

MASSACHUSETTS COSMETOLOGY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

We are aware that you may have questions concerning the State Board Examinations. Please check this FAQ list before sending any inquiries. Some of you have already submitted your questions and we have addressed them below. All procedures for the general levels, MANICURISTS, AESTHETICIANS and COSMETOLOGISTS were founded on a panel of SME's (Subject Matter Experts) at a review meeting with the Massachusetts State Board.

NOTE: Live models are required for most tasks. See requirements in the Candidate Handbook for models, pg 8.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING CURRENT SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

1. Am I required to wear a face mask?

Yes, both you and your model must bring and wear your own face mask the entire time you are at the test center, including throughout your practical exam. A surgical or cloth face mask is acceptable as long as your nose and mouth are fully covered. Face masks with exhalation valves and face shields are not acceptable. We are unable to provide face masks to candidates. Please refer to the [CDC\(Opens in new window\)](#), [WHO\(Opens in new window\)](#), or your local health organization for best practices on choosing effective face masks. Candidates without a face mask will be denied testing services. You will be asked to briefly remove the mask during the check-in process to take the required candidate photo.

2. Do I need to bring a mannequin for my Practical Examination?

The Massachusetts Board of Cosmetology and Barbering has temporarily approved the use of mannequins for the Practical Portion of the Aesthetician Exam beginning in January, 2021. The Board approved these exam modifications and confirmed that these changes are meant to be temporary. Mannequins are provided to Aesthetician candidates at the test site. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic safety protocols, Pearson's face mask policy now requires everyone to wear face masks or face coverings while in testing centers, including the models during all demonstrations of the Practical Exams. In accordance with this policy, the Board has agreed to the use of mannequins for certain tasks that previously required the model to remove their mask.

Aesthetician Practical: Candidates are provided with an Aesthetic/Makeup mannequin specific for demonstrating the skills to meet the requirements for testing. Candidates are expected to demonstrate all steps of the tasks performed on mannequins and allowed to mock certain steps as outlined on pg. 7 in the Candidate Handbook.

The Board also approved modifications to the Barber and Cosmetology practical exams. **Cosmetology, Manicuring and Barber candidates are still required to bring a LIVE MODEL.** However, Cosmetology Candidates are provided mannequins to demonstrate Task #2 Basic Facial and Task #3 Makeup Application. Barber Candidates are required to bring a live model but are given specific instructions on performing the shave task on their model. Please refer to pg 7 in the Candidate Handbook for more details.

3. What is the current requirement for smocks?

Smocks are required for all candidates – All candidates must have a smock or lab coat that covers clothing. Uniforms, scrubs and aprons are allowed for Cosmetology, Aesthetics and Manicuring. Please see the detailed Dress Code requirements in the Candidate Handbook, pg. 10.

4. Do I have to wear a face shield?

Not currently. Face masks are required.

5. Do I have to wear gloves for the entire exam?

This is optional; however, gloves must be worn by the candidates during the Tasks that require gloves on the Practical. Keep in mind, the model is considered the same client for all tasks on the Practical, if you choose to wear gloves for the entire exam, 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Can we use home-made Hand Sanitizer?

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

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. 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.

2. Do we still have to have two forms of ID?

Yes, this is correct. Two forms of signature bearing identification (one must be photo-bearing). Please read full instructions in the current MA Candidate Handbook.

3. Do the evaluators still check the haircuts and chemical tasks?

No. Evaluators are not conducting hands-on checks of the candidates work at this time.

4. 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.

5. *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.

6. *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.

7. *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.

8. *If I fail the Infection Control and Safety Task #1, do I fail the entire exam?*

Yes. Candidates must pass Infection Control and Safety and the overall tasks for their practical exam. If a candidate passes the tasks but does NOT pass Infection Control and Safety, the candidate will be required to retest on the entire exam. The failing score report will indicate whether the candidate has failed Infection Control and Safety, the practical exam tasks, or both.

INFECTION CONTROL AND SAFETY

1. *Do I have to wear gloves for the entire Practical? Should I remove the gloves to sanitize my hands in between tasks?*

This is optional; however, gloves must be worn by the candidates during the Tasks that require gloves on the Practical. Keep in mind, the model is considered the same client for all tasks on the Practical, if you choose to wear gloves for the entire exam, 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.

2. *In each of the tasks it does not tell us to sanitize our hands and clean the tabletop, do we only have to do it one time?*

Candidates are required to sanitize their hands once at the beginning of the first task, and again if their hands become unsanitary during the course of the exam, then they must re-sanitize. They must also clean their workstation with disinfectant/sanitizer for workstation twice, once at the beginning of all tasks and also after completing the last task, unless their workstation becomes unsanitary during the course of the exam, then they must re-sanitize it.

Candidates are given instructions at the beginning of each task that includes instructions to clean up their work stations when they've completed the task. They are required to re-sanitize in between tasks only if their hands or workstations have become unsanitary.

3. *What if the candidate only has one cape and needs to re-use it?*

The draping is based on the task you are performing. Chemical capes are required for the chemical tasks, dual purpose capes are acceptable. If a candidate only has 1 cape and the cape becomes unsanitary, the candidate is allowed to re-sanitize it and the hands before using it again.

4. *Does the trash have to be sealed after each task?*

No.

5. Does the “soiled” container have to be sealed after each task?

No.

6. Why do we need a First Aid Kit?

Just as in the salon, a candidate or a model may be cut during a procedure. The first aid kit should be used to clean and attend to the wound. The First Aid Kit should be labeled and contain the following items: bandage, antiseptic (alcohol) wipes, gloves, and 2 plastic baggies for double bagging.

7. Why can't items I bring in be returned to the disinfected bag?

Once an item is used, it is no longer disinfected unless the candidate wants to take the time to disinfect that item. Otherwise, all items used must be placed in the soiled container/bag or trash. If the candidate does have to re-use that item, they need to spray it off with disinfectant/sanitizer.

8. What do I do if I cut my model or myself?

It is mandatory that you have a first aid kit included in your supplies. Universal Precautions should be adhered to when a candidate or model is cut.

1. Gloves
2. Wipe down wound with antiseptic
3. Bandage
4. Place items in bio hazard baggie.
5. Place bio hazard baggie in another baggie.
6. Dispose in your own trash.

Blood borne pathogen refuse should not be left at the test site under any circumstances. It should be removed and taken with the candidate. Remember, no extra time is given for an accident, so be aware of your time. The candidate will not fail if they take the proper steps in cleaning the wound and disposal of blood borne pathogenic material. However, they may have to go home without finishing the task if the cut is too serious.

9. Do I still have to re-sanitize my hands if I pick up a dropped item from the floor and it is placed in the trash?

Yes. Think of the tasks as if you were working on a client. You would wash your hands if you pick up things off the floor or put things in the trash can.

10. What is the difference between the disinfected and soiled bags?

All task bags which contain your clean implements, supplies, and products, should be labeled "disinfected." Once they are removed and used, they should be placed either in the bag labeled "soiled items" or the "trash."

11. Will the infection control and safety components be a separate Task or will they be incorporated into each practical section?

The safety and infection control components will be evaluated throughout all phases of the examination.

12. What do I label my bottle to clean my tabletops?

Bottle should be labeled: "Disinfectant/Sanitizer" as provided on the supply list.

13. What does the term "Prevents Cross-Contamination" mean?

Disposable items are not used more than one time, such as towels, spatulas, and cotton rounds.

Bottles should be pumps or product removed with a spatula that can be thrown away and not "double-dipped." All these are forms of preventing cross contamination.

14. What do I do if I drop an item on the floor that I need to use? Can I kick it to the side?

The candidate should pick the item up immediately, re-sanitize it if it needs to be used, re-sanitize hands and finish the task.

HAIRCUTTING

1. Is the haircut still a 90 degree haircut?

Yes. The basic layered haircut is a blended 90 degree haircut.

2. Can we cut 5" of hair off for the Basic Layered Haircut?

You are only required to remove a minimum of 1/4" of hair for the Basic Layered Haircut.

3. Can any drape be used on haircutting?

A neck strip or towel and a cutting or styling cape is required for the haircutting task.

4. During the haircutting Task on the Practical, do I need to complete a zero degree haircut before completing the layered haircut?

No, it is not necessary. The candidate should complete a 90 degree, basic layered (uniform) haircut.

THERMAL STYLING

1. How many curls are actually required for the Thermal Styling procedure?

The candidate is required to do 2 on base curls in the crown section on the head, and 2 off base curls on the side of the model's head.

2. I was told by my instructor it was better not to have a model that had long hair for the thermal styling. Is this correct?

Since the candidate is required to have 2 on base curls and 2 off base curls, it is much easier to perform these steps if the hair is no longer than 6-7 inches.

3. May I use a towel to drape around my model's neck during the Thermal Styling?

A neck strip or towel and hairstyling cape are required for the Task.

CHEMICAL SERVICES

- 1. Do we still have to pull relaxer through the ends on a virgin chemical relaxer?**
Yes.
- 2. Can I use the same bowl I have for Chemical Relaxing and Chemical Relaxer Retouch?** Yes.
The bowl or product should be labeled "Chemical Relaxer." This is not the same bowl or product you use for haircolor or highlight with foils tasks.
- 3. During the haircoloring application portion of the practical exam, can students use the same bowl for both haircolor re-touch and highlighting?**
Candidates may use the same bowl for highlighting and color. This is not the same bowl you use for chemical relaxing tasks.
- 4. On the chemical relaxer tasks, do we have to apply the base cream in between each parting?**
No, only around the entire quadrant you are using.
- 5. Is it true we only have to wrap 3 perm rods?**
That is correct. See Permanent Wave section of your Candidate Handbook.
- 6. Are all the chemical products mock?**
Yes, the chemical products are mock but must be labeled as the intended product. A mock product can be a setting lotion or gel but cholesterol is NOT recommended because it does not washout easily. Please read your supply list for further information.
- 7. Will the evaluator still have us check our perm rods and tell us when to do a test curl?** The Evaluator will first instruct the candidate to apply the product, then ask you to demonstrate taking a test curl and then ask you to remove the perm rods.
- 8. Do I still have to have 9 sections parted for the Permanent Wave Task?**
Yes, the State Board requires that you have a 9 section parting for your permanent wave task.

BRAIDING

- 1. Does the Braid have to fill the whole quadrant?**
Yes, the entire quadrant should be braided but any type of braid is acceptable.

FINGER WAVING AND PIN CURLS

1. ***What direction should the pin curls face?***

There should be 3 ridges of finger waves and 2 “c” shaped pin curls (one forward and one reverse) at the bottom of the finger waves. There is no preference in which direction you sculpt the waves/curls.

SHAMPOOING

1. ***Do we have to condition the hair after we shampoo it because there is such a short time for shampooing?***

No, conditioner is optional.

2. ***Do we have to clean the sink out after shampooing?***

Yes. You are required to do the necessary sanitizing after shampooing.

BASIC FACIAL, FACIAL CLEANSING, MASQUE, MANIPULATIONS

1. ***How do we remove product from the model?***

Please see individual Tasks. Warm water, astringent or toner is used on cotton pads to remove product

2. ***Can we still bring in wet cotton rounds for the eye pads on the masque application?***

Yes. See Supply List.

3. ***Does the masque have to be applied to the neck and chest?***

No.

4. ***Do we have to wait for the masque to process?***

No.

5. ***Are we expected to drape with a head band and a drape across the chest?***

Yes. See supply list.

6. ***Are we required to cover the model's chair with a sheet or towel?***

Yes (Aesthetics Exam only).

7. ***Are we expected to bring in a magnifying loupe?***

No, an inexpensive magnifying glass will suffice.

8. ***Do we really have to talk to the model on the skin analysis?***

Yes, it is required to describe model's skin type and recommend services and products.

HAIR REMOVAL

- 1. Is it true that we only have to perform hair removal, waxing or tweezing on one eyebrow?**
Yes, only one singular hair on 1 eyebrow can be removed as long as it is demonstrated correctly.
- 2. Can we use a cold wax without strips to perform waxing?**
The wax is a mock wax, cream, or gel labeled "wax" and strips are a required item.
- 3. Why do we have to wear gloves on hair removal?**
Universal Precautions.
- 4. Will the candidate be marked if they do not wear gloves?**
Yes.
- 5. Does the model have to be draped during hair removal?**
Draping is not required on the practical for the Hair Removal tasks.

MAKEUP APPLICATION

- 1. Will a candidate fail if only one cosmetic product is not labeled?**
Candidates will be marked according to what is labeled correctly. If the makeup is not labeled properly (manufacturing label is ok), THEY WILL BE MARKED ACCORDINGLY and may fail the examination.
- 2. Step # 5 under Task #3 Makeup Application, on the Cosmetology exam states: Applies eyebrow pencil. Is that a misprint or are we doing eyebrow pencil instead of eyeliner?**
Eyebrow pencil is required, eyeliner is not. The pencil is sanitized with a disinfected sharpener.
- 3. If mascara is a required cosmetic, how do we apply it to a model and be sanitary?**
Use disposable applicator wands and avoid double dipping. (Mock this application if using a mannequin.)
- 4. Can a candidate do both eyes with mascara with only one dip of the wand?**
Yes.

BASIC MANICURE AND POLISH APPLICATION

1. Do we still have to have a bowl with water on the basic manicure?

Yes, it should be labeled. Please read supply list carefully.

2. Can we bring in water already bottled, so we don't have to go get water?

Yes. The candidate can bring in their own water.

3. Task #4 on the Cosmetology skill, step #10 states to dry client's hand and nails. Do we have to have a towel for this?

Yes, either a paper towel or a cloth towel is recommended.

4. Do we have to do both hands on the manicure?

No, only one hand is required.

5. How many sets of manicuring implements should a candidate bring?

A candidate may re-use the manicuring implements if they disinfect by spraying down implement with disinfectant/sanitizer, so only one set is required.

6. Are we expected to bring real polish remover and polish?

The candidate is expected to bring real products for the polish application and remover. All products should be clearly labeled ex: "base coat, "top coat." A dark colored polish is required. A polish correction pen for the removal on sidewalls of nails is optional.

7. How do we remove the excess polish from the skin?

With the polish correction pen or an orangewood stick and polish remover.

8. Does the entire table have to be covered with paper for the manicure?

No, the table has already been sprayed with disinfectant/sanitizer. If in doubt, you may disinfect/sanitize again.

9. Do we actually cut the cuticles?

No. A candidate is to "mock" demonstrate the ability to trim excess cuticle.