

The Home Care Aide Skills Test and Common Care Practices

The Home Care Aide performance-based test is called the Skills Test. For this test, candidates are given instructions to perform **three skills** on a client. A mannequin is used as the client for some skills, and for other skills another candidate will play the role of the client during the test. The first skill on the test is treated as though it is the first care the home care aide is providing after arriving at the client's home, and the third skill on the test is treated as though it is the last care provided for the client before the home care aide leaves the client for the day. When the home care aide finishes the last skill, the home care aide should prepare the client and himself/herself to leave the client's home for the day.

While the candidate is being evaluated on his/her performance of the three skills, the candidate is also evaluated on two additional skills: hand washing (technique) and a skill referred to as **Common Care Practices**. Common Care Practices are behaviors that are common to every skill the candidate performs, such as infection control and Standard Precautions, communication with the client, and promoting the client's social and human needs, rights, comfort, and safety.

The purpose of the Skills Test is to determine whether candidates' performances meet standards of minimal competency as set by the state. The skills checklist provided on the website www.prometric.com/wadoh describes the behaviors observed for in the performance of each skill. Below is a more detailed description of behaviors that are observed for when evaluating the **Common Care Practices Skill**.

When performing behaviors evaluated as **Common Care Practices**, candidates may do more than what is minimally observed for during the test. For example, during training candidates should learn many ways to promote a client's rights; during the test, candidates' performances are observed for just a few basic behaviors about promoting client's rights. For example, the evaluator will observe for whether candidates announce themselves before entering a client's room, whether they tell a client about care they will provide before starting care, and whether they keep the client informed about what they are doing throughout care.

Below is an overview of behaviors the evaluator observes for when rating **Common Care Practices**:

Use Infection Control Measures and Standard Precautions to Protect the Client and the Home Care Aide

General

Does the candidate:

- begin care to the client with clean hands?
- wash hands before touching the client?
- end client visit with clean hands?

When gloves are worn for care

Does the candidate:

- wash hands after removing gloves?

When performing bathing-type skills (such as foot care, fingernail and hand care, perineal care, catheter care, and mouth care)

Does the candidate:

- avoid placing soiled linen or clothing directly on table?
- avoid holding linen (clean or dirty) against home care aide's clothing?
- avoid placing linen directly on floor except when used as protective barrier?
- use appropriate container for water for bathing-type skills (e.g., bath basin not bedpan)?
- store denture in a denture cup?

Promote Client's Social and Human Needs

When providing care for each skill, does the candidate:

- ask client about preferences or needs during care?
- converse with client during care (client-focused)?
- address client by name?¹
- encourage client's participation in care? (except when instructions explain that the client is unable to assist with a part of the care)

Promote Client's Rights

When providing care for each skill, does the candidate:

- announce self or knock before entering client's room?
- tell client about care to be provided before beginning and throughout care?
- refrain from addressing client using terms such as "honey"?
- leave client covered with top bed sheet at completion of procedure, when the client is in bed?

Promote Client's Safety

Does the candidate:

When a client is in bed:

- leave client in safe position in bed?
- leave bed in low position at end of skill? (Note: This is only evaluated if a hospital style bed is at the test site and the candidate raises the bed for care.)

When a client is in a chair:

- leave client in safe position in chair?

After administering medication:

- replace lids on medication bottle(s)?

Promote Client's Comfort

Does the candidate:

- ask the client about comfort or leave client in alignment?

¹ The expectation is that candidate address the client by name at least one time during the test. While the client's name is Chris Smith, it is accepted during testing when the candidate addresses the client by the name of Chris, Mr/Mrs/Ms Smith, or by the actor's actual name. When the medication skill is tested, the candidate must recognize the client's name is Chris Smith.