



BLS OM Skills Exam Administration Guidelines

Introduction

The ***BLS OM Skills Exam Administration Guidelines*** are the instructions for EMS agencies administering an optional module skills exam and outline the requirements, expectations and responsibilities of personnel conducting skills testing for authorized BLS OM skills.

These guidelines were developed based on the NREMT testing method for the skill station exam format with specific scenarios and skill sheets. The OM skills testing station equipment lists, station instructions, scenario instructions, and skill sheets will be available on the Bureau's EMS Agency web page under Optional Modules or in IGEMS under Manage Courses when requesting the exam record.

General Responsibilities

1. **IGEMS.** First submit a request for an Exam record (course) in IGEMS under Manage Courses where all exams and courses are requested.
 - a. Course Type = Exams
 - b. Course Name = Exam – BLS Optional Modules
2. **Skills Exam Host Site.** Skills exam host sites must be a licensed EMS agency at the BLS clinical level with the required OM Addendum or an EMS Education Program at the AEMT/ILS clinical level or higher approved by the agency's medical director.
3. **Exam Administrator.** Agency administrators must receive authorization from the agency's medical director to administer the exam or appoint an Exam Administrator when the agency administrator isn't going to be the Exam Administrator.
4. **Exam Resources.** Agency administrators will be responsible for obtaining resources for exams.
 - a. Exam Resources Checklist:
 - ☐ BLS OM Skills Exam Administration Guidelines
 - ☐ Station equipment requirements
 - ☐ Station Examiner Instructions
 - ☐ Simulated Patient/Victim Instructions
 - ☐ Station Student Instructions
 - ☐ Station Scenario Requirements/Info
 - ☐ Station Skill Sheets
 - b. Appropriate equipment for each skill station should be inspected, clean and in working condition prior to exam.
 - c. Qualified Skill Examiners for each skill station.

- i. The examiners of each skill station must be experienced EMS personnel approved by the medical director as an expert in clinical and practical knowledge of the skill.
 - ii. The agency administrator must upload a roster of the skill examiners, their licensure number and level in the skills exam record in IGEMS.
 - d. Simulated Patients/Victims when indicated by the skill station instructions.
5. **Bureau right to observe/audit.** The Bureau reserves the right to observe and audit skills exams for compliance with exam guidelines and the standards of professional conduct.
6. **Ethical Administration of the Exam.** The agency is responsible for ensuring the exam is fair, objective, and impartial without discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age (persons aged 40 and older) or disability when reasonable accommodations can be provided. The Exam Administrator is responsible for visiting all skill stations to verify that Skills Examiners conduct evaluations fairly.
7. **Skills exam results.** Skill Station results must be reviewed by the agency's medical director. They are the authority for verifying and approving the pass/fail status of each completed skill. This can be done in person or online but needs to be during the exam to determine retest eligibility in real time. The Exam Administrator must record the candidate's status of Pass/Retest/Fail and completion date in IGEMS and upload a copy of the exam results signed off by the medical director under "Documents" in the IGEMS exam record.

Exam Day Expectations and Responsibilities

1. **Skill Examiner Expectations.** The Exam Administrator must read the Skill Examiner Orientation to the skill examiners, mock patients/victims, and anyone assisting with the exam. The Exam Administrator must be available for questions throughout the exam.
 - a. The Exam Administrator, skill examiners and students will conduct themselves within the standards of professional conduct.
 - b. The Exam Administrator and skill examiners are prohibited from instructing, aiding or coaching the student during his/her examination. If accommodations are required for any student or skill examiner, those should be attempted to be met to the satisfaction of all participants.
2. **Exam Resources.** The skill examiners will be using the Bureau approved OM skill station resources for each skill station.

Skill Stations:

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

- Intravenous (IV) Vascular Access and Non-medicated (or D5W) IV Fluid Infusion
- Intraosseous (IO) Vascular Access and Medication Administration
- Advanced Airways Devices (King LTs, LMAs, iGels, etc.)

Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)

- Extremity Splinting; Joint Immobilization or Long Bone Immobilization
- Spinal Motion Restriction (Previously Long Spine Board)
- Seated Spinal Motion Restriction

3. **Student Expectations.** Exam Administrators must read the Student Orientation to all the participants and be available for questions.
4. **Retest Policy.** Students are allowed two (2) attempts at a skill station. If a student fails a station, you may allow them to retest on that day with another Skill Examiner. If the retested skill station is failed, do not continue retesting. The student should complete remedial training before testing again.
5. **Exam Results/Documentation.** Once the medical director has confirmed a student has successfully completed all stations and has signed the exams results roster, the Exam Administrator must complete the skills exam record in IGEMS to report each student's Pass/Fail status and date of completion. All skills exam documentation including Pass/Fail status results, date of completion, and medical director approved skill sheet results must be maintained for 3 years and available to the Bureau upon request.

Skills Examiner Orientation

The Exam Administrator must read the following to all Skill Examiners and simulated patients:

You were chosen as an examiner today because of your expertise in the assigned skill and ability to fairly and accurately observe and document various performances. All data relative to a student's performance is based upon your objective recordings and observations. The forms you are using today have been designed to assist you in objectively evaluating the students. This examination is a formal verification procedure. You are not permitted to give any teaching, coaching, remedial training or indication of satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance to any student. You must act in a professional manner, paying attention to the way you address students.

Introduce yourself to each student as you call him/her into your skill station. No student, at any time, is permitted to remain in the testing area while waiting for his/her next skill. Give the student time to inspect the equipment if necessary and explain any specific design features of the equipment if you are asked.

When the student begins his/her performance, document the actual time started on the evaluation form as required.

As the student progresses through the skill, fill out the evaluation form in the following manner:

1. Place the point or points in the appropriate space at the time each item is completed.
2. Only whole points may be awarded for those steps performed in an acceptable manner. You are not permitted to award fractions of a point.
3. Place a zero in the "Points Awarded" column for any step that was not completed or was performed in an unacceptable fashion (inappropriate, haphazard, or non-sequential resulting in excessive and potentially detrimental delay).

Limit your dialogue to the materials in the exam. Do not ask for information that does not relate to the evaluation criteria in your skill.

Example: If a student states, "I would now apply high flow oxygen" you might respond "Please explain how you would do that".

You may also have to stimulate a student to perform some action.

Example: If a student states, "I'd do a quick assessment of the legs," you must interject and ask the student to perform the assessment as he/she would in a field situation.

All forms should be filled-out in a manner that prohibits the student from directly observing the points you award or comments you may note. Do not become distracted by searching for specific statements on the evaluation form when you should be observing the student's performance. If this occurs, simply turn the form over and concisely record the entire performance on the backside. After the student finishes the performance, complete the front side of the evaluation form in accordance with the documented performance.

You must observe and enforce all time limits for the skills. When the time limit has been reached, simply stop the student's performance promptly, document the actual time the performance ended, and direct the student to move on to the next skill, making sure that the student does not remove any notes or recording of the skill (ECG strips, notes on vital signs, scenario information, etc.). If the

student is in the middle of a step when the time limit is reached, permit him/her to complete only that step but not start another. You should then place a zero in the "Points Awarded" column for any steps that were not completed within the allotted time.

After all points have been awarded, you must total them and enter the total in the appropriate space on the form. Next, review all "Critical Criteria" statements printed on the evaluation form and check any that apply to the performance you just observed. You must factually document your rationale for checking any of the "Critical Criteria" statements on the reverse side of the evaluation form.

All simulated patients and professional partners should respond within their scope of practice and remain professional throughout the performance.

If you are unsure of scoring a student's performance, notify me as soon as possible. Do not sign or complete any evaluation form in which you have a question until we have discussed the performance. If I'm busy with other duties, make notes of the performance, and continue with your evaluation of other students if possible.

Student Orientation

You must read the following orientation to all testing students: Perform a roll call and properly document the attendees.

[Exam Administrator/Appointed Exam Administrator]. I am the Exam Administrator for this Optional Module examination. I am responsible for ensuring the exam is fair, objective, and impartial without discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age (persons aged 40 and older) or disability. I will be visiting all skill stations to verify that Skills Examiners conduct evaluations fairly. If you believe that the skills exam was unfair due to an equipment malfunction, evaluator bias, or there has been discrimination, discuss your concerns with the agency representative to submit a formal complaint.

The Skill Examiners utilized today were selected because of their expertise in the assigned skill. The examiner is an observer and recorder of your actions. Each examiner documents your performance in relationship to criteria approved by the Idaho Bureau of EMS based on the Idaho and National EMS Education Standards for the scope of practice level where the skill is a floor skill. The examiners have been instructed to avoid any casual conversation with you to ensure fair and equal treatment of all students.

You must wait outside of the room until the skill is opened and you are called. Please be courteous to the students who are testing by keeping all excess noise to a minimum. The examiner will call you into the skill when it is prepared for testing. Be prompt in reporting to each skill so that we may complete this examination within a reasonable time period.

As you enter the room, the examiner will greet you and ask for your first and last name. Please provide the proper spelling of your name so that your results may be reported accurately.

The skills examiner will read instructions out loud to you in addition to your current scenario that you will be asked to follow. Skill examiners are not permitted to provide you with additional information outside of the instructions.

You will be given time at the beginning of each skill to survey and select the equipment necessary for the appropriate management of the patient. Do not feel obligated to use all the equipment. The Skill Examiners will offer to point out any specific operational features of the equipment if you are unfamiliar with any device. If you brought any of your own equipment, I must inspect and approve it before you enter the skill.

Your examiner will be documenting your performance, and you will be required to perform your skill within the allotted time. You should answer any questions you are asked. You should be prepared to demonstrate your ability to complete the tasks as outlined on the skill sheets.

The Skill Examiners do not have access to pass/fail criteria, but merely observe and document your performance in each skill.

No students are permitted to remain in the testing area while waiting for his/her next skill. You are not permitted to discuss any specific details of any skill with each other at any time. If you are caught discussing details of any skill station, you will be immediately dismissed from the remainder of the examination. If you are unsuccessful in any skill today, we recommend you contact your agency training officer or medical director for remedial training before attempting to retest.

Retest Policy. You are allowed two (2) attempts at a skill station. If you fail a station, you are allowed to retest with another Skill Examiner on that day. If the retested skill station is failed, you must complete remedial training before testing again.

Questions?

[\[After any questions\]](#)

Please turn off and lock all electronic devices. Do not use any communication device until after you leave the testing facility today.