



NATIONAL BARBER  
THEORY EXAMINATION

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BULLETIN (CIB)

**EXAMINATION CONTENT AND IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS**

*Please visit your examination provider's website for the most current bulletin prior to testing.*

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The National Barber Theory Examination is the licensure examination for Barbers, which is developed by the National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology (NIC). This bulletin contains **IMPORTANT INFORMATION** regarding the examination, including content outline covered by the theory examination, sample questions and answers, and references. The time allowed for the Barber Theory Examination is 90 minutes.

**PLEASE REVIEW ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY.**

For each NIC National Theory 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 Theory examination and information and guidelines related to administration of the Theory examination.
- **References** – This provides a list of references used to develop and support the content covered in the examination. The references are always the same for the 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**

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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.
- With the exception of verbal instructions, the proctors and examination administration personnel are not allowed to communicate with candidates.
- If you have an emergency situation please notify the proctor.
- 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.
  - Communicating to other candidates.
  - Exhibiting disruptive behavior.
    - *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 your immediate dismissal from the examination and your actions reported to the proper authorities.*

**BARBER THEORY EXAMINATION  
CONTENT OUTLINE**

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The following outlines the scope of content covered by the NIC National Barber Theory Examination. The percentages represent the percentage of items from each domain. The examination is comprised of 60 items of which 50 items are weighted and contribute to the candidate's final score.

**1. Scientific Concepts - 35%**

- A. Infection Control and Safety Practices
  - 1. Identify how disease and infection are caused and transmitted
  - 2. Apply principles of infection control
    - a. Sanitation/Cleansing
    - b. Disinfection
    - c. Sterilization
    - d. Contamination and cross-contamination
  - 3. Apply blood exposure procedures
  - 4. Identify requirements of government agencies related to public protection (e.g., CDC, OSHA, EPA)
- B. Human anatomy and physiology
  - 1. Identify function and structure of the
    - a. Hair and scalp
    - b. Skin
  - 2. Identify bones related to
    - a. Head and face
    - b. Neck, shoulders, and upper back
  - 3. Identify muscles and joints and their functions related to
    - a. Head and face
    - b. Neck, shoulders, and upper back
  - 4. Understand the functions of body systems
    - a. Nervous system
    - b. Circulatory system
    - c. Endocrine system
    - d. Integumentary system
- C. Identify signs and symptoms of conditions, disorders, and diseases related to skin
  - 1. Types
  - 2. Treatments
- D. Identify signs and symptoms of conditions, disorders, and diseases related to hair
  - 1. Types
  - 2. Treatments
- E. Basic chemistry of products used in barbering
  - 1. Understand the chemical pH scale
  - 2. Understand purpose and effects of products, ingredients, and their interactions
  - 3. Understand interactions among chemicals
  - 4. Understand chemical reactions (e.g., overexposure, chemical burn, inhalation)

**2. Implements and Equipment - 10%**

- A. Identify function, purpose, and care of tools used in hair services
  - 1. Equipment (e.g., chair, workstation)
  - 2. Implements (e.g., razors, shears, combs/brushes)
  - 3. Supplies and materials (e.g., towels, drape, neck strips)
  - 4. Electrical tools (e.g., clippers, blow dryers)
- B. Understand and apply safety and sanitation practices for use of implements and equipment

**3. Hair Care Services - 40%**

- A. Client consultation, analysis, and documentation for hair care services
  - 1. Analyze condition of client's hair and scalp (i.e., assessment)
  - 2. Recognize conditions that would prohibit service (i.e., contraindications)
  - 3. Determine services and/or products
  - 4. Document and maintain client records (e.g., consultation card, service history, medical history)
- B. Hair Care
  - 1. Apply knowledge of draping (e.g., chemical, shampoo, haircutting)
  - 2. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for shampooing and conditioning
  - 3. Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for scalp treatments and scalp massage/manipulation
- C. Hair Design
  - 1. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures, and safety of haircutting
    - a. Shaping
    - b. Outlining
    - c. Neck shave
  - 2. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures, and safety of hair styling
    - a. Wet styling
    - b. Blow-dry styling
    - c. Thermal styling
    - d. Natural hair styling (e.g., braiding, locks)
  - 3. Apply knowledge of hair enhancement options
- D. Apply knowledge of preparation, procedures, and safety for head shaving
- E. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures, and safety for chemical services
  - 1. Understand preliminary tests (e.g., purposes, uses, applications):
    - a. Predisposition
    - b. Strand test
  - 2. Hair coloring (including facial hair)
  - 3. Hair lightening
  - 4. Foiling
  - 5. Chemical hair relaxing/restructuring and curl reduction
    - a. Hydroxide
    - b. Thio
    - c. Keratin
  - 6. Chemical waving/texturizing:
    - a. Alkaline
    - b. Acid
    - c. Non-thio

**4. Facial Hair and Skin Care Services - 15%**

- A. Client consultation, analysis, and documentation for facial hair and skin care services
  - 1. Evaluate client's skin (e.g., type, condition)
  - 2. Identify contraindications:
    - a. Disorders
    - b. Diseases
  - 3. Determine services and/or products
  - 4. Document and maintain client records (e.g., consultation card, service history, medical history)
- B. Apply knowledge of draping for facial hair and skin care services
- C. Apply knowledge of principles, procedures, and safety for facial hair and skin care services
  - 1. Complete shave service with required strokes
  - 2. Facial hair design
  - 3. Facial (e.g., cleansing, steam towel, massage)
  - 4. Electrotherapy and light therapy
- D. Apply knowledge of purpose and types of electrotherapy and light therapy

**BARBER THEORY EXAMINATION  
SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

The following sample questions are similar to those on the NIC Barber Theory Examination. Each question is followed by four answer options. Only one option is correct. Correct answers (keys) are listed following the sample questions.

1. Anthrax and tetanus bacilli form which type of spore?
  - a. Mitosis
  - b. Flagella
  - c. Spherical
  - d. Infectious
2. All French style shears
  - a. are cobalt metal.
  - b. have a finger brace.
  - c. are made in France.
  - d. have tight pivots.
3. Prior to a shaving service the headrest **MUST** be
  - a. washed and dried.
  - b. disinfected and covered.
  - c. washed and removed.
  - d. sanitized and sterilized.
4. To avoid damage to muscle tissue, the movements of a massage are directed
  - a. away from the origin of the muscle.
  - b. toward the origin of the muscle.
  - c. around the origin of the muscle.
  - d. above the origin of the muscle.
5. Which of the following can permanently relieve split ends?
  - a. Applying oil to the ends
  - b. Using a styling gel on the ends
  - c. Moistening the ends
  - d. Cutting the ends
6. The diameter of a single strand of hair is also called
  - a. growth pattern.
  - b. porosity.
  - c. density.
  - d. texture.
7. What should be performed **FIRST** before applying permanent haircolor?
  - a. Strand test
  - b. Patch test
  - c. Curl test
  - d. Texture test
8. Before sodium hydroxide processing, hair should be analyzed to determine its
  - a. acidity.
  - b. alkalinity.
  - c. texture, porosity, and elasticity.
  - d. density, color, and end bonds.

**Answers**

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|------|------|------|
| 1. c | 4. b | 7. b |
| 2. b | 5. d | 8. c |
| 3. b | 6. d |      |