	A
5	B
6	C
7	C
8	B
9	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.

Reference Date: March 01, 2026

Standard

Milady Standard Nail Technology 8th Edition + Foundations

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National Nail Technology Written Practical Examination CIB

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

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

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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**

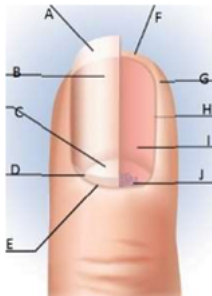
The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC National Nail Technology Written Practical Examination. Each question is followed by four answer options. Only one option is correct. Correct answers (keys) are listed along with the sample questions.

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

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