

# Computerized testing: what you need to know

Throw away your pencils — taking an EMS exam in Texas now means a session at a computer. We've run several articles in this magazine over the past year about computer-based testing (CBT) and what it will mean. We've posted all that information on our website at [www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/ems](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/ems). Click on "Computerized testing info." Below are the essentials – what you really need to know about NREMT testing.

## **What should everyone know about CBT?**

- DSHS will not give any paper-and-pencil exams at the ECA, EMT, intermediate or paramedic levels after December 31, 2006.
- NREMT will not accept or grade any paper-and-pencil exams given after December 31, 2006.
- All education programs and students must register with NREMT. The NREMT web address is [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org).
- Students began registering accounts and filing applications after December 15, 2006.
- EMS students taking an EMS instructor course will call a local DSHS EMS field office to arrange EMS instructor exams.
- Pearson VUE is a separate entity that has an agreement with NREMT to give the exams. The Authorization to Test (ATT) is your permission slip to contact Pearson VUE to schedule your exam.
- The exam scheduling feature and email address used by DSHS were deactivated and are no longer used as of January 1, 2007.

## **What should Texas EMS education programs know about CBT?**

- Every program must go online to the NREMT website and register (see page 22). Once you have registered, a notice will be sent to DSHS that you have registered your program. Once your program is acknowledged to be an approved program by DSHS, NREMT will be notified. If you have not registered your program, this must be done immediately.
- Once your program is approved by DSHS, NREMT will mail you a DVD about the computer-based testing process.
- DSHS will no longer require course completion rosters at the ECA and EMT levels. Coordinators should issue students an individual course completion certificate; these will be audited as needed by DSHS.
- The NREMT computer system will create rosters that go to NREMT to verify course completion.
- Education programs must register through NREMT, and then DSHS can approve them for CBT.
- The ECA and EMT practical (skills) testing are done within the education course. National Registry representatives are still needed for advanced practical exams.
- The electronic verification of course completion does away with the need for education program medical director signatures.
- Be sure your students have the program name and program number you registered with NREMT.

## **What should EMS students know about CBT?**

- EMS students must create an account with NREMT (see page 21). Once the account is established, they can apply for registration and testing. Once the student's education program verifies course completion, they will get an Authorization to Test (ATT) that will allow the student to schedule with Pearson VUE.
- If you do not show for an exam, you must file another application and pay another fee. Candidates can

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change an appointment, but each candidate must contact Pearson VUE directly to cancel or change an appointment to test. This must occur no less than 24 hours prior to the scheduled appointment or the candidate will be charged for the exam.

- If you started with a paper-and-pencil exam and must retest by computer-based testing, your number of attempts start back at one with the computer-based test. All of the other eligibility requirements and rules must be followed.
- Students must have two forms of identification when they go to the test center (examples: driver's license and credit/debit card; driver's license and Social Security card; passport and credit/debit card; or passport and Social Security card).
- Candidates who do not pass the exam will be able to reschedule another exam 14 days after an unsuccessful attempt, which is sooner than with pencil-and-paper examinations.

### **What should EMS students upgrading to a new level of certification know about CBT?**

- EMS students must create an account with NREMT. Once the account is established, they can apply for registration and testing. If they already have an account, they can use the existing one. Once the students' education programs verify course completion, they will get an authorization to test that will allow the students to schedule with Pearson VUE.
- Students must have two forms of identification when you go to the test center (examples: driver's license and credit/debit card; driver's license and Social Security card; passport and credit/debit card; or passport and Social Security card).

### **What about Texas EMS renewal candidates who choose the written exam option?**

- This option is still available. This assessment exam will be a CBT exam as well. We will use an exam developed for DSHS by NREMT and will follow the same process for the other CBT exams.
- When you create your account, you will choose assessment exam.
- Exam results will be reported directly to DSHS.

### **What should the EMS instructor students know about CBT?**

- DSHS is in the process of going forward with recommendations from GETAC on using the 2002 EMS Instructor Curriculum.
- EMS students taking an EMS instructor course will call a local DSHS EMS field office to arrange EMS instructor exams.
- This is a paper-and-pencil exam.
- The exam scheduling feature and email address used by DSHS has been deactivated and is no longer used as of January 1, 2007.

### **What should Texas National Registry representatives know about CBT?**

- Education programs will still need representatives for advanced practical exams.
- The representatives will follow the instructions issued by NREMT to report practical exam results.

### **Who do I contact if I have questions?**

- Contact National Registry. The Community Relations Department will be able to assist you with additional questions during the transition to computer based-testing.
- Website: [www.nremt.org/about/CBT\\_home.as](http://www.nremt.org/about/CBT_home.as)

Common Acronyms:

**NREMT/NR:**  
National Registry of  
Emergency Medical  
Technicians

**PV:**  
PearsonVUE

**CBT:**  
Computer-based testing

**ATT:**  
Authorization To Test



## CBT vs. CAT

You might have heard computerized testing referred to as CAT.

While these terms have been used interchangeably, there are differences between CBT and computer-adaptive testing (CAT). CBT is simply a description of the method of testing. A computer-based test could be simply a mirror image of a so-called 'linear' pencil-and-paper test, where each candidate takes a test with the same test questions in the same order. Or it could be a computer-adaptive test, which adapts questions to the candidate's perceived knowledge. According to testing experts, CAT is a method of question selection for a candidate that allows for the most efficient testing of a candidate's knowledge in the shortest amount of time. For instance, if a candidate correctly answers a question, the computer will choose one slightly more difficult for the next question. This will continue until the candidate misses a question. The computer then asks an easier question. The reverse is true for a candidate with less ability. If a candidate continues to answer incorrectly, then the questions would become easier. The theory of CAT is that it will take fewer questions, answered incorrectly or correctly, to determine whether the candidate possesses the required knowledge. The end result is that candidates at the top end and low end of knowledge will have shorter tests. For those in the middle, it might take a bit longer for the computer to determine if the candidate has the knowledge to pass. As you might have guessed, there are no grades in CAT, simply a pass/fail notation.

ECA, EMT and paramedic tests are CAT while EMT-1 is still CBT.

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## Texas Pearson VUE locations:

### Abilene

500 Chestnut, Suite 856  
Abilene 79602  
325-675-5694

### Amarillo

1616 S. Kentucky, Suite C305  
Amarillo 79102  
806-463-7465

### Austin

301 Congress Avenue, Suite 565  
Austin 78701  
512-469-0276

### Beaumont

Lamar Institute of Technology  
855 E Lavaca  
Beaumont 77705  
409-880-8687

### Bellaire (Houston area)

Prosperity Bank Building  
6800 West Loop South, Suite 405  
Bellaire 77401  
713-838-1849

### Near Brownwood – location to be determined

### Corpus Christi

Corona South Building  
4646 Corona Drive, Suite 175  
Corpus Christi 78411  
361-814-5872

### Dallas

9101 LBJ Freeway, Suite 480  
Dallas 75243  
214-870-8265

### Edinburg

University of Texas  
UTPA Annex Room 180  
Edinburg 78539  
956-292-7583

### El Paso

Coventry III Building  
4445 North Mesa Street, Suite 119  
El Paso 79902  
915-351-6733

### Harlingen

Texas State Technical College  
1902 North Loop 499  
Harlingen 78550  
956-364-4537

### Houston

8876 Gulf Freeway, Suite 220  
Houston 77017  
713-943-2479

### Hurst (Fort Worth)

500 Grapevine Hwy, Suite 401  
Hurst 76054-2707  
817-427-0960

### Laredo

Laredo Community College  
West End Washington Street  
Laredo 78040  
956-721-5245

### Lubbock

Wells Fargo Tower  
1500 Broadway, Suite 1113  
Lubbock 79401  
806-744-1697

### Midland

3300 N. A Street  
Building 4-228  
Midland 79705-5457

### San Antonio

10000 San Pedro, Suite 175  
San Antonio 78216  
210-340-3628

### Southwest Texas – location to be determined

### Tyler

One America Center  
909 East Southeast Loop 323, Suite 625  
Tyler 75701  
903-561-5038

### Waco

1105 Wooded Acres, Suite 406  
Waco 76710  
254-751-0483

### Wichita Falls

American School of Business  
4317 Barnett Rd  
Wichita Falls 76310  
940-691-0454

# Steps for taking the EMS exam

After you complete your EMS course, you will be taking the NREMT certification exam. It might be wise to begin the application process four to six weeks before you intend to take the test. **Prior to testing you will need the following:**

- application
- course completion verification by your program director and
- application fee payment

**You will need the following information from your instructor:**

**The state where the course was approved**

**Program Name**

**Section Code** (if applicable)

Follow these steps for taking the NREMT exam.

## Step 1

### Create Your Account

- Go to [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org)
- Click on “Login” (found in the blue bar at the top of the page)
- Click on “Set Up New Account”
- Complete all information in this section as prompted
- Request user role of “Registrant or Candidate” (do not complete any information within the gray box)
- Read the submission statement
- Click on “Submit”

## Step 2

### Login

- After you have completed Step 1, you can follow the link and login with the username and password you created

## Step 3

### Manage your account information

- Complete all information in the Personal Account Information fields as prompted. *Note: This is the name that will appear on your application, National Registry certificate and card upon successful completion of the examination*
- When you have completed all fields, click “Save”. You will receive a message indicating “Account Saved”

## Step 4

### Create a new application

- Click on “Create a New Application”
- Review the Personal Information Summary – if any items are incorrect, make corrections by clicking on “Manage Account Information”
- Select the application level you wish to complete
- Review the Entry Requirements; check the acknowledgement to complete the online application
- Complete any statements as prompted
- Click on “Next”
- Complete all information in this section as prompted. *Use the information in the box above provided by your instructor*
- Read the acknowledgement prior to clicking “Submit”. Clicking “Submit” is your electronic signature and indicates that you have read, reviewed and agree to the acknowledgement

## Step 5

### Pay application fee

- It is recommended that you pay your application fee at the time you complete your online application. However, if you choose, you may pay at a later date. An Authorization to Test (ATT) will not be issued until payment has been received and all other verifications are complete.
- You can pay by credit/debit online or print a money order tracking slip for mailing your money order to the NREMT.

### Monitor the progress of your application

You can monitor the progress of your application at any time.

- Login on the NREMT ([www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org)) using your username and password
- Click on “Candidate Services”
- Click on “Check Application Status”
- Three areas of the application process are displayed:
  1. Course Completion Verification,
  2. Payment of Application Fee and
  3. Practical Skills Verification. Each topic provides an explanation of the status and who to contact for further assistance.

*Ask your instructor for more information or visit the NREMT website at [www.NREMT.org](http://www.NREMT.org).*

*Revisions and updates may be necessary to make the CBT transition as smooth as possible. Please refer to the NREMT website for the most current policies and procedures.*

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# Program directors and instructors: Register your program with NREMT

Attention program coordinators and instructors: if your program is not registered and approved through NREMT, your students will not be able to take an NREMT exam. **That means your program needs to be registered now!**

If you are a program director, you should go to [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org) to establish a personal account and register your program. If you are an instructor, contact your program director and confirm that your program has been registered. The steps below will make it easy for program directors to complete this process.

## How to register a program

### Step 1

#### Create a personal account:

- Go to [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org).
- Click on “Login” located in the center area of the blue frame.
- Click on “Set Up New Account.”
- Enter your personal information as prompted.
- Create a username that you will remember.
- Do not give your username or password to anyone!
- Request the Program Director user role.
- Click “submit”.

### Step 2

#### Create your PROGRAM account:

- Go to [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org)
- Login using the username and password you established.
- Click on the link “Request Authorization of an EMS

Education Program.”

- Enter the information requested. (Note: You will not be able to edit the field Program Director).
- Click “submit.”
- Your request for registration will be sent to DSHS for review. Upon approval, you will receive an email acknowledging your program has been officially registered — and you will get a DVD with more information about CBT.

### Helpful information

#### *What is a program?*

An *entity* (typically a college, hospital, EMS agency or private company) that has been authorized by the appropriate state authority to sponsor EMS courses leading to state licensure. Some programs have multiple courses or sections/satellites. The program is the *course* sponsor.

#### *Who is the program director?*

The *individual* responsible for overseeing the state-approved EMS educational program.

#### *What is the correct ‘name’ of a program?*

Use the full (unabbreviated) legal name of the program (e.g. Butler Community College— not BCC or Butler Co Coll). The name field is limited to 50 characters.

*For more information and instructor resources on CBT, go to [www.NREMT.org](http://www.NREMT.org), or call (614)888-4484*