



National Hair Design 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 Hair Design Practical Examination is a licensure examination for Hair Design, developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC).

This bulletin contains IMPORTANT INFORMATION regarding National Hair Design Practical Examination content and administration for core services and additional sections and references.

PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY.

For each NIC 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 administration of the Practical examination and information about the scope of content covered in the core sections of the Practical examination.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- **Additional Services** – These provide information about additional sections offered by NIC for examination. Check with your State regulatory agency or examination administration vendor to determine which of these sections your State requires as part of their 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

- The NIC Practical examinations are designed to assess candidates' ability to perform tasks expected to be performed while working as a licensed professional. The tasks a candidate will be asked to perform are those that frequently occur on-the-job and that are important to safe and proficient performance. Though the tasks are performed in an artificial testing session, efforts are made to make the tasks seem realistic and to closely mimic actual conditions. Candidates are expected to conduct themselves as if they were performing these tasks in actual scenarios.
- 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.*

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- All examinations are administered in a testing environment.
- Candidates are evaluated at all times. Continue working until the entire section is complete or time has elapsed.

Supplies

Candidates are required to bring a supply kit for their own use.

- It is the candidate's responsibility to make certain they have a sufficient quantity of supplies that have been properly cleaned and disinfected and that implements are in proper working order.
- The kit will be used during the examination as dry storage and is considered part of the work area. The kit must be kept closed except when removing materials for a particular service.
- Candidates may remove items, supplies, etc., from the kit at any time, however *nothing* may be returned to the kit.
- EPA registered, disinfectant wipes that demonstrate bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal properties must be used. **DISINFECTANT AND AEROSOL SPRAYS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE TESTING ENVIRONMENT.**
- **All products must be labeled in English.** When an original manufacturer's label is required, there can be NO handwritten or any other type of labeling. Original manufacturers' labels must have English and may also include other languages. All non-manufacturer-created labels must be only in English. No labels indicating order of use when performing the service are allowed.
- Original manufacturer's labels are *required* for all disinfectants and hand sanitizers.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- Simulated products are not allowed for disinfectants and hand sanitizers.
- Candidates are to perform all tasks, utilizing products and supplies, as they were taught. There is however, a section titled “Suggested Examination Supplies” provided for each section of the examination. Suggested Supplies can be found after the “Content Domains” section of this bulletin.

Standardized Administration

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

- All practical examinations are administered in English. The verbal instructions will be read twice for each section of the examination.
- With the exception of verbal instructions or an emergency situation, the proctors and/or examination administration personnel are not allowed to communicate with other testing candidates.
- Candidates requesting information during the examination will be told one of the following statements:
 - “Do the best you can with what you have available.”
 - “Do as you were taught.”
- If a candidate experiences an emergency situation, they may notify the proctor by raising their hand.
- Candidates will be given time to set up the universal (also known as general) supplies they will use throughout the examination.
 - Each section of the examination has a maximum time allowance, with the exception of those specified as untimed sections.
 - Once a candidate has completed all tasks in the section, they need to step back to indicate they have finished. In the event that all candi-

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

dates complete a section before the time has elapsed, the examiners will proceed to the next section of the examination. When the timer goes off, all candidates must stop working and step back IMMEDIATELY.

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.

Safety

- During all phases of the examination, candidates must follow all appropriate public protection and infection control procedures and maintain a safe work area.
- Infection Control is defined as:

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- Hand washing with soap and water, or the use of hand sanitizers.
(Hand washing can be simulated with hand sanitizer).
 - Use personal protection equipment, for example, gloves and etc., to create a barrier between the practitioner and the client per service.
 - Regular cleaning, disinfection and sterilization of the environment including tools and surfaces, to reduce the spread of infections.
-
- In the event of a blood exposure incident, candidates will be expected to follow proper blood exposure procedures.
 - Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the examination.
 - Be sure to contact the examination provider or State to obtain the most current version of, and any addenda to blood exposure procedures.
 - If a candidate does not follow infection control procedures or allows the work area to become and remain unsafe, the result may be a failing score for the examination and could result in removal from the testing area.
 - If a candidate experiences any unsafe conditions, they need to address it immediately.

Blood Exposure Procedures

NIC has adopted the following OSHA standards for Blood Exposure [1910.1030 - Bloodborne pathogens. | Occupational Safety and Health Administration¹](#)

¹<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1030/>

How does the adopted OSHA standard impact the evaluation of Blood Exposure during testing?

The NIC practical examinations will use the OSHA standard in evaluating candidate performance during testing. The following is the order in which Blood

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Exposure will be expected to be performed during testing:

NIC practical exam's evaluation of these steps are as follows:

- Avoid all contact with blood or bodily fluids.
- Use an appropriate [antiseptic hand cleanser](#)² (e.g., hand sanitizer) before working on client.
- Put on disposable gloves.
- If an individual is bleeding, do not touch the blood. Ask the injured individual to use a cotton ball or tissue to stop the bleeding and to throw the used material directly into the trash.
- Bandage open cuts or broken skin to prevent contact with blood.
- Throw away disposable gloves immediately after using them.
- Place contaminated supplies in appropriate receptacles.
- Use an appropriate hand cleanser after working on a client; hand wash with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (hand washing can be simulated with hand sanitizer).

²OSHA 29 C.F.R. § 1910.1030(d)(2)(iv). Hand cleanser can be substituted for hand-washing when soap and water is unavailable.

NIC Model or Mannequin Requirements

Please refer to your state specific guidelines for model and mannequin requirements. If your state requires that you use a mannequin head(s) :

- Candidates who are required to use a mannequin head(s) are responsible for coming prepared for the examination.
- Mannequin heads that are premarked for services or presectioned are not allowed for any part of the practical examination.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- Mannequin heads **MUST** be a full-size head, “minikin” or “junior” mannequin heads are **NOT** permitted.
- Mannequin heads must be approved by the examination state/vendor prior to admittance into examination.

Special Attention

The following information is vital and specific to the NIC National Hair Design Practical Examination:

- Candidates will be evaluated on proper designation of materials that are disposed. Candidates are *required* to bring and use the following supplies for the appropriate disposal of materials:
 - Container labeled ‘To be disinfected’
 - Container labeled ‘Soiled linens’
 - Container labeled ‘Trash’
- It is specified that there is more than one client represented for the purpose of this examination. A new client is introduced and must be prepared for during the course of the examination (see Hair Design Practical Examination Content Domains Sections).
- The following sections are new to the Hair Design Practical Examination-
 - Predisposition Test and Strand Test with Simulated Product (Content Domain Section 6)
 - Highlighting with Foil, Virgin Application with Colored Simulated Product (Content Domain Section 7)
 - Blood Exposure Procedure (Content Domain Section 10)
- Candidates are expected to brace any time they are working around the eye and mouth areas.
- Candidates are not allowed to label products as single-use items.
- Use of single-use products may result in a failing score for the examination.

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Core Domain Sections

The scope of the National Hair Design Practical Examination includes 10 (ten) Core Domain Sections. The Core Domain Sections are based on the national job analysis.

1. WORK AREA AND CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (15 minutes)
2. THERMAL CURLING (10 minutes)
3. HAIRCUTTING (35 minutes)
4. WORK AREA AND NEW CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (15 minutes)
5. CHEMICAL WAVING (20 minutes)
6. PREDISPOSITION TEST AND STRAND TEST WITH SIMULATED PRODUCT (10 minutes)
7. HIGHLIGHTING WITH FOIL, VIRGIN APPLICATION WITH COLORED SIMULATED PRODUCT (15 minutes)
8. HAIR COLOR RETOUCH WITH COLORED SIMULATED PRODUCT (10 minutes)
9. VIRGIN HAIR RELAXER (NO BASE) APPLICATION WITH SIMULATED, COLORED PRODUCT (15 minutes)
10. BLOOD EXPOSURE PROCEDURE (10 minutes)

Domain Details

The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Hair Design Practical Examination.

Proctor–Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates: *“Please go to your assigned station and do nothing until instructed by the Proctor.”*

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

1. WORK AREA AND CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (15 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will prepare your work area for your client.

You will set up the universal supplies you will use throughout the examination at this time.

You will also set up the supplies for the following sections of the examination at this time:

- Thermal Curling.

- Haircutting, Additional verbal instruction specific to state guidelines Plug your curling iron in at this time.

(Read only if hot iron is used) You will prepare your client for services.

You will be expected to follow all client protection, safety and infection control procedures.

You will have 15 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 8 minutes remaining.

Do not demonstrate any procedures until the verbal instructions are given and you are instructed to begin.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**

- **1.1 Disinfects all work areas completely with product labeled with manufacturer’s label in English as EPA-registered disinfectant that is bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal**
- **1.2 Sanitizes hands with product with manufacturer’s label in English**
- **1.3 Sets up supplies for Client 1**
- **1.4 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

2. THERMAL CURLING (10 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform Thermal Curling.

You will form four curls on the top of the head.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **2.1 Thermal Curling supplies and implements are visibly clean**
- **2.2 Tests temperature of iron**
- **2.3 Subsections hair for thermal curling**
- **2.4 Demonstrates safe use of iron**
- **2.5 Final appearance of four curls**
- **2.6 Maintains thermal draping throughout section**
- **2.7 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

3. HAIRCUTTING (35 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform a Haircut.

You will complete a basic layered haircut using razor and shears.

You will cut at least 1 inch of hair throughout the haircut.

Do not remove your hair clippings from your work area until you are instructed individually by the examiner to do so.

You will have 35 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 18 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **3.1 Haircutting supplies and implements are visibly clean**
- **3.2 Subsections hair for Haircutting**
- **3.3 Demonstrates safe use of razor**
- **3.4 Demonstrates safe use of shears**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to each candidate individually:

“May I please use your comb to check the haircut?”

- **3.5 Final appearance of haircut**

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to each candidate individually after the final appearance of the haircut has been examined:

“Please clean up your hair at this time.

Upon completion, please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

- **3.6 Removes hair from work area**
- **3.7 Maintains drape throughout section**
- **3.8 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read when all examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed:

“All examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read when all examiners have indicated they have completed their assessment:

“Examiners please rotate at this time.”

4. WORK AREA AND NEW CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (15 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will breakdown your work area and dispose of supplies used in the previous sections of this examination.

You will prepare your work area for a NEW client.

You will set up the universal supplies for the remainder of the examination at this time.

You will also set up the supplies for the following sections of the examination at this time:

- Chemical Waving,*
- Predisposition Test and Strand Test,*
- Highlighting with Foil, Virgin Application,*
- Hair Color Retouch, and*
- Virgin Hair Relaxer Application.*

Additional verbal instruction specific to state guidelines Plug your wax pot in at this time.

(Review your state examination guidelines) You will prepare your client for chemical services.

You will be expected to follow all client protection, safety and infection control procedures.

You will have 15 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 8 minutes remaining.

Do not demonstrate any procedures until the verbal instructions are given and you are instructed to begin.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **4.1 Disinfects all work areas completely with product labeled with manufacturer’s label in English as EPA-registered disinfectant that is bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal**
- **4.2 Sanitizes hands with product with manufacturer’s label in English**

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

- **4.3 Sets up supplies for Client 2 labeled in English**
- **4.4 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

5. CHEMICAL WAVING (20 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform Chemical Waving.

You will wrap the entire center back section of the head, from crown to nape.

Once you are finished wrapping, please step back and do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.

You will have 20 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 10 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **5.1 Chemical waving supplies are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **5.2 Subsections hair for chemical waving**
- **5.3 Wraps hair**
- **5.4 Correct rod and band placement used throughout entire section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to each candidate individually:

“Please demonstrate saturation on the first three rods.”

- **5.5 Demonstrates saturation on the first three rods**

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to each candidate individually:

“Please demonstrate a test curl.”

- **5.6 Demonstrates a test curl**

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to candidate individually once the test curl has been examined:

“Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read when all examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed:

“All examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed.”

You will remove all rods from the head and create 5 sections for the remaining chemical services.

You will have 5 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 2 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **5.7 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **5.8 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

6. PREDISPOSITION TEST AND STRAND TEST WITH SIMULATED PRODUCT (10 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform the Predisposition Test and Strand Test for permanent hair color.

You will demonstrate the predisposition test behind the ear.

You will demonstrate the strand test process on any single subsection of hair.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **6.1 Predisposition test and strand test are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **6.2 Demonstrates predisposition test behind the ear**
- **6.3 Demonstrates strand test process**
- **6.4 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **6.5 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

7. HIGHLIGHTING WITH FOIL, VIRGIN APPLICATION WITH COLORED SIMULATED PRODUCT (15 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform Highlighting with Foil, Virgin Application.

You will place four foils on the top of the head from the front hairline to the apex.

You will apply simulated highlighting product from upper edge of foils to hair ends.

You will have 15 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 8 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **7.1 Highlighting supplies are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **7.2 Subsections hair for highlighting with foils**
- **7.3 Demonstrates foil placement**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

- **7.4 Final result of simulated product application**
- **7.5 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **7.6 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to candidate individually once the final appearance of the foil has been examined:

“Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates once examiners have completed assessment for this section:

“All examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed.”

8. HAIR COLOR RETOUCH WITH COLORED SIMULATED PRODUCT (10 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform a Hair Color Retouch Application.

The client has 1 inch of regrowth.

You will apply simulated hair color product to one section of the back of the head.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **8.1 Hair color retouch supplies are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **8.2 Subsections hair for hair color retouch**
- **8.3 Applies simulated hair color product**
- **8.4 Final result of hair color retouch application**
- **8.5 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **8.6 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

9. VIRGIN HAIR RELAXER (NO BASE) APPLICATION WITH SIMULATED, COLORED PRODUCT (15 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform a Virgin Hair Relaxer (No Base) Application.

You will apply simulated relaxer product on one back quadrant/section of hair.

You will have 15 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 8 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **9.1 Virgin hair relaxer supplies are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **9.2 Prepares for relaxer application**
- **9.3 Applies and smooths simulated relaxer product**
- **9.4 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **9.5 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

10. BLOOD EXPOSURE PROCEDURE (10 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will demonstrate the Blood Exposure Procedure.

You will imagine the following scenario: During a service, you have sustained a minor cut to your index finger.

The injury is such that you can continue with the service.

The injury has not yet contaminated your work area or the client.

You are expected to demonstrate the proper procedure for a blood exposure.

You are expected to follow all client protection, safety and infection control procedures.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

• Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:

- 10.1 Blood exposure supplies are labeled in English**
- 10.2 Removes materials from first aid kit**
- 10.3 Supplies and materials are visibly clean**
- ~~10.4 Cleans injured area with antiseptic~~**
- 10.5 Covers with dressing that is absorbent and secured**
- 10.6 Candidate wears glove or finger guard**
- 10.7 Disposes of all contaminated supplies**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

CANDIDATE CLEANUP AND FINAL SUMMARY Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates at the conclusion of the examination:

“All examiners have indicated they have completed their assessment.

Make sure that all kit supplies and disposable materials are taken with you.

This concludes the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology, National Hair Design Practical Examination.

Thank you for your participation.”

SUGGESTED EXAMINATION SUPPLIES

SUGGESTED EXAMINATION SUPPLIES

Universal Supplies will be defined as

- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant
- First aid kit
- Three containers labeled:
 - ‘Items to be Disinfected’
 - ‘Soiled Linens’
 - ‘Trash’

Suggested supply list:

- This is a list of suggested supplies for the practical examination.
- Candidates are responsible for bringing all needed materials, even if not included on this list.
- Tools must be in good working order.

Information related to labeling of supplies:

- ALL supplies must be labeled in English
- No other languages can be present unless an original manufacturer’s label is present in English
- All other created labels must be only English

Suggested Supplies

* Brushes and Bowls or Bottle Applicators

SUGGESTED EXAMINATION SUPPLIES

Suggested Supplies

- * Candidate Supply Kit to Serve as Dry Storage Area (Must be Closeable)
- * Chemical Wave Rods
- * Cloth Towels
- * Combs
- * Container Labeled “items to be Disinfected”
- * Container Labeled “soiled Linens”
- * Container Labeled “trash”
- * Cotton
- * End Papers
- * EPA-Registered Disinfectant Wipes with Manufacturer’s Label that Demonstrate Bactericidal, Fungicidal and Virucidal Properties Must be Used (Must be Actual Disinfectant Wipes)
- * First Aid Kit
- * Foils
- * Gloves
- * Hair Brushes
- * Hair Clips and/or Clamps
- * Hair Color-Colored Simulated Products
- * Hair Relaxer-Colored Simulated Product
- * Hand Sanitizer and Manufacturer’s Label (Must be Actual Hand Sanitizer)
- * Mannequin Heads and a Table Clamp or Tri-Pod (Pre-Markings or Pre-Sectioning on Mannequins is not Permitted)
- * Material for Testing Temperature of Iron
- * Neck Strips
- * Paper Towels
- * Protective Capes (Child Size Capes may be Used)
- * Protective Cream
- * Razor
- * Shears
- * Simulated Waving Lotion (Water)

SUGGESTED *EXAMINATION SUPPLIES*

Suggested Supplies

* Skin Cleanser

* Spatulas

* Spray Bottle with Water

* Thermal Curling Iron with Cord Unbound and/or Unaltered

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 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 exam material.

Reference Date:

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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 Hair Design Theory Examination is a licensure examination for Hair Design, developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC).

This bulletin contains IMPORTANT INFORMATION regarding National Hair Design 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

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.

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.

HAIR DESIGN THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Domain Details

The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Hair Design 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 (45%)

A. Infection control and safety practices

1. Identify cause/transmission of diseases and infections
2. Identify the purpose and differentiate among the categories of infection control
 - a. Sanitation
 - b. Disinfection
 - c. Sterilization
3. Recognize how cross-contamination occurs and how it can be prevented (e.g., single use and multi-use items)
4. Apply blood exposure procedures
5. Identify requirements of government agencies
 - a. OSHA
 - b. EPA

B. Human anatomy and physiology

1. Identify function and structure of the:
 - a. Hair and scalp
 - b. Skin
 - c. Nails

HAIR DESIGN THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

2. Recognize signs and symptoms of conditions, disorders, and diseases related to:
 - a. Hair and scalp
 - b. Skin
 - c. Nails
3. Identify muscles and joints and their functions related to:
 - a. Head and face
 - b. Arms and hands
 - c. Legs and feet
4. Identify functions of:
 - a. Nervous system
 - b. Circulatory system
- C. Basic chemistry used in Cosmetology
 1. Recognize purpose and effects of ingredients
 2. Recognize interactions between chemicals
 3. Recognize chemical reactions (e.g., overexposure, chemical burn)
 4. Recognize the values of the pH scale
- II. Hair Care and Services (55%)
 - A. Client consultation, analysis, and documentation
 1. Evaluate condition of client's hair and scalp
 2. Recognize conditions that would prohibit service (i.e., contraindications)
 3. Utilize preliminary tests (e.g., predisposition and strand tests)
 4. Recommend services or products based on client needs
 5. Establish/Maintain client records (e.g., service history, client card, medical history)
 - B. Hair care and services- Tools used in hair care services

HAIR DESIGN THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

1. Identify purpose, function, and infection control procedures of items
 - a. Equipment (e.g., chair, workstation)
 - b. Implements (e.g., razors, shears, combs/brushes)
 - c. Supplies and materials (e.g., towels, drapes, neck strips)
 - d. Electrical tools (e.g., irons, blow dryers, clippers)
2. Demonstrate safe practices
 - a. Tools/Implements
 - b. Ergonomics
- C. Hair care principles and procedures
 1. Demonstrate shampooing and conditioning
 2. Demonstrate scalp treatments and scalp massage
 3. Demonstrate draping (e.g., chemical, shampoo, cutting, styling)
 4. Recognize differences in hair care principles and procedures based on various hair types and textures
- D. Hair design principles and procedures
 1. Demonstrate hair cutting and shaping
 2. Demonstrate hair styling
 - a. Wet styling
 - b. Thermal styling
 - c. Natural hair styling (e.g., braiding)
 3. Apply, maintain, and remove hair enhancements
 - a. Wigs and hairpieces
 - b. Hair additions (e.g., taping, bonding, fusion, linking)
 4. Apply principles of balance and hair design (e.g., facial shape, physical structure)

HAIR DESIGN THEORY EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

5. Recognize differences in hair design principles and procedures based on various hair types and textures
- E. Chemical services principles and procedures
 1. Perform hair color services (e.g., virgin, retouch, lightening, foiling, balayage, color formulation, color correction)
 2. Perform chemical hair relaxer/restructurizer and curl reduction (e.g., hydroxide, thio, keratin) service
 3. Perform chemical waving/texturizing (e.g., alkaline, acid, non-thio) services
 4. Understand the chemical products used for the various hair texture types

*NATIONAL HAIR DESIGN THEORY EXAMINATION SAMPLE
QUESTIONS*

**NATIONAL HAIR DESIGN THEORY EXAMINATION
SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC National Hair Design 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. Which of the following will reinforce and reconstruct the hair shaft?
 - A. Scalp treatment
 - B. Balancing shampoo
 - C. Hair brushing
 - D. Protein conditioner
2. When damaged, which of the following will cause the hair growth to be inhibited?
 - A. Papilla
 - B. Shaft
 - C. Cuticle
 - D. Arrector pili
3. A condition caused by an infestation of head lice is
 - A. tinea barbae.
 - B. scabies.
 - C. pediculous capitalis.
 - D. tinea capitis.
4. Debris is removed from tools and implements using which of the following procedures?
 - A. Cleaning
 - B. Disinfection
 - C. Sterilization
 - D. Decontamination
5. What product can be used to equalize the porosity of the hair?
 - A. Shampoo
 - B. Fillers
 - C. Lightener
 - D. Developer

*NATIONAL HAIR DESIGN THEORY EXAMINATION SAMPLE
QUESTIONS*

Table 1: Answer Key

Item	Key
1	D
2	A
3	C
4	A
5	B

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

**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 Hair Design 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

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National Hair Design Practical 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 Hair Design Practical Examination is a licensure examination for Hair Design, developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC).

This bulletin contains IMPORTANT INFORMATION regarding National Hair Design Practical Examination content and administration for core services and additional sections and references.

PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY.

For each NIC 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 administration of the Practical examination and information about the scope of content covered in the core sections of the Practical examination.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- **Additional Services** – These provide information about additional sections offered by NIC for examination. Check with your State regulatory agency or examination administration vendor to determine which of these sections your State requires as part of their 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

- The NIC Practical examinations are designed to assess candidates' ability to perform tasks expected to be performed while working as a licensed professional. The tasks a candidate will be asked to perform are those that frequently occur on-the-job and that are important to safe and proficient performance. Though the tasks are performed in an artificial testing session, efforts are made to make the tasks seem realistic and to closely mimic actual conditions. Candidates are expected to conduct themselves as if they were performing these tasks in actual scenarios.
- 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.*

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- All examinations are administered in a testing environment.
- Candidates are evaluated at all times. Continue working until the entire section is complete or time has elapsed.

Supplies

Candidates are required to bring a supply kit for their own use.

- It is the candidate's responsibility to make certain they have a sufficient quantity of supplies that have been properly cleaned and disinfected and that implements are in proper working order.
- The kit will be used during the examination as dry storage and is considered part of the work area. The kit must be kept closed except when removing materials for a particular service.
- Candidates may remove items, supplies, etc., from the kit at any time, however *nothing* may be returned to the kit.
- EPA registered, disinfectant wipes that demonstrate bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal properties must be used. **DISINFECTANT AND AEROSOL SPRAYS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE TESTING ENVIRONMENT.**
- **All products must be labeled in English.** When an original manufacturer's label is required, there can be NO handwritten or any other type of labeling. Original manufacturers' labels must have English and may also include other languages. All non-manufacturer-created labels must be only in English. No labels indicating order of use when performing the service are allowed.
- Original manufacturer's labels are *required* for all disinfectants and hand sanitizers.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- Simulated products are not allowed for disinfectants and hand sanitizers.
- Candidates are to perform all tasks, utilizing products and supplies, as they were taught. There is however, a section titled “Suggested Examination Supplies” provided for each section of the examination. Suggested Supplies can be found after the “Content Domains” section of this bulletin.

Standardized Administration

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

- All practical examinations are administered in English. The verbal instructions will be read twice for each section of the examination.
- With the exception of verbal instructions or an emergency situation, the proctors and/or examination administration personnel are not allowed to communicate with other testing candidates.
- Candidates requesting information during the examination will be told one of the following statements:
 - “Do the best you can with what you have available.”
 - “Do as you were taught.”
- If a candidate experiences an emergency situation, they may notify the proctor by raising their hand.
- Candidates will be given time to set up the universal (also known as general) supplies they will use throughout the examination.
 - Each section of the examination has a maximum time allowance, with the exception of those specified as untimed sections.
 - Once a candidate has completed all tasks in the section, they need to step back to indicate they have finished. In the event that all candi-

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

dates complete a section before the time has elapsed, the examiners will proceed to the next section of the examination. When the timer goes off, all candidates must stop working and step back IMMEDIATELY.

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.

Safety

- During all phases of the examination, candidates must follow all appropriate public protection and infection control procedures and maintain a safe work area.
- Infection Control is defined as:

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- Hand washing with soap and water, or the use of hand sanitizers.
(Hand washing can be simulated with hand sanitizer).
 - Use personal protection equipment, for example, gloves and etc., to create a barrier between the practitioner and the client per service.
 - Regular cleaning, disinfection and sterilization of the environment including tools and surfaces, to reduce the spread of infections.
-
- In the event of a blood exposure incident, candidates will be expected to follow proper blood exposure procedures.
 - Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the examination.
 - Be sure to contact the examination provider or State to obtain the most current version of, and any addenda to blood exposure procedures.
 - If a candidate does not follow infection control procedures or allows the work area to become and remain unsafe, the result may be a failing score for the examination and could result in removal from the testing area.
 - If a candidate experiences any unsafe conditions, they need to address it immediately.

Blood Exposure Procedures

NIC has adopted the following OSHA standards for Blood Exposure [1910.1030 - Bloodborne pathogens. | Occupational Safety and Health Administration¹](#)

¹<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1030/>

How does the adopted OSHA standard impact the evaluation of Blood Exposure during testing?

The NIC practical examinations will use the OSHA standard in evaluating candidate performance during testing. The following is the order in which Blood

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Exposure will be expected to be performed during testing:

NIC practical exam's evaluation of these steps are as follows:

- Avoid all contact with blood or bodily fluids.
- Use an appropriate [antiseptic hand cleanser](#)² (e.g., hand sanitizer) before working on client.
- Put on disposable gloves.
- If an individual is bleeding, do not touch the blood. Ask the injured individual to use a cotton ball or tissue to stop the bleeding and to throw the used material directly into the trash.
- Bandage open cuts or broken skin to prevent contact with blood.
- Throw away disposable gloves immediately after using them.
- Place contaminated supplies in appropriate receptacles.
- Use an appropriate hand cleanser after working on a client; hand wash with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (hand washing can be simulated with hand sanitizer).

²OSHA 29 C.F.R. § 1910.1030(d)(2)(iv). Hand cleanser can be substituted for hand-washing when soap and water is unavailable.

NIC Model or Mannequin Requirements

Please refer to your state specific guidelines for model and mannequin requirements. If your state requires that you use a mannequin head(s) :

- Candidates who are required to use a mannequin head(s) are responsible for coming prepared for the examination.
- Mannequin heads that are premarked for services or presectioned are not allowed for any part of the practical examination.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

- Mannequin heads **MUST** be a full-size head, “minikin” or “junior” mannequin heads are **NOT** permitted.
- Mannequin heads must be approved by the examination state/vendor prior to admittance into examination.

Special Attention

The following information is vital and specific to the NIC National Hair Design Practical Examination:

- Candidates will be evaluated on proper designation of materials that are disposed. Candidates are *required* to bring and use the following supplies for the appropriate disposal of materials:
 - Container labeled ‘To be disinfected’
 - Container labeled ‘Soiled linens’
 - Container labeled ‘Trash’
- It is specified that there is more than one client represented for the purpose of this examination. A new client is introduced and must be prepared for during the course of the examination (see Hair Design Practical Examination Content Domains Sections).
- The following sections are new to the Hair Design Practical Examination-
 - Predisposition Test and Strand Test with Simulated Product (Content Domain Section 6)
 - Highlighting with Foil, Virgin Application with Colored Simulated Product (Content Domain Section 7)
 - Blood Exposure Procedure (Content Domain Section 10)
- Candidates are expected to brace any time they are working around the eye and mouth areas.
- Candidates are not allowed to label products as single-use items.
- Use of single-use products may result in a failing score for the examination.

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Core Domain Sections

The scope of the National Hair Design Practical Examination includes 10 (ten) Core Domain Sections. The Core Domain Sections are based on the national job analysis.

1. WORK AREA AND CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (15 minutes)
2. THERMAL CURLING (10 minutes)
3. HAIRCUTTING (35 minutes)
4. WORK AREA AND NEW CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (15 minutes)
5. CHEMICAL WAVING (20 minutes)
6. PREDISPOSITION TEST AND STRAND TEST WITH SIMULATED PRODUCT (10 minutes)
7. HIGHLIGHTING WITH FOIL, VIRGIN APPLICATION WITH COLORED SIMULATED PRODUCT (15 minutes)
8. HAIR COLOR RETOUCH WITH COLORED SIMULATED PRODUCT (10 minutes)
9. VIRGIN HAIR RELAXER (NO BASE) APPLICATION WITH SIMULATED, COLORED PRODUCT (15 minutes)
10. BLOOD EXPOSURE PROCEDURE (10 minutes)

Domain Details

The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Hair Design Practical Examination.

Proctor–Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates: *“Please go to your assigned station and do nothing until instructed by the Proctor.”*

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

1. WORK AREA AND CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (15 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will prepare your work area for your client.

You will set up the universal supplies you will use throughout the examination at this time.

You will also set up the supplies for the following sections of the examination at this time:

- Thermal Curling.

- Haircutting, Additional verbal instruction specific to state guidelines Plug your curling iron in at this time.

(Read only if hot iron is used) You will prepare your client for services.

You will be expected to follow all client protection, safety and infection control procedures.

You will have 15 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 8 minutes remaining.

Do not demonstrate any procedures until the verbal instructions are given and you are instructed to begin.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**

- **1.1 Disinfects all work areas completely with product labeled with manufacturer’s label in English as EPA-registered disinfectant that is bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal**
- **1.2 Sanitizes hands with product with manufacturer’s label in English**
- **1.3 Sets up supplies for Client 1**
- **1.4 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

2. THERMAL CURLING (10 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform Thermal Curling.

You will form four curls on the top of the head.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **2.1 Thermal Curling supplies and implements are visibly clean**
- **2.2 Tests temperature of iron**
- **2.3 Subsections hair for thermal curling**
- **2.4 Demonstrates safe use of iron**
- **2.5 Final appearance of four curls**
- **2.6 Maintains thermal draping throughout section**
- **2.7 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

3. HAIRCUTTING (35 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform a Haircut.

You will complete a basic layered haircut using razor and shears.

You will cut at least 1 inch of hair throughout the haircut.

Do not remove your hair clippings from your work area until you are instructed individually by the examiner to do so.

You will have 35 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 18 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **3.1 Haircutting supplies and implements are visibly clean**
- **3.2 Subsections hair for Haircutting**
- **3.3 Demonstrates safe use of razor**
- **3.4 Demonstrates safe use of shears**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to each candidate individually:

“May I please use your comb to check the haircut?”

- **3.5 Final appearance of haircut**

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to each candidate individually after the final appearance of the haircut has been examined:

“Please clean up your hair at this time.

Upon completion, please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

- **3.6 Removes hair from work area**
- **3.7 Maintains drape throughout section**
- **3.8 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read when all examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed:

“All examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read when all examiners have indicated they have completed their assessment:

“Examiners please rotate at this time.”

4. WORK AREA AND NEW CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (15 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will breakdown your work area and dispose of supplies used in the previous sections of this examination.

You will prepare your work area for a NEW client.

You will set up the universal supplies for the remainder of the examination at this time.

You will also set up the supplies for the following sections of the examination at this time:

- Chemical Waving,*
- Predisposition Test and Strand Test,*
- Highlighting with Foil, Virgin Application,*
- Hair Color Retouch, and*
- Virgin Hair Relaxer Application.*

Additional verbal instruction specific to state guidelines Plug your wax pot in at this time.

(Review your state examination guidelines) You will prepare your client for chemical services.

You will be expected to follow all client protection, safety and infection control procedures.

You will have 15 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 8 minutes remaining.

Do not demonstrate any procedures until the verbal instructions are given and you are instructed to begin.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **4.1 Disinfects all work areas completely with product labeled with manufacturer’s label in English as EPA-registered disinfectant that is bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal**
- **4.2 Sanitizes hands with product with manufacturer’s label in English**

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

- **4.3 Sets up supplies for Client 2 labeled in English**
- **4.4 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

5. CHEMICAL WAVING (20 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform Chemical Waving.

You will wrap the entire center back section of the head, from crown to nape.

Once you are finished wrapping, please step back and do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.

You will have 20 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 10 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **5.1 Chemical waving supplies are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **5.2 Subsections hair for chemical waving**
- **5.3 Wraps hair**
- **5.4 Correct rod and band placement used throughout entire section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to each candidate individually:

“Please demonstrate saturation on the first three rods.”

- **5.5 Demonstrates saturation on the first three rods**

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to each candidate individually:

“Please demonstrate a test curl.”

- **5.6 Demonstrates a test curl**

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to candidate individually once the test curl has been examined:

“Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read when all examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed:

“All examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed.”

You will remove all rods from the head and create 5 sections for the remaining chemical services.

You will have 5 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 2 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **5.7 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **5.8 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

6. PREDISPOSITION TEST AND STRAND TEST WITH SIMULATED PRODUCT (10 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform the Predisposition Test and Strand Test for permanent hair color.

You will demonstrate the predisposition test behind the ear.

You will demonstrate the strand test process on any single subsection of hair.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **6.1 Predisposition test and strand test are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **6.2 Demonstrates predisposition test behind the ear**
- **6.3 Demonstrates strand test process**
- **6.4 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **6.5 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

7. HIGHLIGHTING WITH FOIL, VIRGIN APPLICATION WITH COLORED SIMULATED PRODUCT (15 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform Highlighting with Foil, Virgin Application.

You will place four foils on the top of the head from the front hairline to the apex.

You will apply simulated highlighting product from upper edge of foils to hair ends.

You will have 15 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 8 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **7.1 Highlighting supplies are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **7.2 Subsections hair for highlighting with foils**
- **7.3 Demonstrates foil placement**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.

Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

- **7.4 Final result of simulated product application**
- **7.5 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **7.6 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

Examiner - Verbal Instructions: Read to candidate individually once the final appearance of the foil has been examined:

“Please do nothing until the next verbal instructions are given.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates once examiners have completed assessment for this section:

“All examiners have indicated they are ready to proceed.”

8. HAIR COLOR RETOUCH WITH COLORED SIMULATED PRODUCT (10 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform a Hair Color Retouch Application.

The client has 1 inch of regrowth.

You will apply simulated hair color product to one section of the back of the head.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **8.1 Hair color retouch supplies are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **8.2 Subsections hair for hair color retouch**
- **8.3 Applies simulated hair color product**
- **8.4 Final result of hair color retouch application**
- **8.5 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **8.6 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

9. VIRGIN HAIR RELAXER (NO BASE) APPLICATION WITH SIMULATED, COLORED PRODUCT (15 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will perform a Virgin Hair Relaxer (No Base) Application.

You will apply simulated relaxer product on one back quadrant/section of hair.

You will have 15 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 8 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

- **Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:**
- **9.1 Virgin hair relaxer supplies are labeled in English and implements are visibly clean**
- **9.2 Prepares for relaxer application**
- **9.3 Applies and smooths simulated relaxer product**
- **9.4 Maintains chemical drape throughout section**
- **9.5 Places items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash in correct containers throughout section**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

10. BLOOD EXPOSURE PROCEDURE (10 minutes)

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates:

“You will demonstrate the Blood Exposure Procedure.

You will imagine the following scenario: During a service, you have sustained a minor cut to your index finger.

The injury is such that you can continue with the service.

The injury has not yet contaminated your work area or the client.

You are expected to demonstrate the proper procedure for a blood exposure.

You are expected to follow all client protection, safety and infection control procedures.

You will have 10 minutes to complete this section.

You will be informed when you have 5 minutes remaining.

Step back to indicate you have finished.

(1) The instructions will be repeated.

(2) You may begin.”

• Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:

- 10.1 Blood exposure supplies are labeled in English**
- 10.2 Removes materials from first aid kit**
- 10.3 Supplies and materials are visibly clean**
- ~~10.4 Cleans injured area with antiseptic~~**
- 10.5 Covers with dressing that is absorbent and secured**
- 10.6 Candidate wears glove or finger guard**
- 10.7 Disposes of all contaminated supplies**

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if all candidates have stepped back to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”

Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read if the timer goes off before all candidates have stepped back:

“Please stop working.”

HAIR DESIGN PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT OUTLINE

CANDIDATE CLEANUP AND FINAL SUMMARY Proctor - Verbal Instructions: Read to all candidates at the conclusion of the examination:

“All examiners have indicated they have completed their assessment.

Make sure that all kit supplies and disposable materials are taken with you.

This concludes the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology, National Hair Design Practical Examination.

Thank you for your participation.”

SUGGESTED EXAMINATION SUPPLIES

SUGGESTED EXAMINATION SUPPLIES

Universal Supplies will be defined as

- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant
- First aid kit
- Three containers labeled:
 - ‘Items to be Disinfected’
 - ‘Soiled Linens’
 - ‘Trash’

Suggested supply list:

- This is a list of suggested supplies for the practical examination.
- Candidates are responsible for bringing all needed materials, even if not included on this list.
- Tools must be in good working order.

Information related to labeling of supplies:

- ALL supplies must be labeled in English
- No other languages can be present unless an original manufacturer’s label is present in English
- All other created labels must be only English

Suggested Supplies

* Brushes and Bowls or Bottle Applicators

SUGGESTED EXAMINATION SUPPLIES

Suggested Supplies

- * Candidate Supply Kit to Serve as Dry Storage Area (Must be Closeable)
- * Chemical Wave Rods
- * Cloth Towels
- * Combs
- * Container Labeled “items to be Disinfected”
- * Container Labeled “soiled Linens”
- * Container Labeled “trash”
- * Cotton
- * End Papers
- * EPA-Registered Disinfectant Wipes with Manufacturer’s Label that Demonstrate Bactericidal, Fungicidal and Virucidal Properties Must be Used (Must be Actual Disinfectant Wipes)
- * First Aid Kit
- * Foils
- * Gloves
- * Hair Brushes
- * Hair Clips and/or Clamps
- * Hair Color-Colored Simulated Products
- * Hair Relaxer-Colored Simulated Product
- * Hand Sanitizer and Manufacturer’s Label (Must be Actual Hand Sanitizer)
- * Mannequin Heads and a Table Clamp or Tri-Pod (Pre-Markings or Pre-Sectioning on Mannequins is not Permitted)
- * Material for Testing Temperature of Iron
- * Neck Strips
- * Paper Towels
- * Protective Capes (Child Size Capes may be Used)
- * Protective Cream
- * Razor
- * Shears
- * Simulated Waving Lotion (Water)

SUGGESTED *EXAMINATION SUPPLIES*

Suggested Supplies

* Skin Cleanser

* Spatulas

* Spray Bottle with Water

* Thermal Curling Iron with Cord Unbound and/or Unaltered

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 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 exam material.

Reference Date:

Standard

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Supplemental

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