



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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**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.
- ***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 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 (e.g., completely zipped or lid tightly 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.
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## NIC National Nail Technology Practical Examination

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- 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.
  - 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 situation, 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 a candidate has 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, 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.
  - An EPA-registered, hospital-grade disinfectant that demonstrates bactericidal, fungicidal, and virucidal properties must be used. Please refer to the “*Suggested Examination Supplies*” section to see any further state specific requirements for supplies and products.

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## NIC National Nail Technology Practical Examination

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- Simulated products are *not* allowed for disinfectants and hand sanitizers.
- **NO AEROSOLS** are allowed in the testing environment
- Candidates are to perform all tasks, utilizing products and supplies, and 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.

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### NIC MANNEQUIN HAND REQUIREMENTS

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

**If your state requires that you use 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 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:
  - Blood Exposure Procedure (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.
- Use of single-use products may result in a failing score for the examination.
- ***Monomer must be low-odor/less-odor and factory sealed in its original container with manufacturer’s label.***
- ***Polymer and primer must be in its original container with manufacturer’s label.***  
(Please check State specific examination provider’s guidelines)

**NAIL TECHNOLOGY PRACTICAL  
EXAMINATION CONTENT DOMAIN SECTIONS**

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The scope of the National Nail Technology Practical Examination includes 6 (six) 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 (First client) (15 minutes)
2. Manicure and Polish Application (20 minutes)
3. Work Area and New Client Preparation, and Set Up of Supplies (Second client) (10 minutes)
4. Nail Tip Application and Blending (20 minutes)
5. Sculptured Nail (20 minutes)
6. Blood Exposure Procedure (10 minutes)

## **CONTENT DOMAINS**

### **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.”*

*“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, hospital-grade 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 Sanitizes hand to be manicured with product labeled in English
- 2.4 Shapes free edge to establish uniform length and shape
- 2.5 Immerses all fingernails in bowl of water
- 2.6 Applies cuticle remover
- 2.7 Pushes back cuticle
- 2.8 Cleans under free edge
- 2.9 Brushes or wipes nails to remove product or remaining debris
- 2.10 Buffs nails
- 2.11 Applies cuticle oil
- 2.12 Applies massage product
- 2.13 Performs massage on the fingers, top and palm of the hand demonstrating at *LEAST 2* different types of massage movements
- 2.14 Cleanse each nail plate with appropriate solution
- 2.15 Applies base coat to cover entire nail plate
- 2.16 Applies red polish to cover entire nail plate
- 2.17 Applies top coat to cover entire nail plate

**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.”*

- 2.18 Final appearance of polish is smooth and even
- 2.19 Nail plate is entirely covered with red polish
- 2.20 Cuticle and surrounding skin are free of polish and free of injury

***NIC Nail Technology Practical Examination – Manicure and Polish Application (continued)***

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to each candidate individually after the final appearance of nail 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 with the examination.”*

*“You will remove the polish from all 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:**

**2.21 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.”*

### 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.”*

*“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, hospital-grade 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: Proctor will assign the finger for application of the nail tip)

*“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 Sanitizes model’s hand with product labeled in English
- 4.4 Removes residual nail polish from nail plate with appropriate solution
- 4.5 Removes shine from nail plate
- 4.6 Removes dust from nail plate
- 4.7 Applies nail dehydrator product to nail plate
- 4.8 Selects full-well tip and attaches to nail plate of assigned finger
- 4.9 Trims and shapes nail tip
- 4.10 Blends and finishes 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.”*

- 4.11 Result of tip selection and application
- 4.12 Cuticle and surrounding skin are free of adhesive
- 4.13 Appearance of finished nail tip

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate individually after the nail tip application and blending has been examined:

*“Please do nothing until further instructions are given.”*

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

*NIC Nail Technology Practical Examination – Nail Tip Application and Blending (continued)*

**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: Proctor will assign the finger to be sculpted)

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

*“You must use a manufacturer sealed, low-odor/less-odor monomer (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. Polymer, monomer, and primer *MUST* be in original container and have manufacturer’s label in English.**
- 5.2 Implements and supplies are visibly clean**
- 5.3 Removes shine from nail plate**
- 5.4 Cleanses and dehydrates nail plate**
- 5.5 Applies nail form to fit snugly under free edge**
- 5.6 Applies nail primer to nail plate**
- 5.7 Sculpt a nail to extend the free edge of assigned finger**
- 5.8 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.”*

*NIC Nail Technology Practical Examination – Sculptured Nail (continued)*

- 5.9 Appearance of finished sculptured nail is smooth, balanced, and even
- 5.10 Cuticle and surrounding skin are free of sculptured product and remain undamaged

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to each candidate individually once the final appearance of nail has been examined:

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

- 5.11 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. 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, your client has sustained a minor cut to the thumb. The injury is such that you can continue with the service. You have not come in contact with the blood and your work area has not been contaminated. 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.”*

*“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 Blood exposure supplies and materials are labeled in English
- 6.2 Removes materials from first aid kit
- 6.3 Supplies and materials are visibly clean
- 6.4 Candidate wears gloves
- 6.5 Cleans injured area with antiseptic
- 6.6 Covers with dressing that is absorbent and secured
- 6.7 Disposes of all contaminated supplies

***NIC Nail Technology Practical Examination – Blood Exposure (continued)***

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if all candidates have turned the hand to indicate they have completed the section before timing has elapsed:

*“All candidates have indicated they have completed this section. Please wait 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 wait 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***

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**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
- Original manufacturers' labels MUST have English and may be multi-language
- All other created labels must be only English

**EXAMINATION UNIVERSAL/GENERAL SUPPLIES**

- candidate supply kit to serve as dry storage area (must be closeable)
- hospital grade (level), EPA-registered disinfectant with manufacturer's label that demonstrates bactericidal, fungicidal and virucidal properties must be used (must be actual disinfectant)
- hand sanitizer and manufacturer's label (must be actual hand sanitizer)
- container labeled "items to be disinfected"
- container labeled "soiled linens"
- container labeled "trash"
- first aid kit
- paper towels

**MANICURE AND POLISH APPLICATION SUPPLIES**

- mannequin hand(s) with artificial nails attached (Must be entire hand; cannot have removable digits.)
- bowl (finger bowl)
- water
- nail file(s) and/or buffer(s)
- cotton
- cuticle cream/remover
- cuticle pusher
- nail brush
- massage product
- base coat
- top coat
- red polish
- polish remover

**NAIL TIP APPLICATION AND BLENDING SUPPLIES**

- mannequin hand(s) with artificial nails attached (Must be entire hand; cannot have removable digits.)
- nail file(s) and/or buffer(s)
- full-well nail tips
- nail clipper
- adhesive

**SCULPTURED NAIL SUPPLIES**

- mannequin hand(s) with artificial nails attached (Must be entire hand; cannot have removable digits.)
- nail prep solution
- sculptured nail products – monomer, polymer, and primer  
*Monomer must be low-odor/less-odor and factory sealed in its original container with manufacturer's label.*  
*Polymer and primer must be in its original container with manufacturer's label.*  
(Please check State specific examination provider's guidelines)
- sculptured nail brush
- dappen dishes
- nail form(s)
- file(s) and/or buffer(s)
- oil

**BLOOD EXPOSURE PROCEDURE SUPPLIES**

- bag for disposal of blood-contaminated materials