



Information Guide:

Preparing to Write an

Interprovincial Red Seal Exam



THE RIGHT SKILLS ► A PROVEN ADVANTAGE

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Introduction

In this guide you will find useful information about Interprovincial Red Seal exams, as well as strategies for preparing for and writing the exam of your trade. The distinction between a Red Seal endorsement and a provincial/ territorial certification is Red Seal endorsement is recognized nationally. All tasks within the scope of the Red Seal endorsement are outlined in the National Occupational Analysis (NOA).

Where can I find information on Interprovincial Red Seal trades in British Columbia?

Refer to the Industry Training Authority (ITA) website (<http://www.itabc.ca>) for a list of Interprovincial Red Seal programs and BC designated trades. Note that Interprovincial Red Seal designated trades in BC are identified by “Red Seal” following the trade name.

How do I apply to take the exam?

Apprentices

If you are taking technical training classes in BC, ask your training provider instructor about the exam. The Interprovincial exam is usually written during the final week of your last technical training session.

In BC, the ITA tracks technical training session completions. To qualify to write the Interprovincial exam, you must have successfully completed all of the technical training sessions for the program in which you are registered.

Challengers

A Challenger application package is available on each program homepage on the ITA website. To qualify as a challenger to write the Interprovincial Red Seal exam, you must complete the challenge application package and receive approval from ITA Customer Service.

In BC all Interprovincial Red Seal exams are administered by the ITA. Refer to the ITA website for information on how to apply to write exams, exam schedules and locations, and exam writing instructions.

What if I have to re-schedule the exam date?

If you are not able to write the exam on your scheduled date, you must notify the ITA Customer Service Office (778-328-8700 or toll free within BC at 1-866-660-6011) at least five business days before the exam to re-schedule for another day. Failure to provide at least five days notice is considered a no-show and a re-schedule service fee is charged.

What is a pass/fail?

If you achieve 70% or more on the exam, you are determined to be *competent* in the knowledge and skills related to the trade, and you will have passed the Interprovincial Red Seal exam.

If you achieve 69% or less on the exam, you are determined to be *not yet competent* in the knowledge and skills related to the trade. You will not have passed the Interprovincial Red Seal exam and will need to plan on re-writing the exam.

What if I do not pass the exam?

If you do not pass the exam on the first attempt, you can schedule a re-write after thirty days. If your mark on the first attempt was between 60 and 69 percent, you may reapply to re-write your examination by completing the [Examination Application Interprovincial Red Seal/Certificate of Qualification form](#).

If your mark on the first attempt is less than 60%, or if your mark on the second try is less than 70%, you must demonstrate equivalent upgrading. There are three upgrade categories that are acceptable. They are:

- Home study – Documented on the ITA [Home Study Confirmation form](#).
- Employer assistance in problem topic areas – Documented on the ITA [Employer Upgrading Confirmation form](#).
- Successful completion of relevant technical training from an ITA approved training provider – Must be completed after the last unsuccessful attempt. A list of approved training providers is available at <http://www.itabc.ca/page45.aspx>.

Upon completion, submit one of the noted upgrade processes with the ITA re-write exam application form and the exam fee if required. There is a \$100 fee for the third and any subsequent attempts. Please view the ITA's [Examination Policy](#) for further information. For more information on re-writing an exam, refer to the [Examinations page](#) of the ITA website.

National Occupational Analysis (NOA)

What is an NOA?

Red Seal National Occupational Analyses (NOAs) are prepared by industry experts under the guidance of the federal government and the assistance of the provincial/territorial jurisdictions. They are used as base documents in the development of the examination item banks for Interprovincial Red Seal trade certification. Each NOA lists **block topics, tasks and sub-tasks** performed in a trade and describes supporting knowledge and ability statements required to demonstrate competence in that trade.

Why do you need it?

NOAs for Red Seal trades define the content upon which Red Seal exam questions are based. Questions are written to test knowledge and competency related to the **sub-tasks** in the NOA. The NOA for your trade is an important resource and a tool for helping you plan what and how to study for the Red Seal exam.

Important: NOAs for each trade are usually updated every five years. The most recent versions of NOAs are available online at: <http://www.red-seal.ca/>. However, during a five year cycle, two versions of an NOA may be posted. There will always be a note indicating which NOA refers to the current Interprovincial Red Seal exam. Be sure to use the correct NOA when preparing for your exam.

You can also determine the version of NOA used for your trade by referring to the Program Profile on the homepage of your trade on the ITA website. <http://www.itabc.ca>. Note the date of the NOA under the *Program Standards Documentation* section of the Profile. The date on the Program Profile should match the published date on the NOA when referring to the document on the Red Seal website.

Where can I find the NOA for my trade?

You can view the correct NOA for your exam by following these steps:

- Go to the Red Seal website: <http://www.red-seal.ca>.
- On the home page, refer to the right column – **Trades Quick Link**.
- Scroll down the list of trades and click on the name of your trade.
- Scroll down and click the PDF link for the NOA. If there are two NOAs listed, click on the PDF link which refers to the current exam.
- Open the PDF.

What is the Structure of an NOA?

In an NOA, the work performed by tradespersons is divided into three categories:

- Blocks – The largest division within the analysis that is comprised of a distinct set of trade activities.
- Tasks – Distinct actions that describe the activities within a block.
- Sub-Tasks – Distinct actions that describe the activities within a task. The sub-tasks are the specific functions you perform in relation to a Task. **Exam questions are based on sub-tasks.**

Example: Excerpt from NOA for Baker trade

- Block A: Occupational Skills
 - Task 1: Uses tools and equipment.
 - Sub-task 1.01: Uses hand tools and non-mechanized equipment.
 - Sub-task 1.02: Uses mechanized and computerized equipment.
 - Sub-task 1.03: Uses measuring devices.
 - Sub-task 1.04: Uses pans.
 - Sub-task 1.05: Maintains tools and equipment.
 - Sub-task 1.06: Sanitizes tools and equipment.
 - Sub-task 1.07: Uses personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety equipment
 - Task 2: Organizes work.
 - Sub-task 2.01: Maintains safe and sanitary work environment.
 - Sub-task 2.02: Communicates with others.
 - Etc.

How is the NOA used to prepare for the exam?

The NOA content lists and describes each block, task, sub-task and key competencies or knowledge & ability statements for a trade. There is a lot of information spread over many pages. However, the NOA (refer to Appendix F in the NOA) includes a *Task Profile Chart*, which provides a condensed summary of the trade blocks, tasks and sub-tasks. The *Task Profile Chart* is a useful study tool; the chart can be used as a checklist to make sure you have covered all the topics that will be tested on the exam. Sub-tasks you are competent in can be checked on the *Task Profile Chart* and sub-tasks you feel uncertain of can be left unchecked. A list of unchecked sub-tasks is a reminder that more work is required in order to prepare for the exam writing. An example of a *Task Profile Chart* is noted below in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Task Profile Chart from the Mobile Crane Operator NOA, 2009

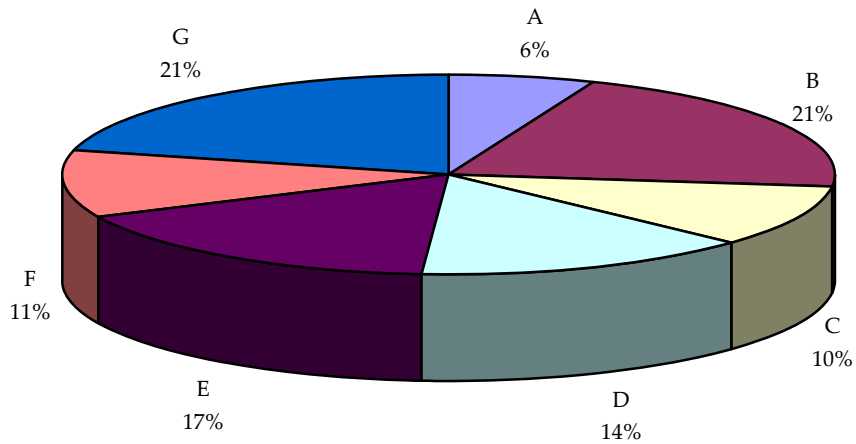
BLOCKS	TASKS	SUB-TASKS			
A - OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	1. Uses tools and equipment.	1.01 Uses hand tools.	1.02 Uses power tools.	1.03 Uses torches.	1.04 Uses measuring equipment.
	2. Organizes work.	2.01 Communicates with others.	2.02 Uses documentation.	2.03 Identifies hazards.	

The NOA also has a *Pie Chart* (refer to Appendix E in the NOA). The *Pie Chart* summarizes the percentage of questions that relate to each block topic on the exam. Use the *Pie Chart* for your trade NOA to gain a sense of the proportionate number of questions that will be on each block topic on the exam.

Focus your study on the sub-task topics within blocks with the highest percentage of questions on the exam, particularly if you are short on time.

Example: Refer to the *Pie Chart* for the Mobile Crane Operator trade in Figure 2 below. Blocks B, E & G contain 59% of the questions on the Interprovincial Red Seal examination. Your study plan should not neglect any of the block areas but you should plan to spend a larger percentage of your time studying the sub-tasks within Blocks B, E & G.

Figure 2. Pie Chart for the Mobile Crane Operator trade.



BLOCK TITLES

<i>Block A</i>	<i>Occupational Skills</i>	<i>Block E</i>	<i>Lift Planning, Site Preparation and Crane Setup</i>
<i>Block B</i>	<i>Hoisting Calculations</i>	<i>Block F</i>	<i>Crane Assembly, Disassembly and Transport</i>
<i>Block C</i>	<i>Crane Inspection and Maintenance</i>	<i>Block G</i>	<i>Crane Operation</i>
<i>Block D</i>	<i>Rigging</i>		

Studying for the Red Seal Exam

Resources

Obtain a list of textbooks and other resources currently being used by apprentices in your trade from your local post-secondary institution. These resources can be found at a local college or university bookstore. Resources can also be acquired at a public library, on the Internet, or in some cases, at your place of employment.

Research potential questions that could be asked in a content area:

- Look at the self-study questions at the end of textbooks. They are a good source of review questions.
- Ask a co-worker or friend who has written the Red Seal exam for your trade to identify study materials and resources they found helpful.
- Find someone on the job that has experience in specific sub-tasks and ask them to make up some trial questions for you.

In addition to exam reviews performed as part of technical training, take advantage of the opportunity to consult with your instructor on the types of questions commonly found on Interprovincial Red Seal exams.

Study Plan

Circumstances, schedules and time available for studying vary for each individual. However, the following strategies have been found to be effective for individuals studying for a Red Seal exam.

- Find a quiet, comfortable place to study and try to use that same place each time you study.
- Maintain a regular daily routine of eating, sleeping, and exercise.
- Establish a regular studying routine and keep track of your study time each week.
- Divide your study sessions into 30-minute blocks, with 10-minute breaks between each block. Change the study topic every 30 minutes.
- At the end of every day, take 10 minutes for every hour you spent studying to review what you covered.
- Do the most difficult studying during the hours when you feel best (save easy tasks for less productive times of the day).
- Take notes (all in your own words) and highlight important information.
- If possible, spend some time studying with others who are preparing to write the same exam.
- Try explaining the subject to another tradesperson or a friend. You need a good understanding of the subject to explain it well.

- Prepare flashcards, flowcharts and diagrams of key information including formulas, definitions and key concepts. See examples below in Figure 3, 4 & 5.

Figure 3. Diagram Example.

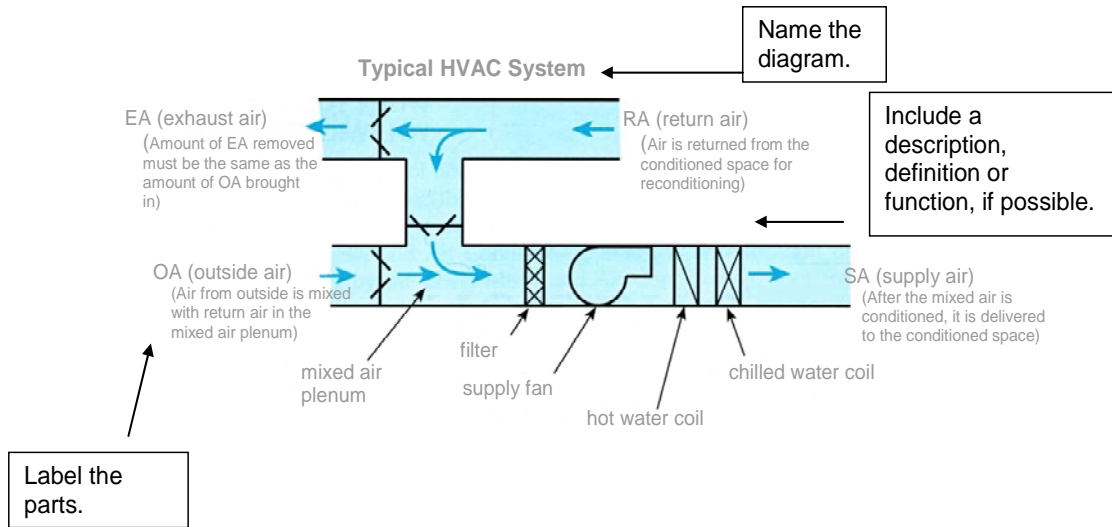


Figure 4. Flashcard Example.

Write the word on the front.

Write the definition or important points on the back.

Keep it short, to the point and written in your own words.

joist

* a piece of lumber 2 to 4 inches thick, 6c or more inches wide, various lengths.

* used horizontally to support a ceiling or floor.

Front **Back**

Figure 5. Flowchart Example.

GROUT COLUMNS AND BASE PLATES

This learning guide will outline the basic procedures for grouting columns and base plates. **1** It is important to prepare the concrete surface before setting the column or machine base. The surface must be cleaned and roughened enough to promote adhesion. There are different procedures depending on the type of grout you will be using.

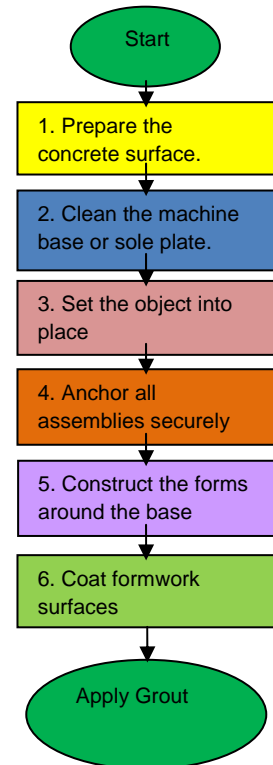
2 To remove rust, paint, oil, grease, or scale remains, clean the machine base or sole plate. If you will be using a cement grout, devise a means for wetting the metal base before grouting. This will assist the flow of grout around foundation bolts and other metal parts.

Once the machine is properly cleaned, set the object into place

3 so that all items to be grouted are properly positioned and anchored before grouting. This is generally accomplished by using metal shims to set the base or soleplate to grade.

4 To make sure that the anchors will not shift out of alignment from grout pressure or tamping, anchor all assemblies securely. Once everything is secure, **5** construct the forms around the base. Ensure that the formwork is strong and watertight. **6** and coat formwork surfaces with a recommended release agent.

Grouting Columns and Base Plates



Red Seal Exam Questions

Red Seal exam questions are written to test your knowledge and competency related to the sub-tasks in the NOA.

- Each exam contains 100 to 150 multiple choice questions.
- Each question has four responses (A, B, C and D), only one of which is correct.
- All questions are of equal value.
- The pass mark is 70%.

Example Questions

Sample Question: 1. (Agricultural Technician)

What should be used to test an electronic control module?

- A. Battery voltage.
- B. Analog meter.
- C. Digital meter.
- D. Test light.

Sample Question: 2. (Agricultural Technician)

What is done when installing a pressed steel oil pan when raised metal is noted around the rail bolt holes?

- A. Use double gaskets with gasket sealer.
- B. Use silicone sealer to replace gasket.
- C. Replace oil pan with silicone sealer.
- D. Straighten sealing surface and install new gasket.

Sample Question: 3. (Agricultural Technician)

All gears clash when shifting a manual transmission and it is difficult to shift into neutral. The transmission is not synchronized. What could cause this problem?

- A. The synchronizer rings are worn.
- B. The clutch is not releasing.
- C. The transmission oil is too hot.
- D. The clutch has loose torsion springs.

Writing a Multiple Choice Exam

Red Seal exams consist exclusively of multiple choice questions. Each question has four responses, only one of which is correct. The three incorrect responses are called distracters because they are intended to look plausible and ‘distract’ you from the correct answer if you are not confident in your knowledge.

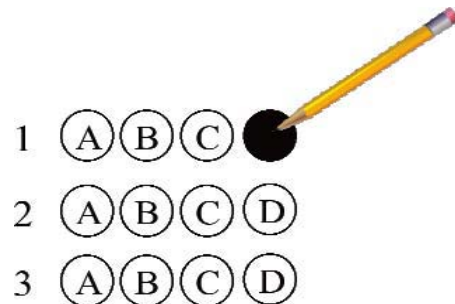
Example:

1. Which of the following is a Red Seal trade?
- A. Florist
 - B. Locksmith
 - C. Shipwright
 - D. Boilermaker

In this example, the correct response (or answer) is D. The other three responses are the distracters. Although plausible—they are all trades—all three are incorrect because they are not Red Seal trades.

Using the above example, you would respond to the question by filling in the appropriate circle on the answer sheet provided during the exam.

Make sure you mark each answer in the corresponding number on your answer sheet (i.e., When reading question number 1 in the exam booklet, make sure you respond to question number 1 on the answer sheet).



Answer Sheet Example

The answer sheet for multiple choice questions is separate from the exam booklet. Figure 6 is an example of an exam answer sheet.

Figure 6. Exam answer sheet example.


**Interprovincial Computerized Examination Management System/
Système Informatisé de Gestion des Examens Interprovinciaux**
ANSWER SHEET/ FEUILLE RÉPONSE
 Form/ Formulaire: 239238-1

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)	21 (A) (B) (C) (D)	41 (A) (B) (C) (D)	61 (A) (B) (C) (D)	81 (A) (B) (C) (D)
2 (A) (B) (C) (D)	22 (A) (B) (C) (D)	42 (A) (B) (C) (D)	62 (A) (B) (C) (D)	82 (A) (B) (C) (D)
3 (A) (B) (C) (D)	23 (A) (B) (C) (D)	43 (A) (B) (C) (D)	63 (A) (B) (C) (D)	83 (A) (B) (C) (D)
4 (A) (B) (C) (D)	24 (A) (B) (C) (D)	44 (A) (B) (C) (D)	64 (A) (B) (C) (D)	84 (A) (B) (C) (D)
5 (A) (B) (C) (D)	25 (A) (B) (C) (D)	45 (A) (B) (C) (D)	65 (A) (B) (C) (D)	85 (A) (B) (C) (D)
6 (A) (B) (C) (D)	26 (A) (B) (C) (D)	46 (A) (B) (C) (D)	66 (A) (B) (C) (D)	86 (A) (B) (C) (D)
7 (A) (B) (C) (D)	27 (A) (B) (C) (D)	47 (A) (B) (C) (D)	67 (A) (B) (C) (D)	87 (A) (B) (C) (D)
8 (A) (B) (C) (D)	28 (A) (B) (C) (D)	48 (A) (B) (C) (D)	68 (A) (B) (C) (D)	88 (A) (B) (C) (D)
9 (A) (B) (C) (D)	29 (A) (B) (C) (D)	49 (A) (B) (C) (D)	69 (A) (B) (C) (D)	89 (A) (B) (C) (D)
10 (A) (B) (C) (D)	30 (A) (B) (C) (D)	50 (A) (B) (C) (D)	70 (A) (B) (C) (D)	90 (A) (B) (C) (D)
11 (A) (B) (C) (D)	31 (A) (B) (C) (D)	51 (A) (B) (C) (D)	71 (A) (B) (C) (D)	91 (A) (B) (C) (D)
12 (A) (B) (C) (D)	32 (A) (B) (C) (D)	52 (A) (B) (C) (D)	72 (A) (B) (C) (D)	92 (A) (B) (C) (D)
13 (A) (B) (C) (D)	33 (A) (B) (C) (D)	53 (A) (B) (C) (D)	73 (A) (B) (C) (D)	93 (A) (B) (C) (D)
14 (A) (B) (C) (D)	34 (A) (B) (C) (D)	54 (A) (B) (C) (D)	74 (A) (B) (C) (D)	94 (A) (B) (C) (D)
15 (A) (B) (C) (D)	35 (A) (B) (C) (D)	55 (A) (B) (C) (D)	75 (A) (B) (C) (D)	95 (A) (B) (C) (D)
16 (A) (B) (C) (D)	36 (A) (B) (C) (D)	56 (A) (B) (C) (D)	76 (A) (B) (C) (D)	96 (A) (B) (C) (D)
17 (A) (B) (C) (D)	37 (A) (B) (C) (D)	57 (A) (B) (C) (D)	77 (A) (B) (C) (D)	97 (A) (B) (C) (D)
18 (A) (B) (C) (D)	38 (A) (B) (C) (D)	58 (A) (B) (C) (D)	78 (A) (B) (C) (D)	98 (A) (B) (C) (D)
19 (A) (B) (C) (D)	39 (A) (B) (C) (D)	59 (A) (B) (C) (D)	79 (A) (B) (C) (D)	99 (A) (B) (C) (D)
20 (A) (B) (C) (D)	40 (A) (B) (C) (D)	60 (A) (B) (C) (D)	80 (A) (B) (C) (D)	100 (A) (B) (C) (D)

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<p>EXAMPLES/ EXEMPLES</p> <p>WRONG/ MAL 1 (A) (B) (C) (D)</p> <p>WRONG/ MAL 2 (A) (B) (C) (D)</p> <p>WRONG/ MAL 3 (A) (B) (C) (D)</p> <p>RIGHT/ BIEN 4 (A) (B) (C) (D)</p>	<p>Important Directions For Marking Answers/ Directions Importantes Pour La Correction Des Réponses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use HB pencil only/ Utilisez un crayon HB seulement. • Do NOT use ink or ballpoint pens/ N'utilisez pas d'encre ni de stylo à bille. • Make heavy black marks that fill the circle completely/ Noircissez les cercles complètement. • Erase cleanly any answer you wish to change/ Effacez proprement les réponses que vous désirez changer. • Make no stray marks on the answer sheet/ Ne laissez aucune marque indésirable sur la feuille de réponse.
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Writing a Red Seal Exam

Prior to arriving at the exam location

- Get adequate sleep the night before the exam.
- Avoid excess alcohol or caffeine the night before the exam.
- Make a note of where to park and how long it takes you to get there.

Day of the exam

- **You must bring valid Canadian Government issued photo ID.** Failure to produce photo ID means you will not be permitted to write the exam and will have to re-schedule for a later date. Refer to [Appendix A on page 19](#) for examples of approved photo ID.
- Paper translation dictionaries are only permitted with prior permission from ITA Customer Service. The dictionary must provide only English language translations without word definitions. In order to obtain permission for this, a [Modified Examination Procedures Application](#) must be completed and submitted to ITA Customer Service 3-4 weeks before examination date.
- Invigilators will supply a calculator to each examinee if required for the examination.
- Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled examination time for registration. If you are late, you will not be permitted to write the exam and will have to reschedule for a later date.
- You must place all personal handbags, notes or books in a designated area or with the invigilator. Cellular phones, programmable or trade-specific calculators, other electronic equipment, textbooks, or notes are to be stored in the designated area.
- If a code book is required for your examination you will be given a copy by the invigilator. Using your own code book is not permitted.
- You will be handed everything you will need to write the exam: an exam booklet, a diagram booklet (if required), code book (if required), pencil, calculator (if required), and an answer sheet.
- Do **not** open or begin the exam until instructed to do so by the exam official.
- Organize and lay out your allowable exam materials.
- You will be provided with instructions and rules on how to fill out the answer sheet.
- You will be told when to begin the exam.
- Dress in layers so that you are not distracted from the exam by being too hot or too cold.
- Bring a watch to pace yourself. For example, on a 4-hour exam with 120 questions, you might aim to write 30 questions per hour or 15 questions per ½ hour.

- A brisk walk or a stretching routine just before the exam can increase the oxygen level into your bloodstream.
- Eat a light, healthy snack and use the washroom just before the exam.
- Avoid other students, especially those who are unprepared and anxious or, conversely, who are overly-confident.
- You will be assigned a seat in the room. If possible, choose a seat in which you feel comfortable.

During the Exam

- Think positive.
- Do **not** talk to other candidates.
- Raise your hand if you do not understand the instructions.
- Use only materials authorized by the officer administering the exam. If you are caught trying to cheat, your exam will be removed, scored zero, and your privilege to write the exam may be forfeited.
- Quickly go over the exam sections to familiarize yourself with the whole exam before concentrating on one section.
- Stick to the facts.
- Separate long questions into smaller parts to make them easier to understand.
- Read the whole question carefully.
- If needed, draw a diagram or jot down a formula on the exam booklet if it helps you answer a question. Estimate the correct answer so that once you calculate the answer, you can check to see if it looks right.
- Try to answer the question without looking at the four responses, then look for the option that matches your answer.
- On the exam booklet, make note of responses you know are wrong to narrow your options.
- Check that you are marking your answers in the right place on the answer sheet.
- Use the pencil to place a dark mark in the space for A, B, C, or D to indicate your chosen answer.
- If you must change an answer, erase it **completely** before filling in another choice.
- Do **not** place other marks on the answer sheet.
- If you do not know the answer, mark the number of the question on the exam booklet, move on, and return to it later.
- Remember you have limited time to write the exam. Pace yourself. Do not spend too much time on any one question.

- Watch for questions written in the negative form and for key words, and choose your answer based on the way the question is worded:
qualifiers: words such as “usually”, “often”, “generally”, “may” and “seldom”
negatives such as “**not**” or “**no**” (the negatives are written in bold in the questions)
superlatives: words such as “every”, “all”, “none”, “always”, “only”
- When you are done, go back to questions you skipped or had difficulty with.
- Answer all the questions, even if you have to guess. Do not leave any question unanswered. Wrong answers are not deducted from your total of correct answers, so you have nothing to lose by guessing at an answer.
- Review your answers once you have finished the exam.
- Take advantage of the entire time allocated for writing the exam – you get no extra points for leaving early, so do not panic when you see others handing in their exams. Leave only when you are satisfied that you have done your best.
- **Return all materials and exam booklets to the examination invigilator.**
- If you believe that there is a mistake on the exam, make note of it on a Blue sheet. The exam invigilator has Blue sheets which are used to write comments about the exam. **Blue sheets must be returned to the invigilator before you leave the examination room.** All Blue sheets will be reviewed by an ITA Program Standards staff member. Your comments are appreciated, and if they indeed highlight a problem with an exam question, they are passed on to those responsible for exam revisions.

After the Exam

Your exam results, broken down by percentage scores for each NOA Block section, will be mailed to you after the exam has been marked. **Exam results will not be released over the telephone.** You should expect to receive your exam result within four to six weeks following the exam.

Once you have met all of the requirements for certification in your trade, you will be issued a Certificate of Qualification with the Red Seal endorsement.

If you were not successful in achieving the 70% passing mark and are eligible to write a supplemental exam, it is highly unlikely you will write the same version twice. Red Seal exams are continually updated and there are multiple versions of every exam in circulation at all times.

Understanding exam results

The table below shows the breakdown of your exam mark by NOA Block section. Each question has the same value; however there are a different number of questions in each NOA Block section making each block worth a different percent of the examination. The percentage you received in each Block section cannot be used to calculate your overall exam result. Your final mark is a simple percentage calculated by dividing the number of questions answered correctly by the total number of questions on the exam.

Example: Carpentry Interprovincial exam results.

Exam Topic	Mark
1 - Occupational Skills	95%
2 - Concrete	67%
3 - Framing	58%
4 – Exterior Finish	81%
5 – Interior Finish	89%

Required Pass mark – 70%

Final Percentage: 78% PASS

Appendix A: Samples of Acceptable Photo Identification



BC Driver's Licence



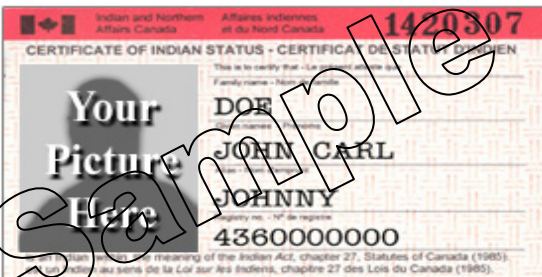
Permanent Resident Card



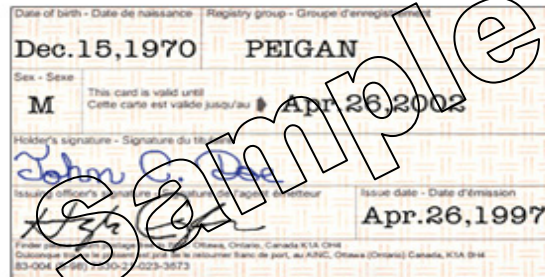
Enhanced Driver's Licence



BC Identity Card



Indian Status Card



Secure Indian Status Card



Canadian Passport