



**NATIONAL NAIL TECHNOLOGY  
PRACTICAL EXAMINATION**

**CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB)**

**EXAMINATION CONTENT AND IMPORTANT ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS**

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

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

This bulletin contains **IMPORTANT INFORMATION** regarding the NIC National Nail Technology Practical Examination content and Administration for Nail Technology core services.

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

- **Important Instructions and Examination Core Domain Content**– This contains 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.
- **References** – This is a list of references used to develop and support the content covered in NIC examinations.

The references will always be the same for both Theory and Practical examinations.

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

**PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY!**

**IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

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- 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.**
- 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.
  - All examinations are administered in a testing environment.
  - Candidates are evaluated at all times. Continue working until you have completed the entire section or time has elapsed.
  - **EPA registered, disinfectant WIPES that demonstrate bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal properties must be used. DISINFECTANT SPRAYS ARE NO LONGER ALLOWED IN THE TESTING ENVIRONMENT.**
- Due to standardization of the NIC National Examinations, proctors and examiners are required to adhere to the following standards:
  - The verbal instructions will be read twice for each section of the examination.
  - With the exception of verbal instructions, the proctors are not allowed to communicate with candidates.

## NIC National Nail Technology Practical Examination

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- Examiners are not allowed to speak with 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, please notify the proctor by raising your 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 candidates have completed all tasks in the section, please step back or turn the hand toward the examiner (in the case of nail sections) to indicate they have finished.
  - In the event that all candidates 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 or turn the hand toward the examiner (in the case of nail services) IMMEDIATELY.
- During all phases of the examination, candidates must follow all appropriate public protection and infection control procedures and maintain a safe work area.
  - In the event of a blood exposure incident, candidates will be expected to follow the NIC Blood Exposure Procedure.

### **Failure to do so may result in your dismissal from the examination.**

- *Be sure to contact your examination provider to obtain the most current version of, and any addendums to, the NIC Blood Exposure Procedure, OR go to [www.nictesting.org](http://www.nictesting.org) for a current downloadable copy.*
- **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.**
- The following provides examples of materials and actions that are prohibited during the examination administration:
  - Possession of cellular phones, watches (of any kind), pagers, tablets, computers, projectors, cameras, or any other electronic or recording devices, printed materials, or handwritten notes.
  - Purses, bags, coats, hats, and any other personal items not directly needed to complete the examination are not allowed.
  - Exhibiting disruptive behavior.
  - Communicating to other candidates or any examiner.
    - *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 the immediate dismissal from the examination and the candidate’s actions reported to the proper authorities.*
- **All supplies 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-manufacturers created labels must be only in English.
  - Original manufacturer’s labels are *required* for all disinfectants and hand sanitizers.
  - **EPA-registered disinfectant WIPES that demonstrate bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal properties must be used. DISINFECTANT SPRAYS ARE NO LONGER ALLOWED IN THE TESTING ENVIRONMENT.** Please refer to the “*Suggested Examination Supplies*” section to see any further state specific requirements for supplies and products.
  - Simulated products are *not* allowed for disinfectants and hand sanitizers.
  - **NO AEROSOLS OR DISINFECTANT SPRAYS** are allowed in the testing environment.
  - Candidates **MUST** wear gloves when using disinfectant.

## NIC National Nail Technology Practical Examination

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- Candidates are to perform all tasks, utilizing products and supplies, as they were taught. There is, however, a section titled “*Suggested Examination Supplies*” provided following the “Content Domains” section of this bulletin for items that a candidate may *possibly* utilize in a section.

### NIC MANNEQUIN HAND REQUIREMENTS

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**Please refer to your state specific guidelines for mannequin hand requirements.**

**If your state requires the use of a mannequin head(s) or hand(s):**

- If candidates are required to use a mannequin hand(s), it is the candidate’s responsibility to come prepared for the examination.
- Mannequin hands must be an entire hand and cannot have removable digits.
- Mannequin heads and hands must be approved by the examination state/vendor prior to admittance into the examination.

### **SPECIAL ATTENTION!**

The following information is vital and specific to the  
NIC National Nail Technology Practical Examination:

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- 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 Nail Technology Practical Examination Content Domains Sections).
- The following sections are **new** to the Nail Technology Practical Examination:
  - Removal of Sculptured Nail (Content Domain Section 6)
- **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.
- ***Monomer must be low-odor/less-odor and factory sealed in its original container with manufacturer’s label.***
- ***Polymer must be in its original container with manufacturer’s label.***  
(Please check State specific examination provider’s guidelines)
- ***Primer (if used) must be in original container with manufacturer’s label.***
- Candidates **MUST** wear gloves when using disinfectant.

## NAIL TECHNOLOGY PRACTICAL EXAMINATION CONTENT DOMAIN SECTIONS

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The scope of the National Nail Technology Practical Examination includes 7 (seven) core domain sections. The Core Domain Sections are based on the national job analysis.

1. **Work Area Preparation, Client Preparation, and Set Up of Supplies** (15 minutes)
2. **Manicure and Polish Application** (20 minutes)
3. **Work Area and New Client Preparation, and Set Up of Supplies** (10 minutes)
4. **Nail Tip Application and Blending** (20 minutes)
5. **Sculptured Nail** (20 minutes)
6. **Removal of Sculptured Nail** (20 minutes)
7. **Blood Exposure Procedure** (Individually Timed, 5 minutes per candidate)

## CONTENT DOMAINS

### **1. WORK AREA PREPARATION, 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.”*

*“You will also set up the supplies for the manicure and polish application.”*

*“You will prepare your client for the 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.”*

*“Turn the hand toward the examiner 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 in English as EPA-registered bactericidal, virucidal, and fungicidal disinfectant**
- 1.2 Sanitizes hands with product labeled in English**
- 1.3 Universal supplies are labeled in English**
- 1.4 Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in a correct manner throughout section**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if all candidates have turned the hand 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 turned the hand:

*“Please stop working.”*

## 2. MANICURE AND POLISH APPLICATION (20 minutes)

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to all candidates:

*“You will perform a manicure and polish application.”*

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

*“You will have 20 minutes to complete this section.”*

*“You will be informed when you have 10 minutes remaining.”*

*“Turn the hand toward the examiner 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 Manicure supplies are labeled in English
- 2.2 Implements and supplies are visibly clean
- 2.3 Performs a basic manicure
- 2.4 Prepares nails and applies RED nail polish

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if all candidates have turned the hand 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 turned the hand:

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

2.5 Final appearance of the manicure

2.6 Final appearance of polish application

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to each candidate individually after the final appearance of nails have 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.”*

*“You will remove the polish from the nails and properly dispose of supplies used in the previous section of the examination.”*

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

*“You will have 5 minutes to complete this section.”*

*“You will be informed when you have 2 minutes remaining.”*

*“Turn the hand toward the examiner to indicate you have finished.”*

(1) *“The instructions will be repeated.”*

(2) *“You may begin.”*

Candidates will be evaluated on the following tasks:

**2.7 Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in a correct manner throughout section**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if all candidates have turned the hand 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 turned the hand:

*“Please stop working.”*

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read when all examiners have indicated they have completed their assessment.

*“Examiners please rotate at this time.”*

### 3. WORK AREA AND NEW CLIENT PREPARATION, AND SET UP OF SUPPLIES (10 minutes)

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to all candidates:

*“You will prepare your work area for a NEW client.”*

*“You will set up the universal supplies you will use for the remainder of the examination.”*

*“You will also set up for the following sections of the examination:*

*Nail Tip Application and Blending*

*Sculptured Nail Service*

*Removal of Sculptured Nail”*

*“You will prepare your client for the services.”*

*“You will be 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.”*

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

*“Turn the hand toward the examiner 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 Disinfects all work areas completely with product labeled in English as EPA-registered bactericidal, virucidal, and fungicidal disinfectant**
- 3.2 Sanitizes hands with product labeled in English**
- 3.3 Universal supplies are labeled in English**
- 3.4 Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in a correct manner throughout section**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if all candidates have turned the hand 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 turned the hand:

*“Please stop working.”*

## 4. NAIL TIP APPLICATION AND BLENDING (20 minutes)

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to all candidates:

(Note to Proctor - Choose any finger)

*“You will perform nail tip application and blending.”*

*“You will apply the nail tip to the \_\_\_\_\_ finger.”*

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

*“You will have 20 minutes to complete this section.”*

*“You will be informed when you have 10 minutes remaining.”*

*“Turn the hand toward the examiner 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 Nail tip application and blending supplies are labeled in English
- 4.2 Implements and supplies are visibly clean
- 4.3 Prepares for nail tip application
- 4.4 Selects full-well tip and attaches to nail plate of assigned finger
- 4.5 Trims, shapes, and blends nail tip

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if all candidates have turned the hand 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 turned the hand:

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

- 4.6 Final appearance of finished nail tip

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to each candidate individually after the final appearance of nails have been examined:

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

- 4.7 Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in a correct manner throughout section

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

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

## 5. SCULPTURED NAIL (20 minutes)

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to all candidates:

(Note to Proctor - Choose any finger)

*“You will sculpt a nail on the \_\_\_\_\_ finger.”*

*“You must use a manufacturer sealed, low-odor/less-odor product.” (Check your state-specific testing guidelines for product requirements.)*

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

*“You will have 20 minutes to complete this section.”*

*“You will be informed when you have 10 minutes remaining.”*

*“Turn the hand toward the examiner 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 Sets up sculptured nail supplies. Products *MUST* be in original container and have manufacturer’s label in English**
- 5.2 Implements and supplies are visibly clean**
- 5.3 Prepares nail plate for sculptured nail**
- 5.4 Sculpts a nail to extend the free edge of assigned finger**
- 5.5 Shapes, contours, and finishes sculptured nail**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if all candidates have turned the hand 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 turned the hand:

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

### **5.6 Final appearance of sculptured nail**

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to each candidate individually after the final appearance of nails have been examined:

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

### **5.7 Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in a correct manner throughout section**

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

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

## 6. REMOVAL OF SCULPTURED NAIL (20 minutes)

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to all candidates:

*“You will perform a removal of the sculptured nail.”*

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

*“You will have 20 minutes to complete this section.”*

*“You will be informed when you have 10 minutes remaining.”*

*“Turn the hand toward the examiner 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 Sculptured nail removal supplies are labeled in English**

**6.2 Implements and supplies are visibly clean**

**6.3 Removes sculptured nail**

**6.4 Smooths and finishes the natural nail**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if all candidates have turned the hand 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 turned the hand:

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

**6.5 Final assessment of sculptured nail removal**

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to each candidate individually after the final appearance of nails have been examined:

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

**6.6 Items to be disinfected, soiled linens, and trash are disposed of in a correct manner throughout section**

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

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

## 7. BLOOD EXPOSURE PROCEDURE (Individually Timed, 5 minutes per candidate)

**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 be instructed individually by the examiner to demonstrate the Blood Exposure Procedure.”*

*“You will have 5 minutes to complete this section.”*

*“You will be informed when you have 2 minutes remaining.”*

*“Do not begin to demonstrate the Blood Exposure Procedure until instructed individually by the examiner to do so.”*

*“Turn the hand toward the examiner to indicate you have finished.”*

(1) *“The instructions will be repeated.”*

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to each candidate individually:

*“Please demonstrate the Blood Exposure Procedure.”*

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

- 7.1 **First aid supplies and materials are labeled in English**
- 7.2 **Removes materials from first aid kit**
- 7.3 **Supplies and materials are visibly clean**
- 7.4 **Cleans injured area with antiseptic**
- 7.5 **Covers injury with dressing that is absorbent and secured**
- 7.6 **Disposes of all contaminated supplies**
- 7.7 **Candidate protects injury with glove or finger cot**

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to each candidate individually:

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

## CANDIDATE SUMMARY AND FINAL CLEANUP

**Proctor - Verbal Instructions:** Read 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 Nail Technology Practical Examination.”*

*“Thank you for your participation.”*

## ***SUGGESTED EXAMINATION SUPPLIES***

### **Information related to labeling of supplies:**

- ALL supplies must be labeled in English
- Original manufacturers' labels MUST have English and may be multi-language
- All other created labels must be only English

### **SUGGESTED SUPPLIES**

- acetone/polish remover
- adhesive
- base coat
- buffer(s)
- candidate supply kit to serve as dry storage area (**must be closeable**)
- container labeled "items to be disinfected"
- container labeled "soiled linens"
- container labeled "trash"
- cotton
- cuticle pusher
- cuticle softener
- dappen dish(es)
- EPA-registered disinfectant wipes with manufacturer's label that demonstrate bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal properties must be used (**must be actual disinfectant wipes**)
- finger bowl with water
- first aid kit
- foil removal wraps
- gloves
- hand sanitizer with manufacturer's label (**must be real product**)
- mannequin hand(s) with artificial nails attached (**must be entire hand; cannot have removable digits.**)
- massage product
- nail brush
- nail cleanser
- nail clipper and/or tip trimmer
- nail file(s)
- nail form(s)
- nail tips
- oil
- paper towels
- red polish
- sculptured nail brush
- sculptured nail products – monomer, polymer  
***Monomer must be low-odor/less-odor and factory sealed in its original container with manufacturer's label.***  
***Polymer must be in its original container with manufacturer's label. (Please check State specific examination guidelines)***  
***Primer (if used) must be in original container with manufacturer's label.***
- top coat
- towel(s)