

MASSACHUSETTS BARBER EXAMINATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NOTE: Live Models are required for all tasks. Models are allowed to take their mask off for the shave task on the Practical. See requirements in the Candidate Handbook for models.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES FOR THE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION:

What are the new safety requirements to take the Practical Exam?

Candidates taking the Practical exam are considered "workers" in a salon and expected to follow the same "Workplace Safety Standards for Close Contact Personal Services" established by the state of MA to address Covid-19 that requires workers to wear gloves, smocks, safety glasses or goggles, and face masks.

Where can I find this information to prepare for my Practical?

The information for required "Additional Protective Equipment" can be found in the Candidate Handbook, Aug. 2020, on page 7, "What to Bring."

What if I don't have all the PPE required?

If you do not bring these items, you will not be allowed to take the Practical Exam.

What is the new requirement for smocks?

Smocks with Sleeves for Candidates – All candidates must have a smock or lab coat (not sleeveless) that must cover clothing. Uniforms and scrubs must be covered. Aprons are not allowed.

Do I have to wear a face mask during the entire exam? Does my model?

Yes. Face masks must be worn the entire time at the test site (both candidate and model) however, the model is allowed to remove their mask briefly during the Shave Task. The Evaluator will provide instructions for this.

Do I have to wear a face shield?

Yes. Face shield, goggles, or eyeglasses of any kind are required for the candidate only during the practical.

Do I have to wear gloves for the entire exam?

Yes. Gloves must be worn by the candidates during the entire exam. However, because the model is considered the same client for all tasks on the Practical, you are only expected to change the gloves if they've become unsanitary. Treat your gloved hands as you would your own and sanitize or replace the gloves accordingly.

What kind of disinfectant is acceptable for cleaning the workstation?

It is now required to have Disinfectant with a manufacturer's label on it (EPA Registered, hospital grade required) for the workstation.

Can we bring a bottle containing a (home-made) disinfectant or disinfectant wipes in a zip-lock bag?

Yes, but it must have a manufacturer's label on it, printed and taped on the product is acceptable.

Can we use alcohol to disinfect/sanitize our workstation and supplies?

Yes. Alcohol (70% isopropyl alcohol) is an approved disinfectant/sanitizer. Although it is not listed on the supply list, it is acceptable in place of a disinfectant/workstation sanitizer.

Can we use home-made Hand Sanitizer?

Yes, but it must be labeled "Hand Sanitizer".

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

Will printed applications be accepted at the test site?

The Board would prefer that you use the printed (colored) applications. However, they will accept a printed copy as long as the application has an original verification signed and stamped by your school.

What if I forget something on my supply list?

Please refer to the supply list listed in the Candidate Handbook and note; if a candidate forgets to bring the required supplies, or if their supplies are not labeled, they will be scored accordingly. If it is a mandatory item to take the Practical or if the candidate shows up to the Practical examination with no supplies at all, they will be disqualified. Fees will apply.

Is there a timeframe allotted for each Task? Does that include the set up and the cleanup of Task supplies?

Yes, the timeframes include set up and take down of supplies. Please read the steps in the Tasks and timeframes carefully.

Can I use a debit card as my secondary identification?

Yes, if that identification card has the same name as your primary ID and signature.

Can students use their driving permits as a government form of identification when they arrive at the test center?

The permit must be government issued, not expired, and have a photo with signature. If it doesn't have these required fields, it cannot be used.

If I do not have hand soap or hand sanitizer, will I still be able to test?

No. Hand soap or Hand sanitizer is now a mandatory supply. You must have one or the other (labeled) to take the Practical.

What if I don't have disinfectant for my workstation?

It is mandatory that all candidates for the Practical Exam bring Disinfectant with manufacturer's label (EPA Registered, hospital grade required) for the workstation.

Where can I find the list of mandatory supplies and Barber equipment required to take the Practical?

Mandatory supplies are listed on pg. 7 in the Candidate Handbook, "What to Bring." Please read through this entire section carefully and note all requirements for the Barber Practical.

Do I need to have a first aid kit?

Yes, a first aid kit is required and must contain the following items: Antiseptic, bandages, multiple pairs of gloves, cotton wipes, and liquid or powdered styptic, and multiple plastic baggies labeled "BIO HAZARD."

May I use small trashcans instead of trash bags for my soiled items and disposable items?

Yes.

Does my model need to have one inch of hair on the entire head?

Barber haircuts require 1 inch of hair on top of the head and no less than ¼ inch of hair at nape and sideburn area.

Do I tape the trash bags to the station or the chair?

Tape is not allowed; you may tie trash bags to the arms of the barber chair.

Does the model need to have visible stubble on the face for the 14- stroke shave?

Yes, it is imperative that the model has VISIBLE stubble on the face for the 14-stroke shave.

What if I do not have what I need to complete a certain task?

Corresponding steps in the task will be marked no, which may cause the candidate to fail the examination.

How important is it that I have all products labeled?

It is imperative that all products are labeled or contained in the original manufacturer's bottles properly labeled.

What if I (or my model) have to use the bathroom during the test?

You are permitted to use the bathroom, with the Evaluator's permission. It is preferred that the candidate and their model use the facilities before the examination.

Do I really need 2 forms of identification?

Yes. Candidates are required to bring one legal identification with a photo and signature. The other identification must have a matching signature to the first form. If you do not have the correct identification, you will be asked to reschedule your examination and fees will apply.

How long is the practical exam?

You will have 2 ½ hours to complete the practical exam.

Do I need to wait for the Evaluator to check the haircut before I begin the shave?

No, you may continue on with your next task. The Evaluator will read you instructions before the examination.

What is a business casual attire shirt? Can't I wear a t-shirt to the examination?

The State Board requires a shirt with a collar. A tie is not required. Please see the Dress Code requirement for Barbers on pg. 9 in the Candidate Handbook.

What happens if I fail the practical and pass the written or vice versa?

You are required to re-take either the practical or the written examination that you may have failed. You are required to pass the failed theory/practical examination within 2 years of your first exam, otherwise you to have to retake both the written and practical examination.

Do I need to have my license application with me when I arrive at the test center?

Yes, you must have your completed and signed license application with you when you arrive at the test center. If your application was issued prior to June 1, 2019, you will need to download and complete a CORI acknowledgement form, which also must be notarized and brought to the testing center. If you arrive without the license application or CORI form, you will be asked to reschedule for another day and pay the rescheduling fee.

Will you tell me if I passed the practical?

Once you have completed the practical and/or the written examination, you will be given both of your test results. If you failed any portion of those examinations, instructions will be included for rescheduling. Fees will apply.

If I fail the practical, can I ask the Evaluator what I did wrong?

Evaluators are not permitted to discuss your results. Your score sheet will include the steps on the task you performed incorrectly.

What neck protection is preferred; a two-ply Professional Service Towel (PST)?

A 5" Professional Service Paper towel should be utilized.

May I use paper towels instead of terry towels for my draping?

Terry cloth towels are required in your supply list.

Should I dampen my model's hair prior to giving a scalp massage?

You may dampen your model's hair with water, but it's not required.

Does the test center provide a sanitizer jar with barbicide or do I have to provide one?

Candidates are NOT required to bring barbicide, it is provided at the test sites.

Do the test centers provide a hone and strop for demonstrating this skill?

Yes, these are provided at the test centers.

May I throw my used blades in the trash when I am done with them?

No, used blades must be disposed of in a bio-hazard container that you bring. You will be required to take the container with you upon the completion of your exam.

May I shave my model even though he has acne?

No, it is not recommended to shave someone who has acne. The evaluator may dismiss you and your model for safety reasons.

May I bring a haircut model and a different shave model?

Yes, you can bring a different model for the haircut and the shave. All models are required to provide proper identification. Models must be at least 16 years of age. Models must not be a cosmetologist, barber, aesthetician or manicurist or going to school for these occupations. Please see the Model requirements listed on pg. 16 in the Candidate Handbook.

Does it matter if I use shave gel or shave foam?

No. Either gel or foam may be utilized.

Do I have to do a precise 14-stroke shave?

Pearson VUE and the Massachusetts Board of Cosmetology and Barbering mandates a 14-stroke face shave be performed for the practical examinations.

When should I ask my model to remove their mask for the shave task?

The evaluator will give instructions prior to the shave task.

Will I fail if my barber jacket/cape is wrinkled?

No.

What do I do if I cut my model?

If you cut your model, you must follow the Universal Precaution procedure regarding nicks or cuts. Universal Precautions are as follows: Apply gloves, use an antiseptic wipe to clean the wound, apply liquid or powdered styptic until nick or cut is contained, bandage if necessary, and double bag all disposables in bio hazard baggies and take home with you for proper disposal. Do NOT leave rubbish in any trash receptacle at the test site.

Do I have to sanitize the station before I begin?

Yes, everything but the mirror must be sanitized. The mirror and the entire station must be sanitized at the end of the test.

What happens if I don't bring all my tools/supplies?

All of the prerequisites must be met and all your supplies/tools must be accounted for as you are setting up your station for the exam. If you do not have the proper tools for the task, you will be marked NO on that task. If you have no supplies, you will be disqualified from the exam. Fees will apply.

May I reuse a towel if I run out of towels?

You cannot reuse towels, it is considered unsanitary. You will be marked no for that task on your score sheet.

May I use trimmers?

No, trimmers are not allowed.

What happens if I take longer than the 2 ½ hours to complete the Practical?

You will be asked to stop when your time runs out and you will be marked wrong for the remaining tasks that were incomplete.

If my shears are not 7-7 ½ inches can I still use them?

If your shears are not the appropriate length, the sections pertaining to shear work will be marked "no."

May I bring my own hot lather machine to the practical test?

Yes, you can bring your own hot lather machine.