

California Barber

Solution key

April 6, 2026

Official exam page

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Online timed practice

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1. Under California law, a cosmetology establishment must display which of the following prominently?

- A. Only the health inspection report
- B. Only the establishment license at the reception desk
- C (correct). Establishment license and all individual practitioner licenses where visible to clients**
- D. No display is required — licenses are held digitally

Rationale: California Business and Professions Code requires cosmetology establishments to display the establishment license and all individual practitioner licenses where they are visible to clients.

2. California BBC inspectors have the authority to enter a licensed cosmetology establishment:

- A. Only after a formal complaint has been filed
- B. Only on scheduled inspection dates
- C (correct). During business hours without prior notice**
- D. Only with a court order

Rationale: California law authorizes BBC inspectors to enter licensed establishments during business hours without prior notice to conduct inspections for compliance with health, safety, and licensing requirements.

3. How often must disinfectant solution in a wet sanitizer jar be changed?

- A. Once a month
- B. After every single use
- C (correct). Daily or whenever visibly contaminated**
- D. Once a week

Rationale: Disinfectant solution becomes contaminated over time and loses efficacy. It must be changed daily or whenever visibly contaminated.

4. What does "sanitation" mean in the context of a salon?

- A. Kill all bacteria but not viruses
- B (correct). Reduce microbial contamination to safe levels but not eliminate all pathogens**
- C. Destroy all microbial life including spores
- D. Remove all physical debris from a surface

Rationale: Sanitation reduces microbial contamination to safe levels but does not eliminate all pathogens. It is a lower level than disinfection or sterilization.

5. What is the purpose of shaving cream or gel in a shave service?

- A. Condition and strengthen the beard
- B. Disinfect the skin surface
- C (correct). Lubricate the skin, soften beard hair, and protect against razor irritation**
- D. Open pores for a deeper shave

Rationale: Shaving cream/gel lubricates the skin to reduce friction, softens beard hair to allow a closer cut, and protects the skin from razor irritation.

6. The three phases of the hair growth cycle in correct order are:

- A. Telogen, anagen, catagen
- B. Anagen, telogen, catagen
- C. Catagen, telogen, anagen
- D (correct). Anagen, catagen, telogen**

Rationale: The anagen (active growth) phase lasts 2–7 years. Catagen (transitional) phase lasts 2–3 weeks. Telogen (resting/shedding) phase lasts 3–4 months before the cycle repeats.

7. Pseudofolliculitis barbae (razor bumps) is caused by:

- A. An allergic reaction to shaving cream
- B. A bacterial infection from an unclean razor
- C (correct). Hair curling back into the skin as it regrows, causing inflammation**
- D. A fungal condition of the beard follicles

Rationale: Pseudofolliculitis barbae occurs when cut hair curls back into the skin as it regrows, causing inflammation. It is more common in men with curly or coarse facial hair.

8. What does "honing" a straight razor accomplish?

- A. Disinfect the blade surface
- B. Align the blade edge without removing metal
- C. Polish the blade for a smoother finish
- D (correct). Remove microscopic metal to restore sharpness when stropping is no longer sufficient**

Rationale: Honing uses a whetstone to remove microscopic metal from the blade edge, restoring sharpness when the blade has dulled beyond what stropping can correct.

9. The California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology (BBC) is regulated under which state agency?

- A. California Department of Public Health
- B. California Labor Commission
- C. California State Licensing Board
- D (correct). Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA)**

Rationale: The California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology (BBC) operates under the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), which oversees professional licensing boards throughout California.

10. A licensee cuts a client and draws blood. What is the correct first response?

- A. Discard all tools and continue with new ones
- B (correct). Stop service, cover wound, remove and disinfect contaminated tools**
- C. Apply antiseptic and continue immediately
- D. Continue the service wearing gloves

Rationale: Service stops immediately. The wound is covered, contaminated tools removed and disinfected, and the area cleaned per bloodborne pathogen protocols.

11. Hair texture affects clipper work because:

- A. It has no effect on clipper technique
- B. Curly hair must always be cut dry
- C. Fine hair always requires a higher guard number
- D (correct). Coarse/thick/curly hair may require more passes and different guard sizes for the**

same visual result

Rationale: Coarse, thick, or curly hair requires more passes with the clipper and may require different guard sizes compared to fine, straight hair to achieve the same visual result.

12. What is the minimum contact time required for most EPA-registered disinfectants to effectively kill pathogens?

- A. 5 minutes
- B (correct). 10 minutes**
- C. 30 minutes
- D. 1 minute

Rationale: Most EPA-registered salon disinfectants require a minimum of 10 minutes of full immersion contact time to achieve label kill claims.

13. Which of the following is a non-porous surface that can be effectively disinfected?

- A. A porous sponge applicator
- B. A fabric cape
- C (correct). A metal shear blade**
- D. A wooden cuticle pusher

Rationale: Non-porous materials (metal, glass, hard plastic) can be fully disinfected. Porous materials absorb disinfectants unevenly and cannot be reliably disinfected.

14. The clipper-over-comb technique is used to:

- A. Cut hair in a straight horizontal line
- B (correct). Blend and taper hair by running clippers over a comb held at varying angles**
- C. Lift hair with a comb and cut with scissors only
- D. Remove bulk from thick hair using a razor

Rationale: Clipper-over-comb blends and tapers hair by holding a comb against the head at varying angles and running clippers over it. It is a foundational barbering technique for creating smooth gradients.

15. Before performing any shave service, the barber should conduct a:

- A (correct). Identify skin type, beard density, growth direction, and any contraindications to customize the service**
- B. Confirm the client wants a straight razor vs safety razor
- C. Determine which brand of shaving cream to use
- D. Check the client's appointment history only

Rationale: A facial analysis identifies skin type, beard density and growth direction, skin conditions (acne, sensitivity, ingrown hairs), and any contraindications — allowing the barber to customize the service.

16. Which of the following describes hair that has been chemically over-processed?

- A. Extremely low porosity and high elasticity
- B. Tightly closed cuticle with low moisture absorption
- C. High shine and smooth cuticle
- D (correct). Extreme porosity, poor elasticity, gummy texture when wet**

Rationale: Over-processed hair has a damaged, weakened cuticle and cortex, resulting in extreme porosity, lack of elasticity, breakage, and a gummy feel when wet.

17. Before clipper blades are used on a new client, they must be:

- A. Sterilized in an autoclave after each client
- B (correct). Disinfected with an EPA-registered disinfectant spray**
- C. Wipe with a dry cloth only
- D. Rinsed with water and dried

Rationale: Clipper blades must be disinfected with an EPA-registered disinfectant spray between each

client to prevent the spread of scalp conditions, bacteria, and bloodborne pathogens.

18. Which type of disinfectant is EPA-registered and most commonly required for non-porous tools in Texas salons?

- A. Bleach diluted in water
- B (correct). EPA-registered hospital-grade disinfectant (quats or phenolics)**
- C. Soap and hot water
- D. Isopropyl alcohol only

Rationale: EPA-registered hospital-grade disinfectants (quaternary ammonium compounds or phenolics) are required for non-porous implements in Texas cosmetology and barbering establishments.

19. What is the difference between a fade and a taper in terms of beard shaping?

- A. They are the same technique with different names
- B. Both require a straight razor
- C. A fade keeps some length; a taper goes to bare skin
- D (correct). A taper gradually reduces length; a fade reduces to skin level**

Rationale: A beard taper gradually reduces length from the cheeks/mustache area toward the neckline. A fade reduces hair from fuller coverage to skin level, typically near the jawline or neck.

20. What is the term for the area of the head where the hairline naturally rounds from the side to the back?

- A. The top of the head at the crown
- B. The temple area on the sides of the head
- C. The parietal ridge at the widest part of the head
- D (correct). The area where the hairline naturally rounds from the side to the back at the nape**

Rationale: The occipital bone area (nape region) is where the natural recession of the hairline meets the back of the head. Barbers must recognize this area to create natural-looking tapers and fades.

21. Under California law, a cosmetologist found practicing without a current, valid license is subject to:

- A. An automatic 30-day suspension
- B (correct). A misdemeanor — subject to fines and potential criminal charges**
- C. A written warning only
- D. No penalty if unlicensed for less than 90 days

Rationale: Practicing cosmetology without a valid California license is a misdemeanor under Business and Professions Code Section 7317, subject to fines and potential criminal charges.

22. EPA-registered salon disinfectants must be effective against which three categories of microorganisms?

- A. Bacteria only
- B. Viruses and fungi only
- C (correct). Bacteria, viruses, and fungi**
- D. Bacteria and viruses only

Rationale: Salon disinfectants must be bactericidal, virucidal, and fungicidal to meet the minimum safety standard for professional use.

23. What is a scalp massage most beneficial for during a shampoo service?

- A. Opens the cuticle for better product penetration
- B. Reduces scalp oil production
- C (correct). Stimulates blood circulation to nourish hair follicles**
- D. Removes product buildup from the scalp

Rationale: Scalp massage stimulates blood circulation to the scalp, which nourishes the hair follicles and encourages healthy hair growth. It also relaxes the client.

24. Alum block is used in barbering primarily to:

- A. Disinfect all tools after the shave service
- B. Soften the beard for the next shave
- C (correct). Stop minor bleeding from razor nicks and provide mild antiseptic action**
- D. Reduce post-shave redness from chemical exposure

Rationale: Alum block (potassium alum) is a natural mineral that stops minor bleeding from razor nicks by acting as a styptic (blood coagulant) and mild antiseptic.

25. What is the technique of blending longer hair on top to shorter hair on the sides called?

- A. Shaping only the hairline without cutting length
- B. Applying a texturizer to loosen the curl pattern
- C. Cutting all hair to the same uniform length
- D (correct). Gradually transitioning hair length from longer at the crown to shorter at the sides and nape**

Rationale: Fading (or tapering) gradually transitions hair length from longer at the crown to shorter or bare skin at the sides and nape, using clippers and blending techniques.

26. Under California Health and Safety Code, cosmetology establishments must maintain hot and cold running water:

- A. Only licensed medical facilities are required to have running water
- B. Water is optional if alcohol-based sanitizers are used
- C. Only cold water is required
- D (correct). Hot and cold running water accessible for sanitation and handwashing**

Rationale: California law requires cosmetology establishments to have adequate hot and cold running water accessible for sanitation of implements and handwashing, as a basic health and safety requirement.

27. The term "pathogen" refers to:

- A. A virus that only affects plants
- B (correct). Any microorganism capable of causing disease**
- C. Any chemical substance found in salon products
- D. A type of allergen found in hair dye

Rationale: A pathogen is any microorganism capable of causing disease — bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. Preventing pathogen transmission is the primary goal of salon disinfection.

28. The four natural growth patterns that affect haircut planning include:

- A (correct). Whorls, widow's peaks, nape growth direction, and recession patterns**
- B. Whether the client has had chemical services previously
- C. The client's hair color and porosity only
- D. The amount of product the client uses daily

Rationale: Natural growth patterns — such as whorls (cowlicks), widow's peaks, nape growth direction, and recession patterns — affect how hair falls and must be accounted for in cut planning.

29. What product is applied after a shave to soothe the skin and close pores?

- A. Lock in moisture like a heavy oil
- B. Soften the beard before the next shave
- C (correct). Soothe razor irritation, close pores, provide mild antiseptic action**
- D. Stimulate beard growth

Rationale: Aftershave lotion or toner is applied post-shave to soothe razor irritation, close open pores, provide mild antiseptic action, and leave the skin feeling refreshed.

30. The three main layers of the hair shaft from outer to inner are:

- A (correct). Cuticle, cortex, medulla**
- B. Cortex, cuticle, medulla
- C. Epidermis, dermis, cortex

D. Medulla, cortex, cuticle

Rationale: The cuticle is the outer protective layer of overlapping scales. The cortex gives hair its strength, elasticity, and color. The medulla is the innermost soft core (absent in fine hair).

31. Which chemical product is prohibited from use in California nail salons?

- A (correct). Liquid methyl methacrylate (MMA) monomer**
- B. Acetone nail polish remover
- C. UV gel nail products
- D. Hydrogen peroxide developer

Rationale: Liquid methyl methacrylate (MMA) monomer is prohibited by the BBC in California nail salons because it is difficult to remove, can penetrate the dermis, and has been associated with serious health risks.

32. Which of the following best describes a bactericide?

- A. A chemical that inhibits bacterial growth without killing them
- B (correct). A chemical that kills bacteria**
- C. A product that removes bacteria without chemicals
- D. A natural antibacterial derived from plants

Rationale: A bactericide kills bacteria. A bacteriostat only inhibits growth. Salon disinfectants must be bactericidal, virucidal, and fungicidal to meet Texas TDLR requirements.

33. What is the primary purpose of the barber's consultation before a haircut?

- A. Sell the client additional products
- B (correct). Identify desired style, hair type, and any concerns to plan the appropriate technique**
- C. Determine which clipper guard to start with
- D. Check if the client has paid for the service

Rationale: The client consultation identifies the desired style, hair type, and any concerns (thinning, scalp conditions, previous chemical services), allowing the barber to plan the appropriate technique.

34. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are required to provide information about:

- A. Pricing and wholesale ordering information
- B. Only the product ingredients and fragrance profile
- C. Instructions for mixing chemical formulas
- D (correct). Hazard information, safe handling, PPE requirements, and emergency response**

Rationale: SDS provide hazard information, safe handling instructions, PPE requirements, and emergency response procedures for chemical products.

35. The term "porosity" in hair science refers to:

- A. How quickly hair dries after washing
- B (correct). How readily the hair absorbs and retains moisture**
- C. The natural wave pattern of the hair
- D. The hair's resistance to breakage under tension

Rationale: Porosity describes how readily the hair absorbs and retains moisture. High porosity hair absorbs quickly but loses moisture fast. Low porosity hair resists absorption but retains moisture well.

36. The scissors-over-comb technique in barbering is most useful for:

- A. Cut thick sections of hair in one pass
- B. Remove bulk from the crown only
- C (correct). Blend the transition zone where faded sides meet longer top hair**
- D. Create a blunt one-length cut

Rationale: Scissors-over-comb is used to cut and blend hair in areas where clippers would be too aggressive, such as blending the transition zone between faded sides and longer top hair.

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37. A client arrives with a visible nail fungus infection on one hand. What is the correct course of action?

- A. Perform the service only on the unaffected hand
- B. Apply antifungal powder and proceed with service
- C (correct). Refuse service and refer the client to a physician**
- D. Wear gloves and complete the full service

Rationale: California law and infection control standards prohibit licensees from performing services on clients with fungal infections. The client must be referred to a physician and service must be refused to protect both the client and other patrons.

38. What is alopecia?

- A. An allergic reaction to color chemicals
- B. Excessive hair growth
- C (correct). Hair loss**
- D. A fungal scalp infection

Rationale: Alopecia is the medical term for hair loss, which can be caused by genetics, hormonal changes, medical conditions, or traction from tight hairstyles.

39. The California BBC requires that disinfectant solutions used on implements be:

- A. Soap and water is sufficient
- B. Rubbing alcohol only
- C. Any household bleach solution
- D (correct). EPA-registered hospital-grade disinfectants per manufacturer instructions**

Rationale: California Title 16 CCR requires that disinfectant solutions used on cosmetology implements be EPA-registered hospital-grade disinfectants, prepared and changed according to manufacturer instructions.

40. What is the recommended number of shave passes for a classic straight razor service?

- A (correct). Three passes: with grain, across grain, against grain**
- B. One pass only
- C. Two passes: with grain then against grain
- D. As many passes as needed with no standard

Rationale: A professional straight razor shave typically involves three passes: with the grain (ATG), across the grain (XTG), and against the grain (ATG) for the closest result.

41. The pH of the hair and scalp is approximately:

- A. 2.0–3.0 — strongly acidic
- B. 8.5–9.5 — alkaline
- C (correct). 4.5–5.5 — slightly acidic**
- D. 7.0 — neutral

Rationale: The natural pH of hair and scalp is slightly acidic at 4.5–5.5. This slightly acidic environment keeps the cuticle closed and the scalp healthy.

42. A client presents with acne pustules on their face. The barber should:

- A. Proceed carefully with light pressure
- B. Apply antiseptic and proceed as normal
- C (correct). Modify or refuse the service — shaving over pustules risks spreading infection**
- D. Use a closer blade angle to avoid the pustules

Rationale: Active acne pustules are infected lesions. Shaving over them risks spreading infection, causing scarring, or introducing pathogens into open skin. Services should be modified or refused.

43. The cortex of the hair contains what bonds that give hair its shape?

- A (correct). Hydrogen bonds and disulfide bonds**
- B. Covalent and ionic bonds only
- C. Salt bonds only
- D. Peptide bonds only

Rationale: The cortex contains disulfide bonds (permanent) and hydrogen bonds (temporary). Permanent waves and chemical relaxers work by breaking and reforming disulfide bonds.

44. Which clipper guard number removes the most hair (leaves the least length)?

- A. Guard #4
- B (correct). Guard #1**
- C. Guard #6
- D. Guard #8

Rationale: Clipper guard #1 leaves approximately 1/8 inch of hair. Guard #0 (no guard) cuts closest to the scalp. Lower numbers remove more hair; higher numbers leave more length.

45. What term describes the process of destroying all microbial life including spores?

- A (correct). Sterilization**
- B. Decontamination
- C. Disinfection
- D. Sanitation

Rationale: Sterilization destroys all microbial life including resistant spores. Disinfection kills most pathogens but not all spores. Sterilization is required for invasive tools.

46. What is the difference between cleaning and disinfecting?

- A. They are the same process
- B. Disinfecting always comes before cleaning
- C (correct). Cleaning removes dirt physically; disinfecting uses chemicals to kill pathogens**
- D. Cleaning kills pathogens; disinfecting removes dirt

Rationale: Cleaning removes dirt and debris physically. Disinfecting uses a chemical to kill pathogens. Cleaning must occur before disinfecting — disinfectants are less effective on dirty surfaces.

47. What is the primary route of transmission for head lice in a salon?

- A. Airborne droplets in the salon
- B. Skin-to-skin contact with the hands
- C. Contaminated water in the shampoo bowl
- D (correct). Direct head-to-head contact and shared tools, combs, and linens**

Rationale: Head lice spread through direct head-to-head contact and shared tools, combs, and linens. Proper disinfection prevents salon transmission.

48. Which EPA registration category indicates a disinfectant is effective against both bacteria and viruses?

- A. Disinfectant labeled for household use only
- B (correct). Hospital-grade or broad-spectrum disinfectant**
- C. Bacteriostatic disinfectant
- D. Quaternary ammonium compound at any concentration

Rationale: The EPA registers disinfectants by efficacy level. A hospital-grade or broad-spectrum disinfectant label indicates effectiveness against both bacteria and viruses, making it suitable for non-porous salon implements per California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology rules.

49. What is the purpose of an autoclave?

- A. Use UV light to kill surface bacteria
- B (correct). Use steam under pressure to sterilize instruments completely**
- C. Circulate disinfectant chemical through a sealed chamber
- D. Dry heat metal instruments to 400°F

Rationale: An autoclave uses steam under pressure (~250°F/121°C) to sterilize instruments by destroying all microorganisms including bacterial endospores.

50. Used straight razor blades must be disposed of in:

- A. In a sealed plastic bag in the trash
- B (correct). In a puncture-resistant sharps container**
- C. Returned to the manufacturer for recycling
- D. In the regular trash bin

Rationale: Used razor blades (sharps) must be disposed of in a puncture-resistant sharps container to prevent needle-stick injuries and comply with OSHA bloodborne pathogen standards.

51. What is the purpose of "outlining" (also called edging or lining) in a barber haircut?

- A. Blend the transition between the top and sides
- B (correct). Create crisp, clean definition at the hairline around ears, neck, and sideburns**
- C. Add length to the hairline
- D. Taper the nape hair into a V-shape

Rationale: Outlining creates crisp, clean definition at the hairline — around the ears, neck, and sideburns — using a trimmer or straight razor for a finished, professional appearance.

52. As of January 1, 2022, how many training hours are required to qualify for the California Cosmetology Operator written exam?

- A (correct). 1,000 hours**
- B. 2,000 hours
- C. 600 hours
- D. 1,600 hours

Rationale: SB 803 (effective January 1, 2022) reduced the required cosmetology training hours from 1,600 to 1,000. Apprenticeship programs may offer an alternative pathway.

53. What is the purpose of clipper oil?

- A. Disinfect the blade between clients
- B (correct). Lubricate blades, reduce heat, prevent rust, and extend blade life**
- C. Make clippers cut closer to the skin
- D. Clean hair and debris from between the teeth

Rationale: Clipper oil lubricates the moving metal blades, reduces friction-generated heat, prevents rust and corrosion, and extends the life of the blades.

54. The California cosmetology written exam is available in which languages as of 2024?

- A. English and Spanish only
- B. English only
- C. English, French, and Spanish
- D (correct). English, Spanish, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog**

Rationale: Per Assembly Bill 451 (effective January 1, 2024), the BBC is required to offer its written exams in English, Spanish, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog.

55. A California cosmetology establishment may employ an unlicensed person to perform which of the following tasks?

- A. Apply color with gloves
- B. Perform blowouts with supervision
- C (correct). Reception, scheduling, and retail tasks only**
- D. Shampoo and condition client hair

Rationale: Under California law, only licensed individuals may perform cosmetology services on clients. Unlicensed employees may perform reception, scheduling, and retail tasks but not any hands-on client services.

56. A client arrives with an open sore on their scalp. The licensee should:

- A. Proceed carefully while wearing gloves
- B. Refer the client to a dermatologist and continue the service
- C (correct). Refuse service until the condition has healed**

D. Apply antiseptic and cover the area before proceeding

Rationale: Services on skin with open sores or active infections risk cross-contamination and harm. Services must be refused until the condition heals.

57. Under California law, the minimum age requirement to obtain a cosmetology license is:

- A. 18 years old
- B. 21 years old
- C (correct). 17 years old**
- D. 16 years old

Rationale: California Business and Professions Code Section 7316 requires applicants to be at least 17 years old to apply for a cosmetology license.

58. Under California law, a licensed cosmetologist may perform which of the following services without an additional license?

- A. Haircutting and styling only
- B. Nail services require a separate license in all cases
- C. Chemical services only with a cosmetology license
- D (correct). Haircutting, styling, chemical services, facials, and basic nail care within BBC scope**

Rationale: A California Cosmetology Operator license authorizes the licensee to perform all cosmetology services including haircutting, styling, chemical services, facials, and basic nail care within the scope defined by the BBC.

59. What does "zero gap" mean when applied to clippers or trimmers?

- A (correct). Aligning the clipper blades to cut as close to the skin as possible without a guard**
- B. Closing the blade so no hair can be cut
- C. Removing the clipper guard for a #0 cut only
- D. Setting the clipper to its widest blade gap

Rationale: Zero gapping means adjusting the clipper or trimmer blades so they are perfectly aligned, allowing the tool to cut as close to the skin as possible without a guard.

60. A client has tinea capitis. What should the licensee do?

- A. Use an antifungal shampoo and continue
- B. Proceed carefully using extra gloves
- C (correct). Refuse service and refer the client to a physician**
- D. Complete the service but disinfect all tools after

Rationale: Tinea capitis (scalp ringworm) is a contagious fungal infection. Services must be refused and the client referred to a physician. Providing service risks spreading the infection.

61. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the salon most commonly includes:

- A. A lab coat only
- B. Nitrile gloves only, no other equipment required
- C (correct). Gloves, safety glasses, and protective aprons as appropriate**
- D. A face mask and hairnet only

Rationale: PPE for salon professionals includes gloves when handling chemicals or during blood exposure risk, safety glasses, and protective aprons as appropriate.

62. What is the purpose of wearing gloves when applying chemical services?

- A. Required only when using bleach products
- B. They eliminate the need for an SDS review
- C (correct). Protect from chemical burns, skin sensitization, and absorption of harmful chemicals**
- D. They improve grip on tools during chemical services

Rationale: Gloves protect the practitioner from chemical burns, skin sensitization, and absorption of

potentially harmful chemicals during color, perm, and relaxer services.

63. When designing a beard neckline, the line should generally follow:

- A. Straight across the bottom of the chin
- B. Following the jawline exactly
- C (correct). An arc from ear to ear, dipping to approximately two fingers above the Adam's apple**
- D. At the Adam's apple

Rationale: The natural beard neckline follows an arc from one ear, dipping to approximately two finger-widths above the Adam's apple, and back up to the other ear.

64. Which of the following is required on the label of every professional chemical product?

- A. Instructions for use and fragrance ingredients only
- B. The salon's name and purchase date
- C (correct). Product name, hazard warnings, and manufacturer information**
- D. Pricing and expiration date only

Rationale: OSHA Hazard Communication Standard requires labels with the product name, hazard warnings, and manufacturer information.

65. Which of the following conditions requires the licensee to refuse service?

- A. A client with dandruff
- B (correct). A client with head lice (pediculosis)**
- C. A client with a minor cut on their arm
- D. A client with dry, flaky scalp

Rationale: Head lice (pediculosis) is contagious and requires refusal of service until the infestation is treated.

66. What does hair elasticity refer to?

- A. The diameter of the hair strand
- B. The hair's resistance to chemical services
- C. The hair's natural color depth
- D (correct). The hair's ability to stretch and return to original length without breaking**

Rationale: Elasticity is the hair's ability to stretch and return to its original length without breaking. Healthy hair can stretch up to 50% of its length when wet. Poor elasticity indicates damage.

67. Hair texture is determined by the:

- A. Color depth of the melanin
- B. Porosity of the hair shaft
- C. Elasticity of the cortex bonds
- D (correct). Diameter of the individual hair strand**

Rationale: Hair texture (fine, medium, coarse) is determined by the diameter of the individual hair strand. Fine hair has a smaller diameter; coarse hair has a larger diameter.

68. What is "pomade" used for in barbering?

- A. Lighten the hair color over time
- B (correct). Add shine, hold, and definition to styled hair**
- C. Condition and repair damaged hair
- D. Protect hair from heat styling tools

Rationale: Pomade is a styling product used to add shine, hold, and definition to hair. Traditional pomades are oil-based (longer hold, higher shine); water-based pomades wash out more easily.

69. The purpose of a strop when using a traditional straight razor is to:

- A. Disinfect the blade between uses
- B. Remove metal to restore sharpness (honing)
- C. Cool the blade after extended use

D (correct). Realign the microscopic teeth of the blade edge to maintain cutting smoothness

Rationale: A leather strop aligns (realigns) the microscopic teeth of the blade's edge, maintaining sharpness and smooth cutting performance. It does not remove metal like honing does.

70. In California, a client complaint against a licensed cosmetologist is filed with:

- A (correct). The California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology (BBC)**
- B. The California Attorney General's office
- C. The Better Business Bureau
- D. The local county health department

Rationale: Client complaints about licensed cosmetologists in California are filed with the California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology (BBC), which investigates and takes disciplinary action if warranted.

71. A California cosmetology license must be renewed how often?

- A. Every three years
- B (correct). Every two years**
- C. Every year
- D. Every five years

Rationale: California cosmetology licenses issued by the BBC are valid for two years and must be renewed biennially. Continuing education is required for renewal.

72. Single-use items such as neck strips, cotton rounds, and wooden applicators must be:

- A (correct). Used once then discarded**
- B. Autoclaved between clients
- C. Washed with soap and water between clients
- D. Disinfected and stored for reuse

Rationale: Single-use items are used on one client then discarded. They cannot be disinfected and reused — reuse creates a cross-contamination risk.

73. California requires cosmetology students to complete what percentage of their required training hours before being eligible to take the written exam?

- A. No hours required before scheduling the exam
- B. 50% of required hours
- C. 75% of required hours
- D (correct). 100% of required hours verified by their school**

Rationale: Under BBC regulations, cosmetology students must complete 100% of their required training hours (1,000) and have those hours verified by their school before they are eligible to sit for the written exam.

74. California SB 803, effective January 1, 2022, created a new license type for professionals who want to provide hairstyling services without chemical services. This license is called:

- A. Esthetician
- B. Nail Technician
- C. Cosmetology Apprentice
- D (correct). Hairstylist**

Rationale: SB 803 created the new "Hairstylist" license — a 600-hour pathway for those who wish to cut, style, shampoo, and blow-dry hair but do not plan to offer chemical services such as coloring or perming.

75. What is the term for shaving in the direction opposite to hair growth?

- A. Using no angle on the razor blade
- B. Shaving in the direction of hair growth
- C (correct). Shaving in the direction opposite to hair growth**
- D. Shaving across the grain at 90 degrees

Rationale: Against-the-grain shaving cuts hair below the surface of the skin for a closer shave but increases the risk of ingrown hairs and razor burn, especially on sensitive skin.

76. What is the term for excessive, unwanted hair growth on the face or body?

- A. Trichoptilosis
- B. Alopecia
- C. Monilethrix
- D (correct). Hypertrichosis**

Rationale: Hypertrichosis is the general term for excessive hair growth. Hirsutism refers specifically to male-pattern hair growth in women. Both can be caused by hormonal or genetic factors.

77. How long must California cosmetology establishments retain employee and client service records?

- A. 5 years
- B (correct). 3 years**
- C. 7 years
- D. 1 year

Rationale: California Code of Regulations Title 16 Section 979 requires cosmetology establishments to maintain records for a minimum of 3 years.

78. Which of the following is the correct order for hand washing in a salon setting?

- A. Apply hand sanitizer instead of soap and water
- B. Apply soap, wet hands, lather 10 seconds, rinse, air dry
- C (correct). Wet hands, apply soap, lather 20 seconds, rinse, dry with clean towel**
- D. Wet hands, rinse, apply soap, lather 5 seconds, dry

Rationale: Proper hand washing requires wetting hands first, then applying soap and lathering for at least 20 seconds, rinsing thoroughly, and drying with a clean towel. This sequence ensures maximum pathogen removal.

79. What is the term for the natural pigment that gives hair its color?

- A (correct). Melanin**
- B. Sebum
- C. Keratin
- D. Collagen

Rationale: Melanin is the pigment produced by melanocytes in the hair follicle. Eumelanin produces brown/black tones; pheomelanin produces red/yellow tones.

80. What is the correct order of steps when disinfecting tools at a cosmetology or barbering station?

- A. Disinfect, clean, rinse, dry
- B. Rinse, disinfect, clean, dry
- C. Disinfect, rinse, clean, dry
- D (correct). Clean, rinse, disinfect, rinse, dry**

Rationale: Tools must be cleaned before disinfection — disinfectants cannot penetrate organic matter. The correct sequence is: clean, rinse, disinfect, rinse, dry.

81. California AB 451 (effective January 1, 2024) amended California Insurance Code Section 1677 to require BBC exams be offered in how many languages beyond English?

- A. Three languages (Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese)
- B. Two languages (Spanish and Chinese)
- C (correct). Five additional languages: Spanish, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and**

Tagalog

D. One language (Spanish only)

Rationale: AB 451 requires the BBC to offer its written exams in Spanish, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog — four additional languages beyond English.

82. Beard trimming with scissors requires the barber to:

- A. Trim only with clippers, never scissors
- B. Cut without combing to preserve natural direction
- C. Wet the beard thoroughly before any trimming
- D (correct). Comb the beard upward or outward to capture all hairs evenly in the cut**

Rationale: Combing the beard upward or outward before trimming ensures all hairs are captured in the cut, producing an even, blended result.

83. What is the correct angle for holding a straight razor during a shave?

- A. 90 degrees (perpendicular)
- B. 60 degrees
- C. 15 degrees
- D (correct). 30 degrees**

Rationale: A straight razor is held at approximately 30 degrees against the skin. This angle allows the blade to cut hair cleanly without dragging or causing razor burn.

84. Sebum is produced by which gland in the scalp?

- A. Arrector pili muscles
- B. The dermal papilla
- C (correct). Sebaceous glands**
- D. Sudoriferous (sweat) glands

Rationale: The sebaceous glands produce sebum, the natural oil that lubricates and conditions the hair and scalp. Overproduction leads to oily scalp conditions; underproduction leads to dryness.

85. Which scalp condition is characterized by white or yellowish flakes and itching?

- A (correct). Pityriasis (dandruff)**
- B. Tinea capitis
- C. Psoriasis
- D. Seborrheic dermatitis

Rationale: Pityriasis (dandruff) is the most common scalp condition, characterized by excessive shedding of dead skin cells. It can be dry (white flakes) or oily (yellowish flakes).

86. How must soiled towels and linens be stored in a Texas salon or barbershop?

- A (correct). In a closed, covered container separate from clean linens**
- B. Mixed with clean linens and washed later
- C. Left on the counter until end of day
- D. On the floor near the workstation

Rationale: Texas regulations require soiled linens to be stored in a closed, covered container separate from clean linens to prevent cross-contamination.

87. A high fade is characterized by:

- A. The fade is performed only on the nape
- B. The hair on top is cut very short
- C (correct). The bare skin area starts high on the sides and back near the top of the head**
- D. The fade begins near the nape and ears

Rationale: A high fade starts very close to the top of the head, with the skin-bare area beginning high on the sides and back. A low fade starts near the nape and ears.

88. The "skin fade" or "bald fade" refers to:

- A. Hair tapers to a #1 guard at the nape only
- B. A fade that starts high and ends at a #2 guard
- C (correct). Hair tapers completely down to bare skin at the lowest point of the fade**
- D. Hair is cut to a uniform short length throughout

Rationale: A skin fade (bald fade) tapers the hair completely down to the bare skin at the sides and back, with no visible hair at the lowest point of the fade.

89. In California, a cosmetology establishment that operates without a valid establishment license is subject to:

- A. Automatic permanent closure
- B. Only a written warning
- C. No penalty for first offense
- D (correct). Civil penalties and cease-and-desist orders**

Rationale: Operating a cosmetology establishment without a valid BBC establishment license is a violation of California Business and Professions Code and may result in civil penalties and cease-and-desist orders.

90. What is the technical term for split ends?

- A (correct). Trichoptilosis**
- B. Alopecia
- C. Hypertrichosis
- D. Pityriasis

Rationale: Trichoptilosis is the technical term for split ends, which occur when the protective cuticle is worn away and the inner cortex of the hair shaft splits.

91. Under California law, a cosmetologist may have their license revoked for which of the following?

- A. Missing a single license renewal deadline
- B. Using a product brand not listed on the BBC website
- C. Working in a county other than the one on the license
- D (correct). Fraud in obtaining the license, repeated violations, practicing while impaired, or gross negligence**

Rationale: California Business and Professions Code provides grounds for BBC to revoke or suspend a license including fraud in obtaining the license, repeated violations, practicing while impaired, and gross negligence.

92. Which pathogen causes ringworm (tinea capitis) of the scalp?

- A (correct). A dermatophyte fungus**
- B. A bacterium
- C. A virus
- D. A parasitic worm

Rationale: Tinea capitis is caused by a dermatophyte fungus — not a worm. It is highly contagious and requires refusal of service.

93. Before performing a straight razor shave, the barber must disinfect the razor by:

- A. Sterilized in an autoclave weekly
- B. Wiped with a dry cloth only
- C. Rinsed under hot running water
- D (correct). Disinfected with EPA-registered disinfectant or blade changed for each client**

Rationale: Straight razors must be disinfected with an EPA-registered hospital-grade disinfectant between clients. Disposable straight razor blades must be changed for each client.

94. What is the arrector pili muscle?

- A. A nerve ending in the scalp
- B (correct). A small muscle attached to each follicle that causes hair to stand upright**
- C. A blood vessel that nourishes the follicle
- D. The innermost layer of the hair shaft

Rationale: The arrector pili is a small muscle attached to each hair follicle. When it contracts due to cold or fear, it causes the hair to stand upright, producing goosebumps.

95. What is the function of the dermal papilla?

- A. Produces the hair's natural oil (sebum)
- B. Contains melanocytes that produce hair pigment
- C (correct). Supplies nutrients to the hair matrix cells via blood vessels, driving hair growth**
- D. Determines the natural curl pattern of the hair

Rationale: The dermal papilla is a cluster of cells at the base of the hair follicle that contains blood vessels and nerves. It supplies nutrients to the hair matrix cells, driving hair growth.

96. How must clean, disinfected implements be stored?

- A (correct). In a clean, covered container or drawer separate from soiled tools**
- B. Next to the disinfectant jar
- C. Wrapped in a paper towel until needed
- D. In an open container on the counter

Rationale: Disinfected implements must be stored in a clean, covered container or drawer — separate from soiled tools — to maintain their disinfected status.

97. What is the primary protein that makes up the hair shaft?

- A. Collagen
- B (correct). Keratin**
- C. Elastin
- D. Melanin

Rationale: Keratin is the fibrous protein that forms the structure of hair, skin, and nails. Hair is approximately 95% keratin.

98. Hot towels are applied before a straight razor shave to:

- A. Disinfect the skin before razor contact
- B. Cool the skin to close pores before shaving
- C. Remove excess oil and product from the beard
- D (correct). Soften beard hair, open follicles, and relax skin to reduce razor burn**

Rationale: Hot towels soften the beard by hydrating the hair shaft (making it easier to cut), open the follicle, and relax the skin — reducing the risk of razor burn and nicks.

99. Which part of the hair is the only living portion?

- A. The cortex
- B. The hair shaft
- C. The cuticle layer
- D (correct). The hair follicle (dermal papilla)**

Rationale: The hair follicle (specifically the dermal papilla) is the only living part of the hair. The visible hair shaft is composed of dead, keratinized cells.

100. HIV is classified as which type of pathogen?

- A (correct). A bloodborne pathogen**
- B. An airborne pathogen
- C. A waterborne pathogen
- D. A food-borne pathogen

Rationale: HIV is a bloodborne pathogen. Accidental cuts are the primary risk in salon settings.

Standard disinfection protocols protect against HIV transmission.