



Medication Aide Testing

Actor Training Guidelines

This is an instructional handout designed to quickly answer Testing Service Contractor questions regarding the training and certification of Actors for participation during the administration of the Skill Test.

BECOMING AN ACTOR:

You will need to fill out the **Actor Training Affidavit and Confidentiality/Nondisclosure Agreement**. The Testing Services Contractor/RN Test Observer you will be working with can provide you with the link to the agreement form.

To become an Actor, an individual must review these instructions with a certified RN Test Observer as assigned by a Testing Service Contractor, or directly from D&SDT-HEADMASTER staff in some situations, and certify that they received and understand these instructions. The individual must be trained with the state-approved materials that are included within. The Actor would have/should have filled out and signed a Testing Services Contractor generated application. The individual must also meet the criteria listed below. After accomplishing these tasks, the person may then be used as an Actor. These guidelines will be given to Actors for their continued review.

Please do not hesitate to contact D&SDT-HEADMASTER at (800)393-8664, (877)851-2355, or (888)401-0462 with any questions at any time.

These guidelines may also serve as the framework for an Actor Job Description, though Testing Service Contractors/RN Test Observers may design the Job Description as they require.

WHO CAN BE A SKILL TEST ACTOR?

Note: It is not necessary to be a professional actor or have acting experience to be successful as a Skill test actor. If you have acting experience, you may find this much more difficult than working from a script or within dramatic improvisational outlines, and you may find this frustrating. This work has nothing to do with finding dramatic moments or playing to an audience. It has everything to do with disciplining yourself, within the needs of the skill exam. It can be very repetitive as ***exactly the same simulation must be done for every candidate***. *Actors must be 'test neutral' at all times and never influence the outcome of the skill test.*

To qualify as an Actor, the Actor must meet the following criteria:

1. Actors need to understand that they are not able to sit for the State competency test for six (6) months from the date that they last worked as an Actor.
2. Actors must be of legal working age in the State they are working. Minors must also have a work permit where required by State law.
3. Actors must be trained and certified with these approved materials.
4. Actors must attest to abide by the Actor Training Affidavit and Confidentiality/Nondisclosure Agreement.
5. An Actor may **NOT** be a Medication Aide/Assistant Test Candidate who has not been tested.
6. An Actor may **NOT** be a student in any Medication Aide/Assistant training program.
7. Actors can be registry active Medication Aides/Assistants, testing team family members, volunteers, etc.



COMPENSATION FOR BEING A SKILL TEST ACTOR:

Actors may be volunteers. For non-volunteer Actors, the Testing Services Contractor should pay Actors an agreed-upon remuneration for assisting with the administration of a Skill test, at the rate agreed upon by both parties. RN Test Observers must be sure to include the Actor's name for the test events the actor participates in, so D&SDT-HEADMASTER staff can contact them for test dispute investigations when needed.

SKILL TASKS REQUIRING AN ACTOR:

Actors must be comfortable acting as a healthcare resident. If the Actor has any hesitation in participating in the demonstration of any of the skill tasks (please refer to the Medication Aide Candidate Handbook for the state you will be an Actor in for the state-specific tasks at www.hdmaster.com), they should not become certified as an Actor.

- Nasal Spray Administration (normal saline solution nasal spray will be sprayed into nostrils).
- Ear Drop Administration (drop(s) of water will be placed into ear).
- Eye Drop Administration (normal saline solution eye drops will be placed in eye(s)). Actor must be willing to have eyes wiped after drop administration.
- Ointment Administration (lotion rubbed on forearm).
- Topical Spray Administration (water sprayed on forearm).
- Tablet Administration (candy will be used as "pretend" medication).
- Capsule Administration (candy will be used as "pretend" medication).
- Liquid Medication Administration (juice, water, etc., will be used as "pretend" medication).
- Have your Apical Pulse rate taken.

SCHEDULING:

Actors will be contacted by Testing Services Contractors/RN Test Observer to be scheduled for testing dates.

TEST SECURITY:

Actors will be required to maintain, and never violate, the security of the tests or compromise any testing information. If Actors violate test security, they will be held legally accountable and prosecuted to the full extent of the law. **Actors MUST NOT release any test content or information about any candidate's performance to ANYONE other than the RN Test Observer, D&SDT-HEADMASTER staff, or the appropriate State agency.**

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE:

Actors should wear comfortable clothes that do not restrict their motion in any way. Short sleeves that are easy to push up or no sleeves on shirts are recommended.

SAFETY:

Actors should voice their concerns to the RN Test Observer if at any time they believe that they are in danger. In some cases, these situations can be handled within the test experience. In other situations, a time-out (testing stopped) is necessary.



COMMUNICATING WITH CANDIDATES:

In non-test situations, good care involves cooperative communication between the resident and the candidate. The resident might tell the candidate what is comfortable or ask for what they want. In the test situation, the candidate must rely on learned knowledge and training to give proper care and the actor/resident responses must be SKILL TEST OUTCOME NEUTRAL. (Impact on the outcome of the skill task must be test neutral, the “whatever you think is best” answer to questions the candidates ask puts the decision back on the candidate.) **Do not lead the candidate toward any conclusion about providing further care or care they may not have provided.** The actor may be compelled to “help” a candidate during the exam. This is natural but must be avoided.

Actors may interact with candidates as though they were a typical healthcare resident.

1. Actors **may not initiate** communication with the candidate.
2. Actors must not show any body language that may indicate that the candidate did something correctly or incorrectly.
3. Actors cannot prompt the candidate, such as asking them to provide a specific medication.
4. Many skill tasks include some communication between the Actor and the candidate. A few examples of appropriate communication follow. The Actor NEVER initiates any communication, except for a personal safety concern.
5. Actors should never be conversing (chit-chat or personal conversations) with the RN Test Observer during testing.
6. Actors do not move to set up for the next task until the RN Test Observer has received a verbal closure from the candidate that they are finished with the task they just demonstrated.

These examples are relevant for nearly any skill task and are listed to give a general idea of expectations for an Actor’s general mindset, behavior, and the range of communication allowable.

ENTERING A ROOM: If the candidate knocks on the door the Actor should say, “Come in.” The actor’s communication as a healthcare resident can put the candidate at ease and help the candidate perform better, while still remaining test neutral. Convey non-verbal acceptance with a smile and a relaxed, accepting, positive tone of voice.

If the candidate were to ask the Actor, “Do you want the head of the bed up or down for your eye drops?” a neutral non-skill directive response is “Whatever you think is best”. This puts the decision back with the test candidate. “Do you want the head of the bed down for your ear drops?” A SKILL IMPACT NEUTRAL response is “I don’t know” or “Whatever you think is best.”

OTHER COMMUNICATION:

Sometimes a nervous candidate’s reaction may be to become giggly and tempt the actor/resident into silliness. You will not be helping the candidate if you engage in this overcompensating behavior and it will further distract the candidate. You must remain professional and act out your role as a resident and at all times remain test neutral throughout every candidate's test. Be sure every candidate has the exact same opportunity to perform their best without you impacting the outcome of the candidate’s test.