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TESTING ORGANIZATION GUIDE
North American Technician Excellence Exams
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Welcome to the NATE Testing Process!

All NATE Testing Organizations have one thing in common: they are dedicated to promoting technician excellence in the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) industry by offering the NATE exams.

This manual explains NATE's policies and procedures for scheduling and hosting exams.

To achieve NATE certification, a candidate must pass the Core exam and one Specialty exam. Once begun, candidates must complete the certification process within two years, or they lose credit for tests taken and passed. There are two types of certification: Service and Installation – and there are seven Specialties within those types – Air Conditioning, Air Distribution, Gas Heating, Gas Hydronics, Heat Pump, Oil Heating, and Oil Hydronics.

Scheduling Testing Sessions

Testing Organizations (TO's) set their own testing schedule. Once a testing session is scheduled, TO's complete the *Exam Order and Test Session Scheduling Form* online and click to electronically submit it to NATE. TO's should order tests so the order is received at least 14 days prior to the test date. This allows NATE adequate time to process the order.

Exam orders and test sessions scheduled with less than 14 calendar days prior to the test will incur rush charge of \$50 plus shipping costs if applicable.

The earlier you schedule a testing session, the easier it is for your Testing Organization (TO) to market it to prospective customers.

You need to complete the following information areas on the electronic *Exam Order and Test Session Scheduling Form*:

Session Length and Timing

All NATE testing sessions are scheduled as four hours in length--this is the maximum amount of time a candidate will have to complete exams. Most candidates can complete two exams (Core/Specialty or Specialty/Specialty) in one four-hour session. Allow additional time prior to the testing session for check-in and any on-site registrations.

TO's may hold more than one testing session in a single day. Simply indicate on the *Test Session Scheduling Form* the times for all sessions scheduled for a particular day.

Site of test

Testing can be done at the Testing Organization's facility, or at an off-site location. TO's are required to provide a controlled, quiet environment so candidates are not distracted or disrupted, and exam security is maintained.

Proctors

The proctor is responsible for running the testing session. TO's should contact NATE if assistance is needed in finding a proctor. Only NATE-approved proctors may receive and distribute exams, conduct testing sessions, and bundle exams for return to NATE. NATE provides proctors with a Proctor Guide covering policies, a checklist, and a proctor script.

Whether a NATE-approved proctor is drawn from within or outside of the testing organization, all Testing Organizations should use a proctor who is a **disinterested third party**. A *disinterested third party* is defined as someone who:

- Is not the employer or a co-worker who can hire, fire, or has supervisory responsibility of any candidate in the testing session;
- Is not a relative of any candidate in the testing session;
- Will not receive direct financial gain from the outcome of the candidate's testing session.

Testing Organizations are responsible for proctor compensation, if any, and appropriate completion of IRS Form 1099, if necessary.

Only one proctor is **required** for up to 35 candidates in a room. If you have **more** than 35 candidates registered for a single testing session, or are testing candidates in more than one room, you must have another proctor for each session or separate room.

The proctor is responsible for running the overall testing session. He or she:

- will receive the exams and
- is responsible for collecting and bundling all exams and
- is accountable for returning them by carrier which can be tracked to Video General, Inc., NATE's test processor.

While it is a good idea to designate an alternate proctor, you do not need to do so unless you expect more than 35 candidates.

NOTE: Candidates must wait 30 days after a test before doing any retesting.

The candidate is not technically certified until **all fees are paid** to NATE. TO's with the privilege of using PO's (purchase orders) or invoicing will be suspended if payment to NATE is in arrears.

Setting Exam Fees

Each Testing Organization (TO) sets its own price for the exams and is responsible for collecting payment. Call the NATE office for current pricing.

Registering Candidates for Exams

Each TO establishes its own procedures for registering candidates. TO's may contact NATE if they have questions or need assistance in developing a registration form. A sample form is on our website http://www.natex.org/docs/Custom_Style_1_flyer.DOC NATE will forward it without charge for you to customize.

Sometimes, you may not need to create and distribute a candidate registration form. Whether or not you use a form, there is some basic information that each candidate should receive prior to the testing session. The basic information should include:

- Where,
- When,
- How long the testing session runs,
- Who is running the testing session and their contact information,
- What is the cost to the technician and
- How does the technician pay for the session,
- What to bring, and
- What is not allowed.

NATE's sheet should be distributed to all test candidates. Of course, feel free to incorporate this information into your registration form.

If you create a registration form, we ask that you send the draft you've created to NATE before you send it out. Our review will help you ensure that all relevant information has been included in your forms.

Privacy Policy

Federal Privacy law prohibits NATE from releasing individual exam scores to anyone other than the candidate unless NATE has the candidate's written permission to do so. TO's may want to provide candidates with a form. The online form at: http://www.natex.org/docs/AuthReleaseGrades3rdParty_Interactive.pdf is to be signed by each candidate to authorize the release of their scores to a designated third party. Written authorization must be granted **each** time a candidate sits for a test.

Testing Organizations may check aggregate exam scores at www.natetesting.com.

NATE's privacy policy prohibits the selling or distributing candidate registration information.

Confirmation

The Testing Organization should send each candidate a confirmation of their registration which includes the date, time, and location of the testing session. Tests will arrive where the proctor designates approximately five days prior to the test session. If they do not arrive, contact NATE at once (ldominguez@natex.org) or (danaman@natex.org).

Ordering Paper & Pencil Exams

Exam orders placed with less than 14 calendar days prior to the paper and pencil test session will incur a rush charge of \$50 plus shipping costs if applicable.

Effective 1 January 2007, all Testing Organizations must order exams online at www.natetesting.com . To do so you will need your password; if you do not have a password, contact NATE (ldominguez@natex.org) or (danaman@natex.org) to a create one.

Once candidate registrations are collected, order the necessary exams by logging onto www.natetesting.com. Exams should be ordered at least **14 days prior to the testing session**. This gives NATE sufficient time to process the order and ship it to the proctor and allows the proctor time to examine the packet and take care of any problems. TO's who order exams less than 14 days before a testing session will incur an additional \$50 rush charge, plus shipping cost if applicable.

HINT: Order a few extra exams if allowing on-site registrations. There is no charge for returning unopened/unused exams.

Hosting the Testing Session

The testing site should be quiet, well-lit and comfortable. Provide at least 54 inches of working space for each candidate. Set up the room so candidates are all facing in the same direction and so all are seated side-by-side. Be sure all doors close completely. Have number 2 wooden pencils available for the examinees. A candidate may have only a nonprogrammable calculator. Scratch paper is provided. No candidate is allowed to have electronic communication devices (cell phones, blackberry's etc...) in the testing area. All tests are closed book, *except* for the senior-level *HVAC Efficiency Analyst* test.

Testing Allowance

NATE will pay a \$125 allowance to Testing Organizations whenever they host a test session for 16 or more candidates.

Accommodating Candidates with Disabilities

The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requires accommodating – within reason – people with disabilities. To qualify for such ADA assistance, a candidate must supply the TO with documentation of their disability from a qualified professional with the necessary credentials to properly diagnose their disability. Additionally, testing assistance may be needed by candidates who have a reading difficulty which is not covered by the *Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)*. This includes those individuals for whom English is their second language. This reader or translator cannot be a person who has HVAC experience.

All requests for assistance should be very specific and must be received by the TO (Testing Organization) 30 days prior to the testing session. It is the responsibility of the candidate to make arrangements for and cover the cost of providing special assistance.

During the Testing Session

Once the testing session begins, the proctor assumes full responsibility for everything. Only registered proctors, assistant proctors, and candidates may be in the room when a test session is in progress. Once a testing session begins, no new candidates may be admitted to the testing room.

The only exceptions to this rule are

- NATE Technical Committee members, or
- NATE staff.

Exam Security

NATE takes the security of its exams very seriously. Exams are individually sealed in clear packaging and numbered when sent. When received, the proctor should examine them to ensure that all are sealed and are the exams ordered (example: service, not installation). If an exam arrives in an unsealed condition, it may indicate a security breach. **Notify NATE/VGI Testing immediately about exams which arrive opened.** Only a candidate should open exams during a testing session.

After the Testing Session

After a testing session, there are only two categories of exams which are returned:

- 1) completed exams that have been resealed by the candidate (with proctor's initials on the envelope), and
- 2) unopened, unused exams.

Opened unused exams are considered a security breach and should be returned to NATE/VGI with a written explanation from the proctor, and if opened after the candidate erroneously sealed it, by both proctor and candidate.

If opened exams are returned without a written explanation for each exam that is opened, the status of a Testing Organization may be revoked.

All exams which were sent to a TO must be returned at the same time. If *any* exam is lost, the TO will be suspended.

Returning Exams for Grading

Once a testing session is complete, the proctor must:

- account for all exams sent and being returned.
- box up exams and
- ship them back within forty-eight hours, via traceable method, to NATE/VGI Test Service, along with the appropriate test fees.

All exams must be returned to NATE/VGI Test Service.

Notice of Test Results

Candidates will receive direct notice of their scores approximately two weeks ***after*** **NATE/VGI receives exams and test fees**. If a candidate has signed a release directing NATE/VGI to mail a copy of his scores to a third party, that will be honored.