



**NATIONAL TATTOO  
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.*

**National Tattoo Practical Examination is the licensure examination for Tattoo, which is developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC). This bulletin contains IMPORTANT INFORMATION regarding the NIC National Tattoo Practical Examination content and administration for Tattoo core sections.**

For each NIC National Practical Examination, there are TWO (2) parts to every Candidate Information Bulletin (CIB) stored as separate documents:

- ***Examination Content*** and ***Important Instructions*** – This provides information about the scope of content covered in the Practical examination and information and guidelines related to administration of the Practical examination.
- ***References*** – This provides 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 BOTH DOCUMENTS THAT MAKE UP THE NIC EXAMINATION CIB.**

**PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY!**

**IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

- 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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- 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 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, 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.*

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- **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 manufacturer's labels must have English and may also include other languages. All non-manufacturer 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.
    - 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.

### **SPECIAL ATTENTION**

The following information is vital and specific to the  
NIC National Tattoo 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/sterilized**"
  - Container labeled "**Sharps**" (OSHA Approved)
  - Container labeled "**Trash**"
- 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.
- If a hand washing station is NOT provided in the examination room, the nearest restroom will serve as the hand washing station.
- Live model must have a pre-shaved forearm; forearm **MUST** be free of tattoos.
- In the case a foot switch is used for the examination, it will be considered a "contaminated" item and therefore **MUST** be packed and stored separate from clean supplies and equipment.
- Candidates are required to supply and utilize a client armrest for the needed tasks in this examination.

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**TATTOO PRACTICAL EXAMINATION  
CONTENT DOMAIN SECTIONS**

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The scope of the National Tattoo Practical Examination includes 5 (five) core domain sections. The Core Domain Sections are based on the national job analysis.

1. **Work Area Set Up** (20 minutes)
2. **Client Preparation and Stencil Application** (10 minutes)
3. **Machine Assembly** (10 minutes)
4. **Demonstration of Simulated Tattoo Procedure and Conclusion** (untimed)
5. **Break Down Work Area, Supplies, and Equipment and Conclusion of Procedure** (20 minutes)
6. **Work Area Set for New Client** (20 minutes)

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**1. WORK AREA SET UP (20 minutes)**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate:

*"You will imagine the following scenario: You are starting work at a new studio. You have been assigned a work station that contains two tables and two chairs. You are responsible for setting up the station and unpacking your supplies. You will begin seeing clients as soon as your station is prepared."*

*"You will prepare yourself for a tattoo procedure".*

*"You will prepare your work surface(s) and work area(s) for your first client."*

*"You will set up the supplies and equipment you will use throughout the examination."*

*"You may arrange the work area and equipment to meet your needs."*

*"You will designate the universal supply area on the table provided."*

*"You will not assemble your machine or disperse pigment at this time."*

*"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."*

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

*"Raise your hand to indicate you have finished."*

(1) *"The instructions will be repeated."*

(2) *"You may begin."*

**1.1 Prepare yourself for a tattoo procedure**

**1.2 Disinfects and prepares all work surface(s) and work area(s)**

**1.3 Prepares supplies and equipment**

**1.4 Disposes of all contaminated supplies**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if candidate has raised their hand to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

*"The candidate has indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed."*

*"The model may be seated at this time."*

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if the timer goes off before the candidate has indicated they have completed this section of the examination:

*"Please stop working. The model may be seated at this time."*

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**2. CLIENT PREPARATION AND STENCIL APPLICATION (10 minutes)**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate:

*“You will demonstrate client preparation and stencil application.”*

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

*“Your model should be in the chair at this time.”*

*“You must use an arm rest for the simulated application.”*

*“You will perform a simulated shave. Do not uncap the razor.”*

*“You will apply the stencil to the forearm.”*

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

*“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.”*

*“Raise your hand to indicate you have finished.”*

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

(2) *“You may begin.”*

**2.1 Prepares client’s skin**

**2.2 Applies stencil**

**2.3 Disposes of all contaminated supplies**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if candidate has raised their hand to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

*“The candidate has indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”*

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if the timer goes off before the candidate has indicated they have completed this section of the examination:

*“Please stop working.”*

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**3. MACHINE ASSEMBLY (10 MINUTES)**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate:

*“You will assemble your machine.”*

*“You must present your packaged tube and needle to the examiner prior to beginning machine assembly.”*

*“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.”*

*“Raise your hand to indicate you have finished.”*

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

(2) *“You may begin.”*

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

*“Please present your tube and needle.”*

### **3.1 Assembles Machine**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if candidate has raised their hand to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

*“The candidate has 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 the candidate has indicated they have completed this section of the examination:

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

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

*“Please power your machine on and off at this time. **Do not** touch the needle to skin.”*

### **3.2 Powers machine on and off**

### **3.3 Disposes of all contaminated supplies**

**NOTE: Examiner will unplug power supply to tattoo machine**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate when examiner has indicated they have completed their assessment:

*“The examiner has indicated they are ready to proceed.”*

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**4. DEMONSTRATION OF SIMULATED TATTOO PROCEDURE AND  
CONCLUSION (Untimed)**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate:

*“You will demonstrate a simulated tattoo application and conclusion of the tattoo procedure”*

*“The power to your machine has been disconnected.”*

*“You must use an arm rest for the simulated tattoo application until instructed to stop.”*

*“Do not touch the client with the needle.”*

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

*“You will be instructed by the examiner to demonstrate simulated tattoo application.”*

*“This is an untimed section.”*

*“Do not begin to demonstrate until the examiner instructs you to do so.”*

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

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

*“Please demonstrate simulated procedure for tattoo application until instructed to stop.”*

**4.1 Disperses pigment**

**4.2 Demonstrates simulated procedure for tattoo application**

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

*“Please stop working. Please add another ink cap, disperse pigment, and continue with your simulation”*

**4.3 Adds additional ink cap and fills with ink**

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

*“Please stop your simulation and conclude the tattoo procedure.”*

**4.4 Conclusion of tattoo procedure**

**Examiner – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate after conclusion of tattoo procedure has been examined:

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

**4.5 Disposes of all contaminated supplies**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate: when examiner has indicated they have completed their assessment:

*“The examiner has indicated they are ready to proceed. The model is excused at this time.”*



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**5. BREAKDOWN PROCEDURAL AREA SUPPLIES, AND EQUIPMENT  
AND CONCLUSION OF TATTOO SERVICE (20 minutes)**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate:

*“You will breakdown the procedural area(s) and surface(s) and properly dispose of supplies used during the tattoo service.”*

*“Do nothing with the foot switch at this time.”*

*“You will follow all steps to conclude the service and ensure personal protection.”*

*“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.”*

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

*“Raise your hand to indicate you have finished.”*

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

(2) *“You may begin.”*

**5.1 Breaks down procedural work surface(s) and work area(s), supplies, and equipment**

**5.2 Cleans up and concludes service**

**5.3 Disposes of all contaminated supplies**

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

*You have completed the tattoo procedure. Follow all steps to conclude the service to ensure personal protection.”*

**5.4 Completes personal protection procedures**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if candidate has raised their hand to indicate they have completed the section before the timing has elapsed:

*“The candidate has 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 the candidate has indicated they have completed this section:

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

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**6. WORK AREA SET UP FOR NEW CLIENT (20 minutes)**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to candidate:

*“You will set up the supplies and equipment you will use for the NEW client.”*

**(Additional Verbal Instruction if Foot Switch is Used)** *“Do nothing with the foot switch until instructed by the examiner.”*

*“Raise your hand to indicate you have finished the set up for NEW client.”*

*“You will not assemble your machine or disperse pigment at this time.”*

*“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.”*

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

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

(2) *“You may begin.”*

**6.1 Prepares supplies and equipment**

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

*“Please demonstrate disinfection and storage for transportation of foot switch only. Place the foot switch on the floor under the table.”*

**6.2 Disposes of all contaminated supplies**

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

*“Please follow all steps to ensure personal protection.”*

**6.3 Completes personal protection procedures**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if candidate has raised their hand to indicate they have completed the section before timing has elapsed:

*“The candidate has indicated they have completed this section of the examination, we will now proceed.”*

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read if the timer goes off before the candidate has indicated they have completed this section of the examination:

*“Please stop working.”*

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**CANDIDATE SUMMARY AND FINAL CLEANUP**

**Proctor – Verbal Instructions:** Read to all candidates at the conclusion of the examination:

*“The examiner has indicated they have completed their assessment.”*

*“Make sure that all kit, supplies, equipment, and disposable materials are taken with you.”*

*“This concludes the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology, National Tattoo Practical Examination.”*

*“Thank you for your participation.”*

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***SUGGESTED EXAMINATION SUPPLIES***

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**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.

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

**Special Instructions**

- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant must be real product, not simulated
- If a hand washing station is not provided in the testing room, the nearest restroom will serve as the hand washing station
- Live model must have pre-shaved forearm and free of tattoos
- Model should be free of tattoos in demonstration area
- A foot switch is considered contaminated at all times, and should be packaged separately from all other equipment

**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 with manufacturer's label (*must be actual hand sanitizer*)
- container labeled "items to be disinfected/sterilized"
- container labeled "sharps"
- container labeled "trash"
- trash bags
- first aid kit
- tattoo machine
- power supply (*clip cord, foot switch, power cord*)
- arm rest
- disposable gloves (*medical grade*)
- grommets
- rubber bands
- tongue depressors
- petroleum jelly, ointment(s), etc.
- ink caps
- stencil solution
- prepared stencil (*approx. 2x3 inches*)
- barriers
- tape
- paper towels (*sealed roll*)
- irrigation bottles (*labeled in English*)

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- pigment (*MUST comply with state and/or local regulations*)
- razor (*MUST be capped for simulated shaving*)
- tubes (*MUST be packaged and sterile*)
- needle(s) (*MUST be packaged and sterile*)
- protective covering for tattoo (*MUST comply with state and/or local regulations*)