

CRITICAL CARE PARAMEDIC

Certification Exam

Candidate Handbook

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Critical Care Paramedic

Certification Exam

Candidate Handbook

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Critical Care Paramedic Certification

The recognition of a Critical Care Paramedic in Tennessee has been established by the Emergency Medical Services Board as a skill set above that received in the Initial Paramedic Training. The Emergency Medical Services Board has identified a scope of practice for the Critical Care Paramedic in Tennessee. Critical Care Paramedic Modules were designed to create continuity within Critical Care Paramedic Training in Tennessee to ensure all programs were consistent with the overall terminal objective - a competent safe and efficient Critical Care Paramedic capable of practicing within the Scope of Practice identified within the Emergency Medical Services Rules and Regulations. The committee members felt it necessary to both identify and assess these objectives that must be met in every program. The Critical Care Paramedic certification exam was developed to further ensure this consistency and continuity of all Critical Care Paramedics within the State of Tennessee.

The following information regarding Certification as a Critical Care Paramedic was taken from the Rules of the Tennessee Department of Health, Bureau of Health Licensure and Regulation, Division of Emergency Medical Services, Chapter 1200-12-05, Critical Care Paramedic:

1200-12-5-.01 PREAMBLE: To provide for the on-going care of a critically injured or ill patient during an inter-facility transport and other special situations, the Tennessee Emergency Medical Services Board authorizes endorsement of EMT-Paramedics with additional training to perform special critical care. The Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic Critical Care shall be a person who is licensed as a Tennessee Emergency Medical Technician Paramedic and has successfully completed a critical care paramedic program recognized by the Division of Emergency Medical Services, Tennessee Department of Health or comparable training and education, and received endorsement from the training institution and the department, and who is licensed to practice advanced emergency medical care upon the order or under the supervision of a physician or authorized registered nurse.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 4-5-202, 4-5-204, 68-140-504, 68-140-506, 68-140-508, and 68-140-517. Administrative History: Original rule filed August 24, 2006; effective November 7, 2006.

About the Tennessee Critical Care Paramedic Certification Exam

The questions on the Critical Care Paramedic Certification Examination are based on the training modules and objectives used in the Critical Care Paramedic training course. The questions on the exam will be multiple-choice in format and will have four (4) answer choices. They are taken from information taken from a variety of Critical Care nursing and paramedic sources. For each question, you must decide which *one* of the choices is the *best* answer. Even though some answers may be somewhat correct, one of the choices represents a *best* answer. You must decide which one of the choices is the *best* answer. We recommend that you read the entire question and all response choices before making your decision.

You will be provided an answer sheet on which to mark your answers. You will indicate which answer you have selected by darkening the bubble on the answer sheet which corresponds to the *one* answer that you think is *best*.

This test consists of approximately 100 questions. You will be allowed 3 hours for the examination. You must achieve a score of 69% or better on the certification exam to pass. You will be given one point for each correct answer. No points will be deducted for incorrect answers. There is no penalty for guessing if you do not know the correct answer.

Please note that test takers are NOT PERMITTED to bring ANY electronic communication or recording devices such as cellular phones, pagers, palm pilots, radios, cassette/digital recording devices, laptops, etc., into the written test site. Possession of one or more of these prohibited devices inside of the testing center will result in disqualification. In addition, brief cases and other personal items must be left outside of the testing center. Upon completion of the testing process, candidates must leave the testing premises. Candidates found attempting to reconstruct the exam will be disqualified from sitting for subsequent exams. Failure to obey the rules and instructions before, during, and after the examination may result in disqualification from the examination. Be sure to listen to all instructions carefully. If you do not follow instructions, you may hurt your chances for a good score.

Prerequisites for the Critical Care Paramedic Certification Exam

The following are required prerequisites for individuals entering a Critical Care Paramedic Training Program:

1. Successful completion of a State Approved Critical Care Paramedic Program.

Sample Questions

The following items are *similar* to the items you may expect to find on the Critical Care Paramedic Certification Exam. Questions will be based on material from each of the training modules and objectives used in the Critical Care Paramedic training course.

Medical Legal

1. You have been found guilty in a court of law with failure to comply with reasonable standards of care under circumstances related to a critical care transport that you performed. Based on this information, you realize you have been found guilty of which of the following?
 - a. injury
 - b. causation
 - c. breach of duty
 - d. negligence

2. The actions and care that you are legally able to provide as a critical care paramedic fall under which of the following?
 - a. Standards of Care
 - b. Medical Control
 - c. Standing Orders
 - d. Scope of Practice

Respiratory

3. Carotid and aortic bodies respond to hypercapnia by:
 - a. vasodilating the pulmonary arteries and veins.
 - b. decreasing the respiratory rate.
 - c. increasing the respiratory rate.
 - d. vasoconstricting the pulmonary arteries and veins.

4. You arrive at a rural hospital to transport a 22 year-old male with a left-sided chest tube after a diagnosis of pneumothorax. On your exam, you notice the chest tube is not connected to suction, but you note continuous vigorous bubbling in the water seal. Based on your understanding of chest tubes, which of the following is a **CORRECT** statement?
 - a. The chest tube may be displaced.
 - b. The pneumothorax may have resolved.
 - c. The patient probably has a slow respiratory rate.
 - d. This is a normal finding in a chest tube not connected to suction.

Cardiovascular

5. As a critical care paramedic, you are transporting a patient with a pulmonary artery catheter in place. You observe the values to be abnormally elevated. Which of the following should be your first action?
 - a. administer bolus of fluids
 - b. ensure transducer action
 - c. administer dopamine 3 mcg/kg/min
 - d. administer nitroglycerin 10 mcg/min

6. A patient presents during transport with pulmonary crackles, distended jugular veins, and peripheral pitting edema. The paramedic should consider a treatment regimen for which of the following?
 - a. cardiac tamponade
 - b. tension pneumothorax
 - c. simple pneumothorax
 - d. congestive heart failure

Neurological

7. When transporting a patient with suspected intracranial hypertension, which of the following are priorities during transport?
 - a. mild hypocarbia, euglycemia, normothermia
 - b. hyperglycemia, hypercarbia, hyperthermia
 - c. seizure prevention, hypoglycemia, hypothermia
 - d. hypercarbia, hypoglycemia, normothermia

8. Cerebral perfusion pressure is calculated using which of the following two variables?
 - a. central venous pressure and intracranial pressure
 - b. systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure
 - c. mean arterial pressure and intracranial pressure
 - d. diastolic blood pressure and intracranial pressure

Gastrointestinal, Genitorurial, and Renal

9. Which of the following terms is the structural reference point that distinguishes an upper GI bleed from a lower GI bleed?
 - a. Greater Omentum
 - b. Ligament of Treitz
 - c. The Mesentery
 - d. Lesser Omentum

10. If your patient has a positive Chvostek's sign, they are suffering from which of the following?
- a. hypercalcaemia
 - b. hypocalcaemia
 - c. hyperkalemia
 - d. hypokalemia

Multiple Organ Dysfunction Syndrome

11. Which of the following are normal blood gas values?
- a. pH 6.35-6.45
 - b. PaO₂ 60-80 mmHg
 - c. PaCO₂ 25-35 mmHg
 - d. pH 7.35-7.45
12. Urticaria, wheezing, dyspnea and flushing are indicative of what type of shock?
- a. hypovolemic
 - b. septic
 - c. anaphylactic
 - d. neurogenic

Special Considerations

13. Hypotension in a three-year-old patient diagnosed with sepsis of an unknown origin would be defined by which of the following parameters?
- a. a systolic pressure < 76
 - b. a systolic pressure < 80
 - c. a systolic pressure < 66
 - d. a systolic pressure < 90
14. A burn patient with a suspected inhalation injury requires intubation with RSI protocol. Your choice of a neuromuscular blocking drug will be influenced by which of the following?
- a. depth of the burn
 - b. time elapsed since the burn occurred
 - c. percentage of body surface area affected
 - d. adequacy of the patient's tissue perfusion

Critical Transport

15. During what war were helicopters first used for medical transport?
- a. Korean War
 - b. World War I
 - c. World War II
 - d. Vietnam War
16. Which of the following levels of ambulance service as recognized by Medicare is necessary when a patient's condition requires on-going care provided beyond the scope of the paramedic?
- a. advanced life support
 - b. paramedic intercept
 - c. specialty care transport
 - d. fixed wing air ambulance

ANSWERS

- 1. C
- 2. D
- 3. C
- 4. A
- 5. B
- 6. D
- 7. A
- 8. C
- 9. B
- 10. B
- 11. D
- 12. C
- 13. A
- 14. B
- 15. A
- 16. C

Tips for Taking the Exam

Before the Exam

- Get everything you need organized the night before. Select comfortable clothes to wear. Make sure you have a government-issued picture ID.
- If possible before exam day, drive to the exam site and make sure you know where you will be going.
- Get a good night's sleep and wake up early enough to eat a good breakfast.
- Leave early enough so you allow MORE than enough time to arrive at least 15 minutes before the exam registration begins.

During the Exam

- Make sure your exam is complete. First, count through the pages one by one to make sure they are numbered in sequence and that you have a complete package. Errors can appear in publications. A typo does not invalidate a test; however, a typo or printing error in page numbering would be a problem for you. As soon as you get your test booklet, be sure to count the pages and make sure you have consecutively numbered pages. In many exams the instructions tell you how many pages you should have in the test booklet; however, do not take for granted that the pages are numbered correctly if the last page of your booklet is the number you were told it should be. For example, you may have been given a faulty test booklet with a duplicate of page 12 and no page 11. Go through each page one by one.
- Read the instructions carefully. Read the instructions for each set of material or questions. There are usually different instructions which apply to different kinds of questions. Make certain you understand what you are supposed to do.
- Monitor your time. Note the time allowed and number of questions. You have been given a certain amount of time to complete your exam. Pace yourself so that you do not spend too much time on any one item. If there are 100 questions and you have 2½ hours to complete the test, then this means you have 1½ minutes per question or 10 questions every 15 minutes. So monitor

your time periodically throughout the test to make sure you have not fallen behind. If you find that a question is taking more than your allotted time, then lightly circle the question number on the answer sheet (later, you must erase it completely) and/or in the test booklet and move on to the next question. If you have time at the end of the exam, you may come back to that question.

- Do not waste any time. Once you have gone through every item, immediately go back over them. You will NOT be allowed to write in the booklet.
- Examine the answer sheet carefully. Be sure you have filled in the information and darkened the bubbles for all of the information. Do not skip any of the sections on the answer sheet. Some of this information is needed to meet Federal requirements. Be sure to look at the way the questions are numbered. Do the questions run sequentially down vertical columns, or do they run horizontally across the page?
- While taking the exam, check frequently to make sure that the question number that you are marking on the answer sheet matches the question number in the test booklet. Here are some important details to remember so that you do not lose valuable points because of an error:
 - Check each question's number on the answer sheet against the question's number on the test. If you, by error, get off track with the numbers, you will fail this test.
 - One check is to put a dash through the question number on the test booklet that you are working on, then check that number against the one on the answer sheet. Circle the choice on the test booklet that you think is correct and check that against the choice you marked on the answer sheet.
 - Erase all extraneous (extra) marks.
 - Make sure you have darkened only one choice for each question. If two are marked, you will not receive credit, so completely erase any changed answers.
 - Do NOT leave a question on the answer sheet blank. Be sure to leave enough time at the end of the exam to complete a final check of your answer sheet to make sure an answer has been bubbled for each test item.

- Understand the question. Understanding what the question is asking is fundamental and important to answering it correctly, so read each item stem once, read the response choices, then reread the stem.
- Do not select a choice before reading all the response choices. There may be an answer that is somewhat correct listed first, but then you may find an answer that is *most* correct. Your careful reading of your instructions told you always to select the best response.
- Carefully examine a choice to determine why it **COULD NOT** be correct. Once you have determined that a choice **CANNOT** be correct, then eliminate that choice and move to the next choice. If you are not able to eliminate the choice, then move to the next choice. Always go with your educated guess, rather than your first impression, if you do not know which choice is correct. If you can eliminate one of the choices, your odds are now one in three, instead of one in four. Sometimes you are not able to eliminate a choice because it simply is not a wrong choice. It is only after you have reviewed all choices when you realize that, even though it is not wrong, there is one choice that is better than the others.
- Return to previously skipped questions. After you have completed going through all the questions on the exam, go back to the ones you skipped.

CRITICAL CARE PARAMEDIC CERTIFICATION EXAM

Tennessee Department of Health

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

NAME: TEST TAKER
SSN: 000-00-0000
EXAM DATE(S): January 31, 2009
TEST LOCATION:

SCORE REPORT

| RAW SCORE | PERCENT SCORE | OFFICIAL RESULT |
|-----------|---------------|-----------------|
| 70 | 70 | PASS |

You must answer at least 70 questions correctly to pass the exam.

The passing score for the exam is a 70%. Your Percent Score must be at least a 70 to pass the exam.

If you do not pass the exam, your score report will include diagnostic feedback regarding your strengths and weaknesses.



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