



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



# NREMT CANDIDATE INFORMATION

PREPARE FOR SUCCESS ON THE  
NREMT COGNITIVE EXAM

## CONGRATULATIONS!

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

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

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE EXAM

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

### ***There are several important concepts to keep in mind:***

- Your test will be different from every other candidate's. NREMT EMT-Basic and Paramedic cognitive exams are computerized adaptive tests. Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) is state-of-the-art in high stakes certification testing. It is the most accurate and fair evaluation technology available. CAT testing is different from most other forms of testing in that *each exam adapts to each candidate's ability level*. Depending on how a question is answered, the computer determines the difficulty of the next question. Consequently, each candidate's testing experience will be unique.
  - There is no minimum percentage of correct items needed to pass the test. CAT exam scores are based on the characteristics of the questions you get right and wrong—not how many you get right.
  - Since items get more difficult as you answer them correctly, you will most likely perceive the test as very challenging. However, a difficult question for you may be easy for someone else.
  - Your test result is measured against a predetermined competency level.
  - Your performance on the previous question determines what question you will receive next. This means you are NOT able to go back and answer questions or change your answers.
  - There is a minimum and maximum number of questions for each test, however, your test may be a different length than other candidates. It is important to know that the length of the exam is not an indicator of whether you pass or fail. The test will end when:
    1. your ability has been accurately determined,
    2. you have received the maximum number of items, OR
    3. you have run out of time.
- Exam questions evaluate your ability to apply knowledge from your course and textbook to the types of tasks and situations that are expected of entry level EMS professionals. Questions that are answered incorrectly on the exam mean you could choose the wrong assessment or treatment in the field. There are some general concepts to remember about the cognitive exam:
- There is only *ONE BEST* answer! The items are written to determine how you would respond in the field. Incorrect responses may be misunderstandings, common mistakes or inefficient approaches that represent less than optimal care.
  - NREMT tests reflect *national standards, not local or state protocols*. The NREMT avoids testing on specific details that have regional differences. Some topics in EMS are controversial, and experts disagree on the single best approach to some situations. The NREMT generally avoids testing over controversial areas.
  - NREMT exams focus on what EMTs should actually *do in the field*. The test is not taken from any single textbook or source. The exams are intended to reflect the current accepted practices of EMS. Fortunately, most textbooks are up-to-date and written to a similar standard; however, *no one source completely prepares you for*

## What You Should Know About the Exam continued...

*the exam.* You are encouraged to consult multiple references, especially in areas in which you are having difficulty.

- Due to the test format—a computer adaptive test (CAT)—your performance on the previous question determines what question you will receive next. This means *you will NOT be able to go back and answer questions or change your answers.* You will be most successful with CAT if you approach each question individually. Do your best on each question and then move on to the next question.

Exam question resources include: the *current* American Heart Association Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and ECC (Emergency Cardiovascular Care)—plus ACLS for Paramedics (see [www.americanheart.org/cpr](http://www.americanheart.org/cpr)), and The National Standard Curriculum (see [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov)). Another resource is the Practice Analysis which is conducted every five years to determine the actual situations EMTs and Paramedics handle.

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

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

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

## NCCA ACCREDITATION

As a commitment to excellence, NREMT exams are backed by accreditation from The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), which is the accreditation arm of The National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA). The NCCA is recognized as the authority on accreditation standards for professional certification organizations and programs. NCCA accreditation means that the standards set by the NREMT have been reviewed by the NCCA and deemed credible for ensuring the health, welfare and safety of the public. In addition, this assures that you are getting a fair and accurate assessment of your competency.

## ITEM EXAMPLES

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

1. Your patient fell while skateboarding and has a painful, swollen, deformed lower arm. You are unable to palpate the radial pulse. You should immediately
  - a. apply cold packs.
  - b. align the arm with gentle traction.**
  - c. splint the arm in the position found.
  - d. ask the patient to try moving the arm.
2. Your patient is a disoriented 86 year old male with a history of terminal brain cancer. He has fallen out of bed and is complaining of severe right hip pain. His wife called 911 for assistance in putting him back to bed. She says he has DNR orders and that she does not want him transported. You should initially
  - a. ask to see the DNR orders.
  - b. explain why he needs to be transported.**
  - c. have her sign a refusal form.
  - d. call for police backup.
3. You are called to a scene where the police have detained a man who they thought was drunk. They called you because he has a history of diabetes. You administer oral glucose and within a minute the patient becomes unresponsive. You should
  - a. remain at the scene under police authority and request ALS backup.
  - b. leave the glucose in place, complete an initial exam and transport.
  - c. open his airway with a oropharyngeal airway and ventilate.
  - d. suction the glucose out of his mouth and begin transport.**

## PEARSON VUE IS THE NREMT TEST PROVIDER

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

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

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

## EXAM SECURITY

The NREMT takes exam security issues very seriously. Stringent security policies and procedures are in place to protect the content of exams and maintain the security of all data concerning the candidate and the testing session. Please remember that these security procedures are to protect the integrity of the certification process and are not designed to add to your anxiety regarding the examination. Some of the security measures are designed to ensure that the candidate taking the test is the person he or she claims to be, and that everybody takes the test in a uniform and unaided fashion.

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

- show identification as described in your ATT (Authorization to Test) letter
- have your identity verified by a digital security device (such as a digital finger print or infrared palm reader)
- sign in electronically
- have your picture taken
- store all belongings in a locker prior to entry into the exam room
- be recorded (by audio and/or video) during the exam

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

## PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

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

- Study your EMT textbook thoroughly and consider using the accompanying workbooks to help you master the material.
- Thoroughly review the *current* American Heart Association guidelines for CPR (for health care professionals) and ECC (Emergency Cardiovascular Care), plus ACLS for Paramedics. You will be tested on this material at the level of the exam you are taking.
- Study guides may help you identify your weaknesses, but should be used carefully. Some study guides have many easy questions leading some candidates to believe that they are prepared for the exam when more study is warranted. If you choose to use a study guide, we suggest that you do so a few weeks before your actual exam. You can obtain these from your local bookstore or library. Use the score to identify your areas of strength and weakness. Re-read and study your notes and materials for the areas you did not do well in. The National Registry does not recommend a particular study guide, but recognizes that they can be useful.

*Preparing for the Exam continued...*

## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE EXAM

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

## THE DAY OF THE EXAM

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

## DURING THE EXAM

Take your time and read each item carefully. The exam is constructed so most people will have plenty of time to finish. Most successful candidates spend about 30-60 seconds per item reading each question carefully and thinking it through. Less than 1% of the candidates are unable to finish the exam. Your risk of misreading a question is far greater than your risk of running out of time.

Don't get frustrated. Because of the adaptive nature of the exam, everyone will think their test is difficult. The CAT algorithm is adjusting the test to your maximum ability level, so you may feel that all the items are difficult. Focus on one question at a time, do your best on that item, and move on.

## AFTER THE EXAM

Examination results are not released at the test center or over the telephone. Your examination results will be available on the NREMT website usually within 2 business days following the completion of the examination provided you have met all other requirements of registration. Log in to your account and click on 'Check Application Status' to view your exam results. Print a copy of your exam results report (unless you requested notification by mail only.)

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

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

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