

Certified Registered Central Service Technician (CRCST) Exam Content Outline



Revised June 2018; Updated January 2024

The CRCST Exam Content Outline was created through the 2017 job task analysis and outlines the specific areas of knowledge necessary to perform the duties of a Central Service Technician. The Content Outline also details the percentage weight for each of the seven sections which comprise the CRCST Exam. The higher the percentage weight, the more heavily the questions in that area will affect your overall test score.

SECTION 1: **CLEANING, DECONTAMINATION & DISINFECTION** (PERCENTAGE WEIGHT 20%)

I. **AREA SPECIFIC SAFETY STANDARDS**

- A. OSHA/Blood Borne Pathogens
- B. Microbiology (e.g. cross contamination, chain of infection, microbial transmission, how CS supports infection prevention)
- C. Where to obtain area specific safety awareness standards (e.g. safety data sheets (SDS), regulatory agencies & professional associations)
- D. Sharps safety
- E. Equipment operation
- F. Chemical safety & handling (e.g. spill kit, interpreting the Manufacturer's Instructions for Use (IFU) & SDS, disposal)
- G. Location, operation & testing of eyewash station & shower
- H. Ergonomics (e.g. work-flow, proper body mechanics)
- I. Traffic flow
- J. How to contain, transport & receive soiled items into decontamination or soiled utility rooms (e.g. inspecting for & reporting inadequate point of use cleaning)
- K. Hand-hygiene (e.g. frequency)

II. **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

- A. What type of PPE to use
- B. Donning & doffing PPE
- C. When to change & how to dispose of PPE

III. **TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT**

- A. Standards for temperature
- B. Standards for humidity
- C. Recording & documenting temperature & humidity (e.g. frequency)
- D. Corrective actions taken if not within the parameters (e.g. who to notify)

IV. **Preparing Work Area For Decontamination**

- A. Correct cleaning agent or chemicals for cleaning process
- B. Supplies Needed (e.g. brush, towels, location of restock)
- C. Equipment (e.g. washer disinfectant, ultrasonic, cart washer, leak tester)
- E. How to determine & prepare chemicals following the Manufacturer's IFU (e.g. dilution, equipment)
- F. How to check & replenish chemicals in equipment
- G. How to determine the correct chemicals for the equipment
- H. Testing the functionality of light & magnification devices
- I. How to clean sink strainer/drains (e.g. frequency)

V. **QUALITY TESTS**

- A. Efficacy testing process for washer/disinfectant
- B. Efficacy testing process for ultrasonic
- C. Efficacy testing process for Automated Endoscope Reprocessor (AER)
- D. Efficacy testing process for cart washer
- E. Frequency of quality tests (e.g. washers, ultrasonic, AERs, cart washers)
- F. How to document & interpret quality test results (e.g. quality assurance testing program)

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VI. Maintenance & Troubleshooting of Equipment

- A. How to interpret the Manufacturer's IFU (e.g. operator's manual, locate)
- B. How to identify, respond & report malfunctions and/or alarms
- C. How to clean equipment strainers/drains
- D. Identification of outlets (e.g. on/off, regular, emergency)
- E. Chemical feed line functionality (e.g. identifying detergent dosage)
- F. How to clean & test spray arms
- G. How to check washer manifolds & baskets

VII. IDENTIFICATION & SEPARATION OF REUSABLE & DISPOSABLE ITEMS

- A. Sorting reusable & disposable items (e.g. laparoscopic tips, linens, drapes, third-party recycling vendors, sustainability)
- B. How to dispose of sharps & non-reprocessed items (e.g. biohazards vs non-regulated trash, sharps container)

VIII. PREPARING ITEMS FOR DECONTAMINATION

- A. Identify manual and/or mechanical cleaning according to the Manufacturer's IFU
- B. Proper opening & positioning of instruments
- C. How to disassemble instruments
- D. What goes in each sink (e.g. two or three sink method)
- E. Soak process (e.g. water temperature, dilution)
- F. Brushes (e.g. selection, size & care, single use vs reusable)
- G. Prevention of aerosols
- H. When & how to use high-pressure water & air gun/hose (e.g. critical water)
- I. Visual inspection of bioburden removal (e.g. magnifying devices)
- J. How to properly load items into the equipment
- K. Selection of appropriate wash cycle
- L. Methods for reducing the risk of Toxic Anterior Segment Syndrome (TASS)
- M. Special precautions for Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease (CJD) instruments

IX. SELECTING & USING APPROPRIATE DISINFECTANT

- A. Disinfectant family (e.g. quats, halogens, aldehydes)
- B. Three levels of Spaulding Classification (e.g. non-critical, semi-critical, critical)
- C. How to identify, select & use the appropriate chemicals (e.g. exposure times, rinsing)
- D. Documentation of chemical testing (e.g. temperature, Minimum Effective Concentration(MEC))
- E. Corrective actions for failed quality tests (e.g. temperature, MEC)

X. HIGH LEVEL DISINFECTION (HLD) PROCESS

- A. Safety measures when using HLD (e.g. PPE, spill kit, ventilation)
- B. Dilution requirements (e.g. concentration, expiration, end of use date, labeling)
- C. Rinsing requirements (e.g. critical water)
- D. Proper documentation (e.g. technician information, patient information, exposure time & solution temperature, lot control number)
- E. Care, handling & storage (e.g. drying, expiration date)
- F. Proper disposal methods (e.g. neutralizer)
- G. Transport guidelines (e.g. closed container, clean labeling)

XI. TRANSFERRING ITEMS TO PREPARATION AREA

- A. How to maintain appropriate air flow (e.g. negative pressure, positive pressure)
- B. How to prevent cross-contamination (e.g. point of use cleaning & decontamination prior to IUSS)
- C. Performing a visual check for cleanliness

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SECTION 2: **PREPARATION & PACKAGING** (PERCENTAGE WEIGHT 20%)

I. AREA SPECIFIC STANDARDS

- A. Area specific safety awareness (e.g. hot carts, wet floors, hot trays)
- B. Sharps safety (e.g. skin hooks, K-wire, towel clips)
- C. Equipment operation (e.g. heat sealers, insulation testers, scope inspectors)
- D. Where to find Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
- E. Chemical safety & handling (e.g. interpreting the Manufacturer's Instructions for Use (IFU) & SDS, disposal)
- F. Ergonomics (e.g. work-flow, proper body mechanics)
- G. Traffic flow
- H. Hand-hygiene

II. TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- A. Standards for temperature
- B. Standards for humidity
- C. Recording & documenting temperature & humidity (e.g. frequency)
- D. Corrective actions taken if not within parameters (e.g. who to notify)

III. PREPARING WORK AREA FOR PACKAGING

- A. Dress code
- B. Supplies needed (e.g. indicators, tip protectors, tray liners, tape)
- C. Work area requirements (e.g. cleaning requirements, lighting, magnification)

IV. RECEIVING ITEMS FOR PREPARATION

- A. How to unload equipment (e.g. instrument, cart washers)
- B. How to accept manually cleaned items (e.g. pass-through window)
- C. How to identify & sort items (e.g. service, facility, loaner)

V. INSPECTING ITEMS FOR CLEANLINESS & FUNCTIONALITY

- A. How to check for cleanliness & functionality
- B. Proper testing tools & process for checking functionality of items (e.g. sharpness testing)
- C. Process of handling broken and/or damaged instrumentation (e.g. dull, misaligned, documentation)
- E. Lubrication of items (e.g. according to the Manufacturer's IFU, when & how to lubricate)
- F. How to assemble, test & disassemble items according to the Manufacturer's IFU

VI. IDENTIFYING CORRECT CONTENTS FOR ASSEMBLY

- A. Utilizing count sheets, peel pack lists, tray lists
- B. How to identify items (e.g. catalogs, product number, computers, tape, etching, cross-referenceing)
- C. How to size & measure items

VII. ASSEMBLING CONTENTS FOR PACKAGING

- A. Instrument protection devices (e.g. tip protectors, foam, mats, tray liners)
- B. Proper instrument placement (e.g. facilitate sterilization, protect instruments)
- C. Instrument organizers (e.g. stringers, racks)
- D. Class/type & appropriate use of chemical indicators/integrators (e.g. proper placement, intended cycle)
- E. Weight limits & weight distribution

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VIII. PACKAGING METHOD

- A. Types of packaging method (e.g. flat wrap, peel pack, container, size, packaging weight)
- B. Sterilization method/cycle to be used
- C. External indicators (e.g. locks, tape)
- D. Inspecting packaging (e.g. wrap, rigid containers)
- E. Closure methods (e.g. tape, locks, heat seal, self-seal)
- F. Proper packaging methods (e.g. peel packs, rigid containers, wrap (simultaneous vs sequential))
- G. Proper wrapping techniques (e.g. square fold, envelope)

IX. LABELING METHOD

- A. Approved writing instrument
- B. Placement of labeling & writing (e.g. write on plastic side of peel pouch, write on tape not wrapper)
- C. Proper label information (e.g. missing items, tray information, technician identification, storage destination)
- D. Special information identifiers (e.g. implant, loaners, sterilization methods/cycle)
- E. Date of sterilization/date of expiration (e.g. event-related vs time)

X. TRANSFERRING ITEMS TO APPROPRIATE AREA

- A. Proper item handling (e.g. stacking, rough handling (sliding), package integrity)
- B. How to prioritize for rapid turn-around
- C. Ergonomics (e.g. workflow, body mechanics)
- D. How to track items (e.g. manual, computer)

SECTION 3: DOCUMENTATION & RECORD MAINTENANCE (PERCENTAGE WEIGHT 10%)

I. RECORD MAINTENANCE

- A. Record Keeping (e.g. policy & procedure, what needs to be kept, type of records, record location, quality test results)
- B. Purpose of record keeping (e.g. standards, legal documents)

II. ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION MONITORING & CORRECTIVE ACTION

- A. Appropriate air exchanges & pressures for all work areas
- B. Corrective action plan for environmental conditions out of compliance (e.g. temperature, humidity, air flow, regulatory bodies)

III. EMPLOYEE EDUCATION, SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT

- A. Accident/incident reporting policy (e.g. patient tracing procedure, in event of needle stick, cut)
- B. Orientation (e.g. health care facility, state & federal regulations, disaster plan, risk management & safety management policies)
- C. Personnel monitoring (e.g. exposure control plan, badges)
- D. Education & training record requirements (e.g. certification, competencies, continuing education, new equipment & processes)

SECTION 4: STERILIZATION PROCESS (PERCENTAGE WEIGHT 20%)

I. AREA SPECIFIC SAFETY STANDARDS

- A. Area specific safety awareness (e.g. hot carts, wet floors, hot trays, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), traffic flow, hand-hygiene)
- B. Equipment operation (e.g. high & low temp sterilizers, incubators)

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- C. Sterilization chemical safety & handling (e.g. interpreting the Manufacturer's Instructions for Use (IFU) & Safety Data Sheets (SDS), disposal)
- D. Ergonomics (e.g. work-flow, proper body mechanics)

II. TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- A. Standards for temperature
- B. Standards for humidity
- C. Recording & documenting temperature & humidity (e.g. frequency)
- D. Corrective actions taken if not within the parameters (e.g. who to notify)

III. PREPARING THE WORK AREA FOR STERILIZATION

- A. Supplies needed (e.g. printer supplies, test packs, label/load gun supplies)
- B. Cleaning equipment (e.g. according to the Manufacturer's IFU, drains, chamber)
- C. Checking equipment functionality (e.g. error codes, printer, incubators)

IV. STERILIZER TESTS

- A. Leak tests
- B. Bowie Dick/air removal tests
- C. Biological tests (e.g. high & low temperature, cycle changes)
- D. When to perform tests (e.g. repair, construction, malfunction, routine)

V. STERILIZATION METHODS & CYCLES

- A. High temperature (e.g. steam, dry heat)
- B. Low temperature (e.g. gas plasma, vaporized, ethylene oxide, liquid chemical)
- C. Anatomy & phases of the high & low temperature sterilizers
- D. Different types of cycles (e.g. gravity, dynamic, standard, advanced, IUSS)

VI. PRE- & POST-STERILIZATION PACKAGE INTEGRITY

- A. What compromises integrity (e.g. moisture, holes, filters, broken locks & seals)
- B. Filter placement, locks, seals & external indicators

VII. LOAD STERILIZER

- A. Load configuration (e.g. metal, wrapped, rigid container, peel pouch)
- B. Sterilization method verification (e.g. high vs low temperature)
- C. Biological tests/process challenge devices (e.g. selection, placement)
- D. How to identify appropriate use of external indicators (e.g. sterilization method, placement)

VIII. OPERATING & MONITORING STERILIZATION EQUIPMENT

- A. Sterilizer component checks (e.g. according to Manufacturer's IFU, door gaskets, drains, carts, incubator temperature verification)
- B. How to select & change cycle for high & low temperature sterilizers (e.g. exposure, dry, temperature)
- C. How to replace & dispose of empty cartridges/tanks/cassettes

IX. CYCLE PARAMETER VERIFICATION

- A. How to interpret the printout (e.g. temperature, time & pressure exposure, cycle type)
- B. Verification procedures to ensure accountability (e.g. initialing the printout)

X. UNLOADING STERILIZER

- A. What compromises sterility (e.g. cooling time, temperature, handling, equipment failure)
- B. Traffic flow (e.g. cart placement)

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XI. TEST RESULTS

- A. Proper handling & incubation of the biological tests/process challenge devices
- B. Quarantine (e.g. implants, early release)
- C. How to interpret & document test results

XII. POTENTIAL PROCESS FAILURES

- A. How to identify a process failure (e.g. wet packs, color change, failure to meet sterilization parameters)
- B. Procedure for follow-up after process failure (e.g. recall, documentation, contact)

XIII. LOAD CONTROL (LOT) NUMBER

- A. Required information for a load control (lot) number

XIV. DOCUMENTING STERILIZATION LOAD CONTENTS

- A. How & what to record (e.g. computer or manual load log sheet)
- B. Rationale for documentation (e.g. recall, traceability)

SECTION 5: CUSTOMER RELATIONS (PERCENTAGE WEIGHT 10%)

I. CUSTOMER RELATIONS

- A. Communication etiquette (e.g. phone, email, text, active listening)
- B. Decision-making skills (e.g. prioritizing, critical thinking)
- C. Communication types (e.g. formal, informal, service recovery skills)
- D. Medical terminology (e.g. anatomy & physiology, surgical terminology, instrumentation)

II. TEAMWORK & WORK GROUPS

- A. Types of work groups (e.g. quality, cross-functional)
- B. Decision making & accountability (e.g. identify roles & responsibilities)
- C. Task prioritization (e.g. reading the schedule, turnover, anticipating customer needs)

SECTION 6: STERILE STORAGE & INVENTORY MANAGEMENT (PERCENTAGE WEIGHT 7%)

I. AREA SPECIFIC SAFETY STANDARDS

- A. Area specific safety awareness (e.g. traffic flow, hand-hygiene, Safety Data Sheets (SDS))
- B. Ergonomics (e.g. work-flow, proper body mechanics)

II. TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- A. Standards for temperature
- B. Standards for humidity
- C. Recording & documenting temperature & humidity (e.g. frequency)
- D. Corrective actions taken if not within the parameters (e.g. who to notify)

III. PREPARING THE WORK AREA FOR STORAGE

- A. Dress code
- B. Supplies needed (e.g. carts (closed, open), rack system (closed, semi-closed, open))
- C. Work area requirements (e.g. cleaning requirements)

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IV. ORDERING & INVENTORY REPLENISHMENT

- A. Inventory replenishment & distribution systems (e.g. periodic automated replenishment, exchange cart system, requisition systems)
- B. The ordering process (e.g. computerized vs manual)
- C. How to identify the product (e.g. catalog numbers, item number, descriptions)
- D. Unit of measure (e.g. each, box, package, case)
- E. How to handle inventory deficiencies (e.g. outages, substitutes, communication)

V. RECEIVING & INSPECTING INVENTORY

- A. Proper break-out area (e.g. corrugated cardboard, external shipping containers)
- B. Inspecting for integrity (e.g. what & when to check)
- C. expiration & manufacturing dates (e.g. symbols, what & when to check)

VI. STOCKING & ROTATING INVENTORY

- A. Location of supplies (e.g. shelf/cart location, sterile supplies)
- B. Shelf life policy (e.g. expiration, event-related)
- C. Process for rotating inventory (e.g. First in First Out (FIFO))
- D. Proper storage requirements (e.g. height, weight, distance from wall/floor, shelving)

VII. DISTRIBUTING STERILE & NON-STERILE ITEMS

- A. Distribution methods (e.g. just in time, exchange cart, case cart)
- B. Proper handling of items (e.g. maintain sterility)
- C. Transport guidelines (e.g. closed cart, bins, dust covers, off-site transport)

VIII. MONITORING & TRACKING ITEMS DISTRIBUTED

- A. High dollar items (e.g. ABC analysis)
- B. Specialty carts (e.g. code carts, emergency carts, c-section)
- C. Critical items (e.g. special order, non-stock items, doctor specials, patient specific items)
- D. Vendor-owned items (e.g. loaner, consignment)
- E. How items are organized & tracked (e.g. manual, RFID, computerized)
- F. Distribution to user departments (e.g. ER, OR, clinics, ICU)

IX. LOSS OF STERILE ITEMS

- A. How to handle manufacturer product recalls
- B. Common causes of waste & loss (e.g. damaged, expired & obsolete items)

SECTION 7: PATIENT CARE EQUIPMENT (PERCENTAGE WEIGHT 13%)

I. AREA SPECIFIC SAFETY STANDARDS

- A. Area specific safety awareness (e.g. OSHA/blood borne pathogens, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), electrical safety, hand-hygiene, regulatory agencies & professional associations)
- B. Equipment operation & how to interpret the Manufacturer's Instructions for Use (IFU) (e.g. operator's manual)

II. TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- A. Standards for temperature
- B. Standards for humidity
- C. Recording & documenting temperature & humidity (e.g. frequency)
- D. Corrective actions taken if not within the parameters (e.g. who to notify)

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III. PREPARING THE WORK AREA FOR DISTRIBUTION

- A. Supplies needed (e.g. sleeves, pads, equipment covers, clean labels/stickers)
- B. Work area requirements (e.g. cleaning requirements, charging stations, plugs)

IV. RECEIVING ITEMS FOR PREPARATION

- A. Identifying types of patient care equipment
- B. Process for recording & tracking equipment (e.g. rental, loaned)
- C. The flow of patient equipment (e.g. one way flow)

V. INSPECTING EQUIPMENT FOR CLEANLINESS & FUNCTIONALITY

- A. How to check for cleanliness
- B. How to check for compliance with safety standards (e.g. frayed cords, preventative maintenance label, damage)
- C. Corrective action plan for equipment out of compliance (e.g. missing/expired preventative maintenance label, who to notify)
- D. Equipment requiring charging or battery replacement

VI. PREPARING EQUIPMENT FOR DISTRIBUTION

- A. How to assemble equipment for distribution (e.g. disposable components, Manufacturer's IFU)
- B. How to test equipment (e.g. per Manufacturer's IFU)

VII. CARE & HANDLING

- A. Location and proper storage of equipment (e.g. dry, clean)

VIII. DISTRIBUTING & TRACKING EQUIPMENT

- A. Systems used (e.g. manual, computer, RFID, hybrid)
- B. How to record & track distribution of patient care equipment
- C. Transport guideline