

PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF BARBER EXAMINERS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APPLICATION AND SKILLS:

1. Do Barbers still take a practical examination?

Yes. Barbers are required to perform and pass a practical examination as well as a theory examination, in order to obtain a license in Pennsylvania.

2. Why are haircoloring, permanent waving, and chemical straightening on the practical examination when Barbers rarely perform these skills?

Chemical services are in the scope of practice for Barbers. In order to be licensed, candidates must show an entry-level skill on these requirements.

3. Can I take the practical examination before I take the theory examination?

Candidates may take the theory or practical examination at any given time in any order. However, the candidate has one year from the date of the first examination to pass the second examination. If both exams are not passed within one year, both exams must be retaken.

Applications for the examination will expire 1 year after issuance date if no exam is taken *or* 1 year after the first exam is taken.

4. Where do I find the practical test sites?

Candidates may search for cities where practical test sites are located by viewing the following: <https://home.pearsonvue.com/Publications/133910.pdf>

5. Where do I find the theory exam test site?

Candidate may search for exam sites via the Pearson VUE web site at: <https://home.pearsonvue.com/pa/cosmetology>

6. How much time is given on the practical examination?

The Barber practical examination is approximately 2 ½ hours and the Barber Teacher practical examination is approximately 2 hours.

7. What if something happens on the day that I'm supposed to take my examination and I can't make it to the test site? Will I still be charged the examination fee?

Please see the absence policy in the [Candidate Handbook](#) on page 5.

8. **Why does the Candidate Handbook say that I should be 30 minutes early for my practical examination?**

The handbook advises to be 30 minutes early for your practical examination because the exam promptly starts at the designated exam time. If you are not present at the exam start time, you will be disqualified from the examination.

9. **Does the timeframe that is listed for the skills include the setup and take down of the scenario?**

Yes. The setup and take down of all supplies are included in the timeframe. You will *not* receive extra time to set up supplies. Sufficient time is allowed in the overall scenario.

10. **What if I forget something on my supply list? Can I borrow from someone else?**

If a candidate forgets to bring the required items, as listed in the [Candidate Handbook](#), page 5, they will be disqualified. If a candidate forgets any other supply, they will be marked accordingly. Candidates are not allowed to borrow any supplies from another candidate, model, evaluator, or test site.

11. **Can a Barber fail if they do not have all their containers labeled? Even if it is one product?**

The State of Pennsylvania requires products and chemicals to be correctly labeled. Please read the supply list carefully. All the items that are required to be labeled are listed and expected to be followed.

The examination is based on established cut scores for each skill. The cut scores were determined by a panel of subject matter experts and are based on the overall difficulty of the skill and the specific steps required to perform the skill correctly. If a candidate fails too many steps within a particular skill, it is a possibility they will fail the whole examination. Candidates must pass each skill in order to pass the exam. Again, if they do not have the required materials or supplies for the required skill; the candidate may be disqualified. (Another example: Chemical Relaxer for chemical relaxing skill).

12. **If a candidate fails the haircutting portion of the practical examination, can they just take that part over again or do they have to take the whole practical examination?**

The failure of any portion of the practical examination requires the whole test to be taken over.

13. **Why do I have to bring a first aid kit?**

Please see the Universal Safety Precautions, defined in question #14 below.

14. **What is required of a Barber who cuts their own finger or their model? Will they automatically fail?**

Universal Precautions must be adhered to in all states. The candidate must first stop the skill immediately if they have a blood spill. They must put a glove on the uninjured hand and use their items from the first aid kit. Specifically, they must wipe down the wound, using an antiseptic (not alcohol), bandage it, and put all disposable items in one baggie labeled "biohazard." That baggie must then be put in another baggie labeled "bio-hazard." These bio-hazard baggies must be thrown in the candidate's own trash can and not left on the premises anywhere at the test site. If the wound continues to bleed, the candidate must apply a glove to that wound and keep it on for the remaining skills to prevent further contamination. If the wound is too serious, the candidate may have to leave the test site. Remember, no extra time is given for this accident, so be aware of your time. The candidate may or may not be marked for unsafe practices determined by the evaluator. Accidents do happen. If a candidate does not have a first aid kit, they will be disqualified immediately. Another form of unsafe procedure that involves Universal Precautions is someone who wipes their nose on their hand and then touches the model or blows on a model's hand. Even if that model is a mannequin.

15. **Will theory examination questions come from the Milady or Salon Fundamental textbooks?**

Pearson VUE does not use any questions from the textbooks on the theory examination. Theory examination items are written by a committee of Subject Matter Experts and are classified to the content outline. Questions on the Barber and Barber Manager theory exams are based on information that can be found in the current edition of Milady's Standard Professional Barbering. Questions on the Barber Teacher theory exam are based on information from the current edition of the Milady Master Educator textbook. All barbering exams contain a state laws and rules portion that tests on current PA state laws and regulations. **Please click on the hyperlink to reference additional [PA Barber Practical Skills and Theory exam content information](#).**

16. **What is performed on a mannequin and what is performed on a live model?**

The Covid-19 safety modifications for the Practical have been rescinded and we have resorted back to pre-Covid, (2019) testing procedures and guidelines for the Practical Examination in test locations where face masks are not required. If the county you are testing in does not require face masks per CDC or local mandate, candidates and models are no longer required to wear face masks; but Pearson highly recommends continued use of face masks.

Male Facials: Barber and barber teacher candidates will complete all facial steps on their live model if the county you are testing in does not require face masks per CDC or local mandate.

Shave: All elements of the 14-stroke shave will be demonstrated on a live model if the county you are testing in does not require face masks per CDC or local mandate.

Pearson will continue to follow any updated CDC and local guidance closely. If anything changes, the Pearson VUE website will be frequently updated to reflect local or CDC guidance. **To confirm if face masks are required** for yourself and/or your live model, please check the Pearson VUE website: <https://home.pearsonvue.com/coronavirus-update#lookup>, then type in the city in which your testing site is located.

HAIRCUTTING

1. **Is the Basic layered haircut a 90 degree haircut?**

Yes. A 90 degree haircut is a basic layered haircut.

2. **Is there a certain amount of hair that we need to leave on the mannequin for any of the haircuts?**

Step #5 for a basic layered haircut states that you must remove a minimum of ½" of hair on the head. There is no required length of hair that must remain after the ½" is removed.

3. **Do we T-part the mannequin and only work in that one quadrant?**

Candidates perform a basic layered haircut on their mannequin in one quadrant of the head. The tapered haircut is performed on a live model and utilizes the whole bottom half of the head (See photo on website). The chemicals are performed on one quadrant of the mannequin.

4. **What if I need to change my blade at the test site due to an unforeseen complication? What do I do with the blade?**

Candidates are required to take the blade home with them. It is important that the blade is not left in any trash or waste receptacle. Altoid boxes make a great blade receptacle. Please come prepared!

HONING AND STROPPING

1. **Do I need to bring a hone and strop for my demonstration?**

No, the hone and strop will be supplied at the test site.

2. **Do I need to bring a straight razor?**

Yes, you will need to bring a **conventional straight razor**, not disposable, for the demonstration.