

# TESTING ORGANIZATION AND PROCTOR GUIDELINES



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## ABOUT NATE

Founded in 1997, North American Technician Excellence (NATE) is the nation’s largest non-profit certification organization for heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration technicians. As our business evolves to meet the growing demands of the HVACR workforce, the company’s vision - to be the leader in developing and recognizing professional HVACR technicians - remains clear. Headquartered in Arlington, VA, NATE is the certification organization that was developed by, and has been supported by the entire HVACR industry for over 20 years.

This manual explains NATE’s policies and guidelines for scheduling and conducting exams and serves to familiarize testing organizations and proctors with their responsibilities.

## STRUCTURE OF CERTIFICATION EXAMS

Testing organizations, proctors, and test candidates should refer to the Knowledge Areas of Technician Expertise (KATEs) to understand the scope of each certification. The KATEs are available on [www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org). NATE certification is awarded in the following three categories:

- Installation
- Service
- Senior



NATE also offers additional credentials, including certifications given jointly with other organizations, the ICE exam, and certificate exams.

## **CORE EXAM**

The Core Exam covers basic knowledge topics that all technicians should possess. For the specific categories and topics, please refer to the Core KATE. To earn a certification in an installation or service specialty, a technician must pass both the Core and their specialty exam

## **SPECIALTY EXAM**

The specialty exams leading to certification are:

### **Installation and Service Specialties:**

- Air Conditioning
- Air Distribution
- Air to Air Heat Pump
- Gas Furnaces

### **Service Specialties:**

- Oil Furnaces
- Hydronics Gas
- Hydronics Oil
- Light Commercial Refrigeration
- Commercial Refrigeration

### **Senior Level Exam:**

- HVAC Efficiency Analyst

### **Note:**

- Technicians earning service certification are automatically awarded the corresponding installation certification.
- Technicians earning the Air to Air Heat Pump Service certification are automatically awarded the corresponding Air Conditioning certification.

### **Other Credentials:**

- Ground Source Heat Pump Installer\* (given jointly with the International Ground Source Heat Pump Association)
- HVAC Performance Verifier (given jointly with RESNET)\*
- EPA 608 Certification Exams\*\*
- Industry Competency Exams (ICE)\*\*
- Heating and Cooling Support Technician Certificate Exam\*\*\*

\*Does not require Core exam for certification.

\*\*Awards EPA or ICE certifications, not a NATE certification.

\*\*\*Certificate exam; not a NATE certification.



## THE ROLE OF TESTING ORGANIZATIONS

A Testing Organization is an organization that has been approved by NATE to participate in and offer support to HVAC/R technicians by hosting testing sessions for candidates. Testing Organizations are the cornerstone of the NATE program; they are NATE's "face" to the technician population. Testing Organizations are responsible for safeguarding the integrity of the NATE exams by abiding to all guidelines.

The Testing Organization Application is available on NATE's website. After being approved as a Testing Organization, you will be listed on NATE's website ([www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org)) on the "Locate a Testing Organization" page.

All Testing Organizations are required to have at least one NATE approved proctor before they are listed on the website and able to order paper exams or create online exam sessions. Only NATE approved proctors may receive exam materials, create online sessions, and proctor the NATE exam. All proctor logins and passwords are individually created and may not be used by anyone else. Violation of this policy may result in revocation of the testing privileges of both the testing organization and proctors.

## SETTING EXAMS FEES

Each Testing Organization (TO) sets its own price for the exams and is responsible for collecting payment. Current pricing from NATE is on the Testing Organization and Proctor opening page on [www.myNATE.org](http://www.myNATE.org).

## THE ROLE OF PROCTORS

Proctors do not have to be a technical expert, nor do they have to hold a NATE certification to be a proctor. Anyone who is affiliated with a testing organization, is conscientious, and a good administrator can be a proctor.

Proctors are responsible for protecting and maintaining the integrity of the NATE certification process. Proctors are ultimately responsible for ordering paper exams or creating online test sessions, securing all received or accessed exam materials, and conducting exam sessions.

## PROCTOR APPLICATION

Proctors must be associated with an approved NATE Testing Organization. The proctor application is available online at [www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org).

Proctors must agree to abide by the policies and procedures listed in this guide, as well as any new policies and procedures NATE may implement.

Proctors can expect to be audited by NATE representatives. Proctors found deficient in carrying out their duties could be subject to having their proctor status suspended or revoked.

## PROCTOR SELECTION

The proctor must be a disinterested party. This is defined as someone who:

- Is not relative of any candidate in the testing session;
- Will not receive direct financial gain from the outcome of the testing;
- Does not have hiring or firing power over any candidate in their session or vice versa.

## NUMBER OF PROCTORS

One proctor is required for every 35 candidates in a room. You will need additional proctors if there are more than 35 candidates registered for a testing session, or if more than one room is used for a testing. A proctor must be in the room with candidates testing at all times.

In the event a testing session requires multiple proctors, one proctor should be designated as the primary proctor with overall responsibility for the testing session. This proctor should complete the Test Session Audit Form when returning the exams. All assistant proctors should be listed on the Testing Session Audit Form.

## SCHEDULING A TEST SESSION

Testing organizations and proctors set their own testing schedule. Both placing orders for paper exams and creating online exam sessions can be done on [www.myNATE.org](http://www.myNATE.org). Please refer to the guides for both ordering paper exams and online testing available on [www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org) for detailed instructions of these processes.

## CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Each testing organization or proctor should establish their own procedures for registering candidates for their sessions.

The following is some basic information that each candidate should receive prior to the testing session:

- Where
- When
- How long the testing session will be
- Who is running the testing session and their contact information
- What is the cost to the technician
- How does the technician pay the testing organization for the session
- What to bring (e.g. Photo ID required, nonprogrammable calculator, #2 pencil)
- What is not allowed in the testing area (e.g. cell phones)

## TEST SESSION TIMES

Test session times for each exam are listed below. While candidates can finish and submit their exams early, proctors must allow them the full time limits listed below and should schedule their exam sessions with these time limits in mind.

The online exam platform will automatically submit a candidates' exam when the time expires.

Testing organizations and proctors may hold more than one test session in a single day.

- 
- Core Exams: 1 ½ hours.
  - Heating and Cooling Support Technician: 2 ½ hours
  - Installation or Service Specialty Exams: 2 ½ hours
  - Senior Level Efficiency Analyst: 4 hours
  - Ground Source Heat Pump Installer: 2 ½ hours

Allow a ditional time prior to the test session for check in, any onsite registrations, and reading the proctor script.

### **TEST SESSION LOCATIONS**

Testing can be done at a testing organization’s facility, or at an off-site location. Testing organizations are required to provide a controlled quiet environment so candidates are not distracted or disrupted, and exam security is maintained. There should be 36 inches of space between each candidate.

### **RECEIPT OF TEST MATERIALS**

If paper exams are ordered, proctors will receive a package of exams and materials from NATE before the scheduled test session.

Your proctor packet contains:

- Extra envelopes to secure the return of all exams;
- Extra answer cards;
- Test Session Audit From to be completed and returned with the exams;
- Proctor packet return envelope for any extra materials and the Test Session Audit Form.

Please verify that the number and type of exams you received matches the order you placed. However, do not open the sealed exam booklets. The proctor script is emailed to you with your tracking number when your exams are shipped.

If your proctor packet is incomplete or you did not receive correct exam types or number of exams ordered, please contact NATE at 877-420-6283 prior to your scheduled test session.

### **EXAM SECURITY**

As a NATE proctor, it is your responsibility to ensure the security of the exam materials at all times, including both paper and online exams. Keep any paper exams in a secure place. No one except registered approved proctors in good standing are allowed to handle the exam materials. During the session, keep any physical materials secured and log off any online exam sessions during breaks.

### **Maintain Control of the Test Session**

A proctor must establish and maintain control of the test session form the time you greet the candidates and check their photo ID, until the time you gather the completed exams. As a proctor, you will need to handle problems and distractions quietly and quickly. If proctors discover any attempts by candidates to cheat or otherwise undermine the integrity of the NATE exam (e.g. copying exam questions), they should secure the candidate’s test materials (if paper exams), immediately end that candidate’s exam session (if online), remove the candidate from the test session and inform them that NATE will not score their exam. Proctors should note these actions on the Test Session Audit Form (if paper exams) or contact NATE directly (if online).



## **Explaining Exam Procedures to Candidates**

When conducting paper exams, proctors must read and adhere to the Proctor Script during the test session. Familiarize yourself with the Proctor Script prior to the test session. The Proctor Script should be read as written. This ensures that all candidates receive the same information. Each candidate receives only one exam at a time. When the candidate is finished with that exam, the proctor will check to make sure all of the questions were answered and the candidate has completed and signed the answer card correctly. All materials, including any scrap paper, are put inside the return envelope by the candidate in front of the proctor. The return envelope is sealed by the candidate, and then the proctor and the candidate sign the envelope.

Online testing instructions for candidates are displayed on the screen as they test. Candidates should read all directions completely and proctors can answer any questions they may have. If candidates use scrap paper during the online exam session, those materials must be collected by the proctor and destroyed after the session.

Proctors are allowed to answer questions about exam procedures, but cannot offer any assistance to candidates in answering exam questions.

## **EXAM RESULTS**

Candidates can access their results on [www.myNATE.org](http://www.myNATE.org) after exams have been posted.

Online results will be fully processed within a maximum of five business days from when the online session was closed. Candidates will use the same myNATE username and password combination they used to take the exam to access their results.

## **APPEALS**

A candidate may request redress for issues concerning their certification status including but not limited to:

- Exam results;
- Denial of certification and/or recertification;
- Redress for continuing education hours.

Please refer to any candidate interested in requesting an appeal to the Technician Handbook (available on [www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org)) for the detailed procedure for submitting their appeal.

## **COMPLAINTS**

Complaints about testing organizations, proctors, certified technicians and/or the contractors who employ those certified technicians may be submitted to NATE. Complaints must be submitted to NATE in writing for review. The party that is the subject of the complaint is given an opportunity to answer the complaint. After reviewing all of the information from both parties, NATE makes a decision based on evidence presented and the request received. The decision can be:

- No action taken;
- Removal or suspension of a certification;
- Removal or suspension of a testing organization;
- Removal or suspension of a proctor;
- Removal or suspension of a contractor from the NATE C-3 listing.

### **ADA ACCOMMODATIONS**

Testing organizations must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (amended 1991), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (amended 1990). If candidates have special needs, they must fill out the Request for Non-Standard Test Accommodations Form, and submit it to NATE at least 45 days before the test session is to be scheduled. This will allow the NATE staff time to notify the testing organization and proctor of the required accommodation(s) and to ensure the accommodations are available. NATE will consult with the testing organization as the best way to meet the needs of the candidate. The form is available online at [www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org).

### **NATE POLICY FOR SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF A TESTING ORGANIZATION OR PROCTOR**

Violations of the published policy and procedures can result in NATE taking action to suspend or revoke a testing organization or proctor. NATE will follow the following process:

- 1.** NATE will review violations of published policy and procedure. If NATE receives a written complaint about a testing organization or proctor violating published policies, NATE will review and respond to the complaint within 30 days.
- 2.** NATE will inform the testing organization and/or proctor in writing about the nature of the violation and allow the testing organization and/or proctor 30 days to submit a written response to the complaint to NATE.
- 3.** If the testing organization and/or proctor does not respond within the allotted time frame, the testing organization and/or proctor will automatically be suspended/revoked per the requested complaint. All parties will be notified in writing of the suspension/revocation.
- 4.** If the testing organization and/or proctor provides a response within the allotted time frame, NATE will review the response and if applicable, provide copies to the complainant that initiated the request.
- 5.** The decision to suspend/revoke the testing organization and/or proctor will be made by NATE's management staff.
- 6.** The decision rendered by NATE's management staff will be provided in writing to the testing organization and/or proctor as well as the complainant within 30 days of receiving a response from the testing organization and/or proctor. The decision by NATE's management staff will be considered final unless the testing organization and/or proctor appeals as shown below.
- 7.** The decision to revoke or suspend a testing organization and/or proctor may be appealed to the NATE Board of Trustees, which will be reviewed at a regularly scheduled NATE Board of Trustees Meeting. Board of Trustees meetings are held twice a year in the spring and fall. Any decision rendered by the NATE Board of trustees will be considered final and will be provided in writing to the testing organization and/or proctor as well as the complainant within 30 days of the decision being made. The complainant and the testing organization/proctor may appear at the Board of Trustees Meeting, at their own expense.