

# California Esthetician

Solution key

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Official exam page

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1. 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. Pricing and expiration date only
  - D (correct). Product name, hazard warnings, and manufacturer information**

Rationale: OSHA Hazard Communication Standard requires labels with the product name, hazard warnings, and manufacturer information.
2. 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.
3. Which Fitzpatrick skin type is most prone to hyperpigmentation after sun exposure or skin trauma?
  - A. Fitzpatrick type III only
  - B (correct). Fitzpatrick types IV through VI**
  - C. All Fitzpatrick types equally
  - D. Fitzpatrick types I and II

Rationale: Fitzpatrick skin types IV through VI have higher melanin concentrations and are more susceptible to post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) following UV exposure or skin trauma. Understanding Fitzpatrick type is essential for safe chemical exfoliation and treatment planning.
4. A high-frequency facial treatment produces which gas that provides antiseptic benefits?
  - A. Nitrogen to tighten pores
  - B. Carbon dioxide for deep penetration
  - C. Hydrogen peroxide for bleaching pigmentation
  - D (correct). Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) with antiseptic and antibacterial properties**

Rationale: High-frequency devices produce ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) from oxygen in the air. Ozone has antiseptic and antibacterial properties, making high-frequency effective for treating acne-prone skin.

5. The term "pathogen" refers to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- A. 5 years
- B. 7 years
- C (correct). 3 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.

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

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

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.

10. What is the purpose of an exfoliant in a facial treatment?

- A (correct). Remove dead cells from the stratum corneum, promoting cell turnover and penetration**
- B. Disinfect the skin surface
- C. Close enlarged pores
- D. Deeply moisturize the skin

Rationale: Exfoliants (mechanical scrubs or chemical AHAs/BHAs) remove dead cells from the stratum corneum, promoting cell turnover, improving texture, and allowing better penetration of subsequent products.

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

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

D. A written warning only

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.

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

**A (correct). Civil penalties and cease-and-desist orders**

B. No penalty for first offense

C. Only a written warning

D. Automatic permanent closure

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.

**13.** Alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) work by:

A. Increase melanin production to even skin tone

**B (correct). Break bonds holding dead cells on the skin surface, promoting cell turnover**

C. Physically scrub away dead skin with abrasive particles

D. Kill acne-causing bacteria in sebaceous follicles

Rationale: AHAs (glycolic, lactic, mandelic acid) are water-soluble chemical exfoliants that break the bonds holding dead cells on the skin surface, promoting cell turnover and improving texture.

**14.** What is the nail matrix?

A. The cuticle that overlaps the nail plate

**B (correct). The tissue beneath the base of the nail plate that produces the nail plate**

C. The nail groove on the sides of the nail

D. The visible nail plate above the finger

Rationale: The nail matrix is the tissue beneath the base of the nail plate (under the lunula). It contains the cells that produce the nail plate. Damage to the matrix can permanently affect nail growth.

**15.** Before performing a waxing service, the esthetician must perform a patch test to check for:

**A (correct). Check for skin sensitivity or allergic reaction to wax and waxing products**

B. Measure the thickness of body hair

C. Confirm the client has not recently shaved

D. Determine the correct wax temperature

Rationale: A patch test (24–48 hours before service) checks for skin sensitivity or allergic reaction to wax and pre/post-wax products, especially important for clients on Retin-A or blood thinners.

**16.** Which of the following best describes the purpose of applying toner after cleansing during a facial service?

A. Seal the skin after moisturizer application

**B (correct). Restore the skin's pH balance and prepare it for treatment products**

C. Act as a physical exfoliant to remove dead skin cells

D. Provide deep cleansing of the pores

Rationale: Toner is applied after cleansing to restore the skin's natural pH balance, remove any remaining traces of cleanser or makeup, and prepare the skin to absorb subsequent treatment products more effectively. It is an important step in the facial sequence covered by California esthetics licensing.

17. Rosacea is a skin condition characterized by:

- A. A bacterial infection causing cystic breakouts on the back
- B. Loss of skin pigmentation in patches
- C (correct). Chronic facial redness, visible blood vessels, flushing, and sometimes papules**
- D. A fungal infection causing circular patches

Rationale: Rosacea is a chronic inflammatory skin condition presenting as facial redness, visible blood vessels (telangiectasia), flushing, and sometimes papules/pustules on the cheeks, nose, and chin.

18. A comedone is:

- A. A type of skin tumor
- B. A superficial fungal skin condition
- C. A bacterial skin infection
- D (correct). A clogged hair follicle — open (blackhead) or closed (whitehead)**

Rationale: A comedone is a clogged hair follicle. Open comedones (blackheads) are oxidized; closed comedones (whiteheads) are covered by skin. They are a primary feature of acne vulgaris.

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

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

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

20. What nail condition is characterized by separation of the nail plate from the nail bed?

- A. Paronychia
- B. Leukonychia
- C. Onychomycosis
- D (correct). Onycholysis**

Rationale: Onycholysis is the separation of the nail plate from the nail bed, starting at the free edge and progressing toward the cuticle. It can be caused by trauma, psoriasis, or fungal infection.

21. HIV is classified as which type of pathogen?

- A. An airborne pathogen
- B. A waterborne pathogen
- C (correct). A bloodborne 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.

22. A client presents with psoriasis on their scalp. The cosmetologist should:

- A (correct). Perform the service carefully if no open or bleeding lesions are present**
- B. Refuse service entirely
- C. Refer to a physician and reschedule
- D. Apply medicated shampoo and continue

Rationale: Psoriasis is a chronic, non-contagious autoimmune condition. Services may be performed if there are no open, bleeding lesions. The cosmetologist should handle the scalp gently and avoid irritating products.

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

- A (correct). Sterilization
- B. Disinfection
- C. Decontamination
- 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.

24. What is the Fitzpatrick Type I skin characteristic?

- A. Burns sometimes, tans gradually, medium complexion
- B. Always tans, never burns, dark skin and hair
- C (correct). Always burns, never tans, very fair skin with red or blonde hair
- D. Never burns, deeply pigmented skin

Rationale: Fitzpatrick Type I: always burns, never tans, very fair skin with red or blonde hair and blue/green eyes. Highest risk for UV damage and must be treated with the most conservative peel strengths.

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

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

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

26. What is the difference between cleaning and disinfecting?

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

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.

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

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

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

28. Soft wax (strip wax) differs from hard wax in which key way?

- A (correct). Soft wax is removed with a strip; hard wax hardens and is removed without a strip
- B. Both types require muslin strips for removal
- C. Soft wax requires no strip; hard wax requires a muslin strip
- D. Hard wax must be applied cold; soft wax is always heated

Rationale: Soft wax is applied in a thin layer and removed with a strip, removing hair and surface skin cells. Hard wax is applied thicker, allowed to harden, and removed without a strip — gentler on sensitive skin.

29. Under SB 803 (effective January 1, 2022), California estheticians may now legally perform which additional service?

- A. Administer injectable fillers and Botox
- B (correct). Lash and brow lamination/perming and dermaplaning**
- C. Perform electrolysis for permanent hair removal
- D. Prescribe topical medications for acne

Rationale: SB 803 expanded the esthetician scope of practice to include lash and brow lamination/perming and dermaplaning, provided the esthetician has proper training in these services.

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

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

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.

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

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

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

32. A client presents with red, flaky patches around the nose and eyebrows. Which skin condition does this most likely indicate?

- A (correct). Seborrheic dermatitis**
- B. Contact dermatitis
- C. Psoriasis
- D. Rosacea

Rationale: Red, flaky patches concentrated around the nose and eyebrows are characteristic of seborrheic dermatitis. This is a medical condition; the esthetician must refer the client to a physician and should not perform facial services on the affected areas.

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

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

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.

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

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

Rationale: Gloves protect the practitioner from chemical burns, skin sensitization, and absorption of potentially harmful chemicals during color, perm, and relaxer services.

35. What is the purpose of a comedone extractor in esthetics?

- A. Administer electric current to pores
- B (correct). Safely extract blackheads and comedones without pinching surrounding tissue**
- C. Apply chemical exfoliant to clogged follicles
- D. Apply heat to melt sebum plugs

Rationale: A comedone extractor (Sharps or Schumann extractor) is a metal tool with loop or lance ends used to safely extract blackheads and closed comedones without pinching or damaging surrounding tissue.

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

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

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

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

- A (correct). Reduce microbial contamination to safe levels but not eliminate all pathogens**
- B. Destroy all microbial life including spores
- C. Kill all bacteria but not viruses
- 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.

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

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

39. What is the transepidermal water loss (TEWL) concept important for in esthetics?

- A. The skin's natural sun protection rating
- B (correct). Water evaporating through the epidermis — high TEWL indicates a compromised barrier**
- C. The skin's ability to absorb topical products
- D. The amount of oil produced by sebaceous glands

Rationale: TEWL measures water evaporating through the epidermis. High TEWL indicates a compromised skin barrier. Estheticians use this concept to select appropriate moisturizers and treatments to restore barrier function.

40. Which layer of the epidermis contains melanocytes (pigment-producing cells)?

- A. Stratum corneum (outermost layer)
- B. The dermis
- C. The subcutis layer
- D (correct). Stratum germinativum (stratum basale)**

Rationale: Melanocytes are located in the stratum germinativum (stratum basale), the deepest layer of the epidermis. They produce melanin, which migrates upward to protect skin cells from UV damage.

41. What does SPF (Sun Protection Factor) measure?

- A. How resistant the skin is to UVA rays
- B. The moisturizing level of the product
- C. The percentage of chemical UV filters in the formula

**D (correct). How long a sunscreen extends the skin's natural UVB protection**

Rationale: SPF measures how long a sunscreen extends the skin's natural protection against UVB rays. SPF 30 filters approximately 97% of UVB radiation.

42. Microdermabrasion is classified as which type of exfoliation?

- A. Electrical stimulation to tighten skin
- B. Chemical exfoliation using AHAs
- C. Light-based treatment using LED technology

**D (correct). Mechanical exfoliation using crystal or diamond-tip abrasion**

Rationale: Microdermabrasion is a mechanical exfoliation technique — it uses a crystal or diamond-tip abrasive to physically remove dead cells from the stratum corneum layer of the epidermis.

43. What is the purpose of an autoclave?

- A (correct). Use steam under pressure to sterilize instruments completely**
- B. Use UV light to kill surface bacteria
- 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.

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

- A (correct). Establishment license and all individual practitioner licenses where visible to clients**
- B. Only the establishment license at the reception desk
- C. Only the health inspection report
- 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.

45. A contraindication for facial extraction services includes:

- A (correct). Active herpes simplex, sunburned skin, open wounds, or clients on Accutane**
- B. Oily skin with minor congestion
- C. Dehydrated skin needing moisture
- D. Sensitive skin without any active breakouts

Rationale: Active herpes simplex (cold sores), sunburned skin, open wounds, extremely sensitive or inflamed skin, and certain prescription medications (Accutane) are contraindications for extractions.

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

- A. A client with a minor cut on their arm
- B. A client with dry, flaky scalp
- C. A client with dandruff

**D (correct). A client with head lice (pediculosis)**

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

47. Which of the following describes a first-degree (superficial) burn?

- A. Blistering and damage into the dermis
- B (correct). Redness and minor pain affecting only the epidermis, no blistering**
- C. Full thickness damage through all skin layers

D. Charring and nerve damage

Rationale: A first-degree burn affects only the epidermis. It presents as redness, minor pain, and no blistering. Common examples include mild sunburn.

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

- A. Only the product ingredients and fragrance profile
- B. Instructions for mixing chemical formulas
- C. Pricing and wholesale ordering information
- 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.

49. The correct order for a basic facial service is:

- A. Steam first, then cleanse, then exfoliate
- B. Mask, cleanse, exfoliate, steam, massage, tone, moisturize
- C. Cleanse, apply mask, steam, exfoliate, moisturize
- D (correct). Consultation, cleanse, exfoliate, steam, extractions, massage, mask, tone, moisturize**

Rationale: A facial follows: consultation/analysis, cleanse, exfoliate, steam/soften, extractions (if appropriate), massage, mask, tone, moisturize/SPF. Each step prepares the skin for the next.

50. Which skin type is characterized by flakiness, tightness, and lack of sebum production?

- A. Oily, shiny T-zone with dry cheeks
- B (correct). Flakiness, tightness, and lack of sebum production**
- C. Oily all over with enlarged pores
- D. Sensitive, easily reddened skin

Rationale: Dry skin lacks adequate sebum production, causing the surface lipid layer to be deficient. This leads to tightness, visible flaking, and a dull complexion.

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

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

52. Effleurage in a facial massage refers to:

- A. Deep kneading of the muscle tissue
- B (correct). Light, gliding, stroking movement**
- C. Rapid tapping or drumming movements
- D. Vibrating movements using fingertips

Rationale: Effleurage is a light, gliding, stroking movement used at the beginning and end of a massage sequence to warm tissue, spread product, and relax the client.

53. The galvanic current treatment in esthetics uses which processes to benefit the skin?

- A. Produce electrical current to stimulate muscle contractions
- B. Remove hair permanently through follicle destruction
- C. Generate heat to open pores and drive product in
- D (correct). Iontophoresis (drive water-soluble products in) and desincrustation (soften sebum)**

Rationale: Galvanic current uses iontophoresis (to drive water-soluble products into the skin using like charges to repel) and desincrustation (to soften sebum and loosen impurities in follicles).

54. Which of the following best describes a bactericide?

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

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

55. What type of skin benefits most from a clay mask?

- A. Dry, dehydrated skin needing intense moisture
- B. Sensitive, reactive skin needing calming
- C (correct). Oily and combination skin prone to congestion**
- D. All skin types equally

Rationale: Clay masks (kaolin, bentonite) are highly absorbent and draw excess oil and impurities from pores. They are most beneficial for oily and combination skin types prone to congestion.

56. 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.

57. Which of the following nail conditions requires the cosmetologist to refuse nail services?

- A. Nail biting (onychophagy)
- B (correct). Onychomycosis (nail fungus)**
- C. Brittle nails (onychorrhexis)
- D. White spots (leukonychia)

Rationale: Onychomycosis (nail fungus) is contagious and requires refusal of service. Implements that contact a fungal infection cannot be safely disinfected and must be discarded.

58. The purpose of a cuticle softener or remover in a manicure service is to:

- A. Harden the cuticle for easier removal
- B (correct). Break down dead cuticle skin so it can be pushed back or removed safely**
- C. Strengthen the nail plate before applying gel
- D. Disinfect the cuticle area before a nail service

Rationale: Cuticle softeners (usually alkaline products containing potassium hydroxide) break down the dead skin of the cuticle, making it easier to push back or remove without damage to the nail.

59. The three layers of the skin from outermost to innermost are:

- A. Cuticle, cortex, medulla
- B (correct). Epidermis, dermis, subcutis (hypodermis)**
- C. Subcutis, dermis, epidermis
- D. Dermis, epidermis, subcutis

Rationale: The epidermis is the outer protective layer. The dermis contains hair follicles, sweat glands, and sebaceous glands. The subcutis (hypodermis) is the deepest fatty layer.

60. After a waxing service, the esthetician should advise the client to avoid which activities for 24 hours?

- A (correct). Avoid sun exposure, heat (saunas, hot baths), tight clothing, and exercise for 24 hours**
- B. Exfoliate immediately to remove remaining hair
- C. Apply retinol cream to soothe the skin

D. Immediately apply heavy moisturizer and tanning oil

Rationale: Freshly waxed skin has open follicles and increased sensitivity. Clients should avoid sun exposure, heat (saunas, hot baths), tight clothing, and exercise (sweat can irritate open follicles) for 24 hours.

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

**A (correct). Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA)**

B. California Labor Commission

C. California State Licensing Board

D. California Department of Public Health

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

62. What does SPF measure on a sunscreen label?

**A (correct). How long the product extends the skin's natural protection against UVB rays**

B. The amount of UVA radiation blocked by the product

C. The moisturizing level of the sunscreen

D. The percentage of UV filters in the formula

Rationale: SPF (Sun Protection Factor) measures how long the product extends the skin's natural protection against UVB rays compared to unprotected skin. SPF does not measure UVA protection.

63. What is the hyponychium?

A. The cuticle fold over the nail base

B. The nail matrix beneath the base of the nail

**C (correct). The thickened skin beneath the free edge of the nail plate**

D. The visible white tip of the nail plate

Rationale: The hyponychium is the thickened skin beneath the free edge of the nail plate where it meets the fingertip. It forms a seal that protects the nail bed from bacteria and debris.

64. Double dipping (reusing the same wax applicator stick in the wax pot) is prohibited because:

A. It is only prohibited for hard wax, not soft wax

**B (correct). It contaminates the wax pot with bacteria and dead skin, spreading infection between clients**

C. It wastes product unnecessarily

D. It causes wax to cool too quickly

Rationale: Double dipping contaminates the wax pot with bacteria, viruses, and dead skin cells from the previous application. Contaminated wax can spread infection between all subsequent clients.

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

A. 1,600 hours

B. 600 hours

C. 2,000 hours

**D (correct). 1,000 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.

66. During a skin analysis, an esthetician observes open comedones across the client's T-zone. Which skin condition is present?

- A. Milia
- B. Closed comedones (whiteheads)
- C (correct). Open comedones (blackheads)**
- D. Pustules

Rationale: Open comedones, commonly called blackheads, form when a hair follicle becomes clogged with sebum and dead skin cells and the pore remains open, allowing oxidation to darken the plug. They are a non-inflammatory form of acne commonly found in oily areas like the T-zone.

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

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

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.

68. Threading for hair removal uses which technique?

- A. Applying warm wax and removing with a strip
- B. Using laser energy to permanently disable follicles
- C (correct). A twisted cotton thread rolled across skin to pull multiple hairs at the follicle**
- D. Applying a depilatory cream to dissolve hair at the surface

Rationale: Threading uses a twisted cotton thread looped and rolled across the skin to catch and pull multiple hairs simultaneously at the follicle level — most precise for shaping brows and facial hair.

69. A client with active pustular acne should receive which facial treatment?

- A. A glycolic acid peel at full strength
- B. Microdermabrasion to remove surface bacteria
- C (correct). A calming, anti-inflammatory treatment without extractions**
- D. Deep extractions and hot steam to unclog pores

Rationale: Active pustular acne indicates bacterial infection. Extractions, steam, and manipulation can spread bacteria and worsen breakouts. A calming, anti-inflammatory treatment without extraction is appropriate.

70. What is the Fitzpatrick skin type scale used for in esthetics?

- A. Determine the correct moisturizer viscosity for a client
- B. Identify the presence of rosacea
- C. Measure the pH of skin products
- D (correct). Classify skin types by UV response to guide peel strength and laser treatment decisions**

Rationale: The Fitzpatrick scale classifies skin types I–VI based on response to UV exposure (burn/tan tendency). It guides treatment decisions for chemical peels, laser services, and sun damage assessment.

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

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

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

72. What is the primary contraindication for waxing over an area treated with Retin-A or tretinoin?

- A. Retin-A increases sun sensitivity but does not affect waxing
- B. Retin-A makes hair grow faster after waxing
- C. Retin-A thickens the dermis, making waxing less effective

**D (correct). Retin-A thins the epidermis — waxing can lift skin layers causing severe damage**

Rationale: Retin-A thins the epidermis, making skin extremely fragile. Waxing over treated areas can remove layers of skin along with the hair, causing severe irritation, bleeding, and scarring.

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

- A (correct). Stop service, cover wound, remove and disinfect contaminated tools**
- B. Discard all tools and continue with new ones
- 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.

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

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

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

75. The function of a toner in a facial routine is to:

- A (correct). Restore pH, remove residual cleanser, and prepare skin for subsequent products**
- B. Deeply hydrate the dermis
- C. Provide heavy occlusive moisture
- D. Replace a moisturizer for oily skin

Rationale: Toners restore the skin's pH after cleansing (typically alkaline), remove residual cleanser, tighten pores temporarily, and prepare the skin to receive subsequent serums and moisturizers.