INFORMATION GUIDE

Preparing to Write an Interprovincial Red Seal Exam
INFORMATION GUIDE IN PREPARING TO WRITE
THE INTERPROVINCIAL RED SEAL EXAM

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1. SUMMARY OF THE REQUIREMENT

In this guide, you will find useful information about Interprovincial Red Seal exams and strategies for preparing for and writing the exam of your trade. All tasks within the scope of the Red Seal endorsement are outlined in the National Occupational Analysis (NOA) or Red Seal Occupational Standard (RSOS).

1.1 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 listing of Interprovincial Red Seal programs and BC designated trades. Note that Interprovincial Red Seal designated trades in BC have been identified with “Red Seal” after the trade name.

1.2 How do I apply to take the exam?

Apprentices

If you are taking technical training classes in BC you should ask your training provider instructor about scheduling the exam. You should anticipate writing the Interprovincial exam during your final week of your last technical training session.

In BC, the ITA is responsible for tracking technical training session completions via ITA Direct Access online portal. To qualify to write the Interprovincial exam you must have successfully completed all of the technical training sessions for your registered trade.

Challengers

A Challenger application package is available at each program homepage on the ITA website http://www.itabc.ca. To qualify as a challenger to write the Interprovincial Red Seal exam you must complete the challenge application package and acquire application approval (subject to Challenge requirements (hours/tasks).

In BC, all Interprovincial Red Seal exams are administered by ITA. Refer to the ITA website http://www.itabc.ca/ for information on applying to write exams, exam schedule and locations, and exam writing instructions.

1.3 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) 1-866-660-6011 to reschedule your exam. You could also email the Customer Service Office at customerservice@itabc.ca.
1.4 What is a pass/fail?
If you achieve 70% or more on the exam, you are determined to be competent in the knowledge 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 skills related to the trade. You will not have passed the Interprovincial Red Seal exam and will need to plan on rewriting the exam.

1.5 What if I failed and require rewriting?
If you do not pass the exam on the first attempt, you can schedule to rewrite. However, the date that you request for your rewrite must be at least 30 days after the day you previously wrote. You need to rewrite an exam if you scored less than 70%. 69% or lower is considered a fail. Rewrites, if permitted, may be subject to a fee. You may apply to rewrite your examination by completing the Examination Application Interprovincial Red Seal/Certificate of Qualification form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Attempts</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Write exam</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>Challenge Application approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Re-write exam</td>
<td>No fee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Re-write exam</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Required to reach out to Adviser for guidance before re-writing exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with Adviser contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Re-write exam</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Re-write exam</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Submit proof of upgrading form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with upgrading required</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Re-write exam</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Individual's file will be reviewed by Completions for recommendation for support before the 6th attempt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Apprentice exams and re-writes (CofQ/IP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Attempts</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Write exam</td>
<td>No fee</td>
<td>Complete technical training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Re-write exam</td>
<td>No fee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Re-write exam with Adviser contact</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Required to reach out to Adviser for guidance before re-writing exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Re-write exam</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Re-write exam with upgrading required</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Submit proof of upgrading form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Re-write exam</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Individuals file will be reviewed by Completions for recommendation for support before the 6th attempt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on rewriting the exam, refer to the Examinations page of the ITA website [http://www.itabc.ca/exams/rewrites](http://www.itabc.ca/exams/rewrites).

2. USE OF AN NOA/RSOS

2.1 What is an NOA/RSOS?

The Red Seal National Occupational Analysis (NOA) or Red Seal Occupational Standard (RSOS) is a document that lists all the tasks performed in the occupation and describes the knowledge, skills and abilities required to demonstrate competence in that trade. Some trades have an NOA and some trades have an RSOS.

2.2 Why do you need it?

NOAs or RSOSs for Red Seal trades provide the content upon which Red Seal exam questions are based. Examination questions are written to test your knowledge and competency related to the sub-tasks in the NOA or RSOS. The NOA or RSOS for your trade is the most important resource and a great tool to help you plan what to study, and how to study, for the Red Seal exam.
2.3 Where can I find the NOA/RSOS for my trade?

Be sure to use the correct NOA/RSOS when preparing for your exam. You can view the correct NOA/RSOS for your exam by following these steps:

• Go to: http://www.red-seal.ca.
• Click on your language of choice.
• On the WELCOME page, click on the Resource Centre tab and select National Occupational Analyses.
• Click on the Consult a trade’s NOA link.
• Select the analysis of your trade that indicates “current exam”.
• Click on the PDF version link to download the NOA or the Red Seal Occupational Standard link to download the RSOS.

2.4 What is the structure of an NOA/RSOS?

BLOCKS/MWA: The NOA is divided into major content areas called BLOCKS. The RSOS is divided into major content areas called MAJOR WORK AREAS (MWA).

OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

TASKS: These Blocks/Major Work Areas are then divided down into TASKS.

| Task 1 | Uses tools and equipment. |

SUB-TASKS: Tasks are then divided into sub-tasks. The sub-tasks are the specific functions you perform in relation to a Task. **Exam questions are based on sub-tasks.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-task</th>
<th>Uses hand tools.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-1.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5 How is the NOA/RSOS used to prepare for the exam?

The percentage number of exam questions on each Block/MWA area of an NOA/RSOS can be found in the Pie Chart below.

Focus your study on the sub-tasks within the Blocks/MWAs where the majority of the questions are. If you have difficulty with areas where there will not be many questions, don’t spend too much time studying these areas. If you are short on time, use your time by concentrating on the areas with the most questions.

For example, if you refer to the Pie Chart on the next page Blocks B, E and G contain 59% of the questions on the Mobile Crane Operator Interprovincial (Red Seal) exam. Your study plans 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.

Read each sub-task in the NOA/RSOS. Remember: Red Seal exam questions are written to test your knowledge and competency related to the sub-tasks in the NOA/RSOS.
EXAMPLE
The example below is from the Mobile Crane Operator NOA, 2009.

APPENDIX E

PIE CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TITLES OF BLOCKS

Block A – Occupational Skills
Block B – Hoisting Calculations
Block C – Crane Inspection and Maintenance
Block D – Rigging

Block E-Lift Planning, Site Preparation and Crane Setup
Block F-Crane Assembly, Disassembly and Transport
Block G-Crane Operation
Also refer to the Task Profile Chart in the Appendices section of the NOA or the Task Matrix and Weighting charts in the RSOS. This chart is a simple visual tool of all the Blocks, Tasks, and Sub-tasks in the NOA/RSOS. It can be used as a self-assessment tool (checklist) to determine your knowledge of each sub-task. Sub-tasks you are competent in can be checked on the 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.

**EXAMPLE**

The example below is from the Mobile Crane Operator NOA, 2009.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLOCKS</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>SUB-TASKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS</td>
<td>1. Uses tools and equipment.</td>
<td>1.01 Uses hand tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Organizes work.</td>
<td>1.02 Uses power tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.03 Uses torches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.04 Uses measuring equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.01 Communicates with others.</td>
<td>2.02 Uses documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.03 Identifies hazards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. STUDYING FOR THE RED SEAL EXAM

3.1 Resources you can use to study for the Red Seal Exam

- 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 perhaps at your place of employment.

- For sub-tasks you have not checked off, research some questions that could be asked in the content area by performing the following steps:
  - Look at the self-study questions at the end of textbooks. They are a good source of review questions.
  - Ask a co-worker, or a 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 tasks and have them make up some trial questions for you.
  - Apart from planned class exam reviews by the instructor, apprentices should take advantage of consulting and obtaining information on the style of questions from their instructor.

3.2 Study plan

Circumstances, schedules and time available for studying vary for each individual. The following strategies are effective for studying for the 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 and change the study topic every 30 minutes.
- At the end of every day, take 10-minutes for every hour you spent studying to review.
- Do your 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.
- Teach the lesson to another tradesperson or to a friend. When you teach someone, you will find that you need to have 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:
3.3 Example of diagram

**Typical HVAC System**

- **EA (exhaust air)**
  (Amount of EA removed must be the same as the amount of OA brought in)
- **RA (return air)**
  (Air is returned from the conditioned space for reconditioning)
- **OA (outside air)**
  (Air from outside is mixed with return air in the mixed air plenum)
- **SA (supply air)**
  (After the mixed air is conditioned, it is delivered to the conditioned space)

- Mixed air plenum
- Filter
- Supply fan
- Chilled water coil
- Hot water coil

Name the diagram.

Include a description, definition or function, if possible.

Label the parts.

3.4 Example of flashcard

**Write the word on the front.**

**joist**

**Front**

**Write the definition or important points on the back.**

- *a piece of lumber 2 to 4 inches thick, 6c or more inches wide, various lengths.*
- *used horizontally to support a ceiling or floor.*

**Back**
3.5 Example of flowchart based on text below

GROUT COLUMNS AND BASE PLATES
This learning guide will outline the basic procedures for grouting columns and base plates. 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.

1. 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.

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

3. 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, construct the forms around the base. Ensure that the formwork is strong and watertight, and coat formwork surfaces with a recommended release agent.


5. Apply grout.
4. THE RED SEAL EXAM

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

- Each exam has between 100 and 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%.

4.1 Samples of exam 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.
5. WRITING A MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAM

Red Seal exams are written exclusively in a multiple choice format. In Red Seal exams each question has four responses, only one of which is correct. The three incorrect responses are called distractors 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. Embalmer
   B. Locksmith
   C. Sawfiler
   D. Boilermaker

In this example, the correct response or answer is D. The other three alternative responses are the distractors. Although plausible, as 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 which will be provided for you.

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).
5.1 Example of Answer Sheet

The answer sheet for multiple choice questions is separate from the exam booklet. Here is an example of an answer sheet:
6. PREPARING FOR THE RED SEAL EXAM

6.1 The night before and the day of the exam
- 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.

7. WRITING THE RED SEAL EXAM

7.1 Before the exam
- Candidates must be in the exam room at the specified start time. At this time, registration will commence and the start of the exam will follow.
- Candidates must provide one of the following types of PHOTO Identification. The photo identification MUST BE VALID AND CURRENT on the day of the exam; expired identifications will not be accepted.
  - Provincial Driver’s License (issued by a Canadian Province or Territory)
  - Provincial Identification Card (i.e. British Columbia Identification Card, Alberta Identification Card)*
  - Passport (Canada or foreign)
  - BC Services Card
  - Combination Driver’s License and BC Services Card
  - Canadian Permanent Residency Card
  - Canadian Certificate of Indian Status*
    *Cards/Certificates without an expiry date will not be accepted
- Candidates who are unable to produce one of the types of photo ID listed above will not be permitted to write the exam and may be subjected to a rewrite fee.
- Prohibited Materials include:
  - Outside code books, calculators, cameras, cell phones, watches, laptops, or any other wireless or electronic communication devices that can store or transmit data.
  - Wallets, backpacks, bags, purses, briefcases, jackets, hats, paper, notebooks, and binders.
  - Examinees that do bring these items will be required to turn them off and store them in the area designated by the invigilator. Under no circumstances will examinees be permitted to keep an electronic device in their possession.
7.2 During the exam

- Candidates will be provided with all materials required to write the exam: an exam booklet, a diagram booklet (where required), code book (where required), calculator, pencils, eraser, and an answer sheet for paper exams.
- Paper translation dictionaries are only permitted with prior permission from ITA. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted.
- Food and beverages are not permitted.
- Calculations may be done in the exam or diagram booklets on paper exams. (All answers must be put on an answer sheet for paper exams.) Scrap paper will be provided for online exams and must be returned. Writing or calculations are not permitted in code books.
- Talking to another candidate during an examination is not permitted.
- If the exam is completed before the time limit, everything must be returned to the registration table including the answer sheet, exam booklet, diagram booklet, code books, and exam supplies. The invigilator will check over your answer sheet to ensure everything is complete. You may then leave quietly.
- Invigilators are not responsible for exam content and are not able to provide definitions, interpretations or clarifications so please do not ask. Candidates with questions or concerns regarding the exam should make notes on the provided question feedback form.

7.3 After the exam

How ITA Scores Exams

ITA exams are electronically scanned and scored. Quality control procedures during and after scoring ensure the accuracy of your exam results.

The passing rate for all ITA exams is 70%.

Your final score is a simple percentage calculated by dividing the number of correct answers by the number of questions on the exam. For example, if there are 120 questions on your exam and you answered 80 of them correctly, you would receive a score of 67%.

As each topic area has a different number of questions, an accurate score cannot be obtained using the percentage from each topic.

Your Exam Results Letter will have details of your mark on each topic area.

Getting Your IPSE & COFQ Exam Results

You will receive your Exam Results Letter within 10 business days* after your exam. This letter
will be sent to the email address you provided to ITA. You can also log into your apprenticeship account to see your results within 10 business days* after your exam.

*During peak periods, processing times may be longer than normal.

You can print an ITA transcript from your account anytime.

### 7.4 Understanding exam results

The following table below shows the breakdown of your exam mark by NOA Block or RSOS MWA section. Each question has the same value. However, there are a different number of questions in each NOA Block or RSOS MWA section making each section worth a different percentage of the exam. The percentage you received in each 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Scoring Formula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Correct Answers/# of Questions = X/100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example**

80/120 = 66.7/100