

**National Recreation and Park Association
Certified Playground Safety Inspector
Examination**

**Candidate Handbook
Paper/Pencil Examination**



**Certified
Playground
Safety Inspector**

**National Recreation and Park Association
National Certification Board
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome

The Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) program is offered by NRPA under the authority of the National Certification Board (NCB).

The purpose of the CPSI Course is for those certified to be able to complete the following:

- Identify hazards on public playground equipment and the playground
- Rank the hazards according to injury potential
- Apply the knowledge to remove the hazards and establish a system of inspections

The desired outcome is that a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) is capable of establishing the basics of a sound risk reduction program, establish a system of repair, retrofit and removal of hazardous equipment and establish a routine inspection system for their own agency or playground owner-client.

The NRPA understands that achieving the CPSI certification does not make one an expert in the implementation of the public use playground standard of care. However, the NRPA does recognize all program participants should acquire the knowledge and specific competencies necessary to attain certification as identified by the CPSI Certification and Exam Committees. This knowledge properly and consistently applied in the field will help to create an experience level necessary to be considered a playground safety expert.

Examination Development

All examination items (questions) have been written and reviewed by subject-matter experts representing playground safety experts and practitioners from many geographical regions. These individuals provide the job-related perspective and expertise that underlies valid examinations.

Individuals seeking certification as a CPSI must receive a passing grade on the CPSI certification examination. Maintenance of the CPSI certification requires at least a passing grade on the CPSI certification examination every three (3) years.

About the Testing Agency

NRPA and the NCB have the overall responsibility for the examination and have contracted with a professional testing agency to administer and provide guidance.

Pearson VUE/Professional Testing Inc. (PTI) is the professional testing agency contracted by NRPA and assists in the development of the exam based on the test specifications developed by the CPSI Certification and Exam Committee in consultation with the testing agency. The testing agency is responsible for the security, administration, scoring and analysis of the examinations and reporting scores to candidates who take the examination under the direction of the NRPA.

SECTION I: ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND RULES FOR EXAMINATION

Services for Individuals with Disabilities

The NRPA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act by ensuring that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take an examination solely by reason of disability. All registration materials must include a statement regarding special accommodations.

A candidate who has a disability may request a special accommodation; the request must be submitted in writing at the time of exam registration. The *Special Accommodations Request Form* is available online at www.nrpa.org/CPSI. All forms must be submitted to the host site 45 days prior to the exam administration date. NRPA will work with the professional testing company and examination host sites to ensure appropriate accommodations are made.

Services for English as a Second Language candidates

Time extension - If a candidate's primary language is not English and he or she wants to request a time extension to take the Certified Playground Safety (CPSI) exam they must submit the *ESL Request Form* (available online at www.nrpa.org/CPSI) which includes additional fee information and the signature of a supervisor, professor, or the employee's human resources representative. The ESL Form must be submitted to the host site at least two weeks prior to the examination. Once the request form and fees have been submitted the testing company will add 90 minutes to the time allowed for the exam.

Translation Dictionary – If a candidate's primary language is not English and he or she wants to provide and use a strict translation dictionary (word to word and in book form only, no electronic dictionaries allowed), he or she must submit an *ESL Request Form* (available online at www.nrpa.org/CPSI) to NRPA at the time of application to request the use of the strict translation dictionary. The ESL Request Form must include the signature of a supervisor, professor, or the employee's human resources representative. Unless a time extension is also requested the candidate will be required to complete the exam within the standard 2 hours. If the request is approved, the applicant will receive a confirmation email from NRPA and the testing company will recognize the request when scheduling the exam. The dictionary will be inspected prior to use to ensure exam security.

Inclement Weather or Emergency

In the event of inclement weather, other acts of God or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an examination, NRPA and Pearson VUE will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling of an examination. The examination will usually not be rescheduled if the host location personnel are able to open the host location.

Candidates may call the host directly to determine if the location will open during inclement weather or an emergency. Every attempt is made to administer examinations as scheduled; however, should an examination be canceled at a host location, all scheduled candidates will be contacted regarding a rescheduled examination date or reapplication procedures.

Age requirement

Candidates sitting for the CPSI Certification examination must be 18 or older. Your legal identification will be verified upon entry into the examination site.

Examination Administration

Please read the following information carefully so that you are fully prepared on the Examination Day

- Arrive during the scheduled check-in period. **Do not arrive late.** You will not be allowed into the room if you arrive after the test has begun. You must have permission from the test administrator to leave the room during the examination. You will not be allowed additional time to make up for time used.
- To check in, **you must bring one form of legal identification that has your photograph on it to the examination site.** Acceptable forms include a photo driver's license, state identification cards, passport and military identifications. School identification badges and work identification badges are not acceptable.
- Candidates will not be allowed to have access to the following types of personal items during the test: cellular phones, hand-held computers/personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other electronic devices, pagers, watches, wallets, purses, hats, bags, coats, books and notes.
- The Exam Administrator will keep the official time and ensure that you are given the allotted time of 2 hours for the exam. If the candidate leaves the room to take a break (i.e. use the restroom) the exam time will not stop.
- If the candidate experiences problems that affect their ability to take the exam, they **must** notify the administrator **immediately.**
- Exam Administrators and exam supervisors are employed proctors and cannot answer questions concerning the content of the examination. Listen carefully to the instructions given by the Exam Administrator and read all directions in the examination booklet thoroughly.
- The Exam Administrators may dismiss a candidate from the examination for any of the following reasons:
 - If a candidate does not have prior authorization to take the examination.
 - If a candidate creates a disturbance, is abusive or otherwise uncooperative.
 - If a candidate gives or receives help, or is suspected of doing so.
 - If a candidate attempts to remove test materials or notes from the testing location.
 - If a candidate attempts to take the examination for someone else.
- Questions or concerns about a test item may be written on the back of the exam answer sheet.
- The examination has two components: the examination booklet and a separate answer sheet. Both must be returned to the Exam Administrator at the completion of the exam or at the end of the exam period

Copyrighted Examination Questions

All examination questions are copyrighted property of The NRPA. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties.

Release of Information

The NRPA is committed to protecting the confidentiality of candidate records and have adopted policies to ensure their privacy. NRPA does not release candidates' examination score to third parties absent special, compelling circumstances. Notification of pass/fail goes directly from the professional testing company to the NRPA. Successful candidates are added to the NRPA CPSI registry available online at www.nrpa.org/CPSI within 6-8 weeks of examination

Following the Examination and Scoring of Results

The testing agency will notify you of your score approximately six to eight (6-8) weeks following the examination. Candidates are considered successful on the exam if they meet or exceed the passing score. The passing score for the examination reflects the amount of knowledge that a committee of experts has determined to be appropriate for certification. A criterion-referenced standard setting procedure and expert judgment was used to evaluate each item on the examination in order to identify the passing point. Your ability to pass the examination depends on the amount of knowledge you display, and not on the other individuals taking the test. Although different forms of the examination can vary somewhat in difficulty, passing the examination has historically required candidates to receive a score of 70.

Verification of Scores

Candidates receiving failing scores may request a rescoring of the answer sheet they submitted. Requests for rescoring should be submitted in writing, with a non-refundable \$15.00 Rescoring Fee, to NRPA, attn: CPSI, 22377 Belmont Ridge Rd, Ashburn, VA 20148. Requests for rescoring answer sheets must be received no later than sixty (60) days following the release of the examination results.

Note: To ensure correct reporting of the results, the testing agency selects a random sampling of answer sheets of candidates who score within one unit of passing. These answer sheets are manually rescored before results are mailed as a quality control measure. Thus, it is extremely doubtful that any examination results will be changed from “Fail” to “Pass” if rescored a second time.

Appeals

Applicants desiring to appeal their examination score may write a letter of appeal to the CPSI Certification Committee c/o NRPA. In the letter, candidates should state reasons why they do not agree with the examination outcome. Written appeals must be received within sixty (60) days of the examination date for the appeal to be considered. Appeals will be reviewed at the quarterly CPSI Certification Committee meeting and letters will be sent to all appealing professionals following decision of the committee.

Re-Examination

Candidates that were unsuccessful in passing the CPSI exam may apply to retake the exam thirty days from the date of the initial exam. Candidates will need to go through the same procedures as outlined above for the administration of the examination.

Duplicate Score Reports

Candidates may purchase additional copies of their score reports at a cost of \$25 per copy. Requests must be submitted to NRPA in writing within 12 months after the examination. The request form can be found on the NRPA website at www.nrpa.org/CPSI

Duplicate Certificate Request

Candidates may purchase additional copies of their certificate at a cost of \$25 per copy. Requests must be submitted to NRPA in writing within 12 months after the examination. Duplicate certificate request forms can be found on the NRPA website at www.nrpa.org/cpsi. Duplicate certificates will be mailed within approximately two weeks after receipt of the request.

Scores Cancelled

NRPA's testing agency is obligated to report scores that accurately reflect the performance of each candidate. For this reason, the testing agency maintains test administration and test security standards that are designed to assure that all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and to prevent some candidates from gaining an unfair advantage over others due to testing irregularities or misconduct. The testing agency will routinely review irregularities and test scores suspected of unusual or non-standard circumstances and report such to NRPA.

NRPA reserves the right to withhold or cancel test scores if, in its sole opinion, there is reason to question their validity. Scores considered for cancellation by NRPA may be grouped into two categories:

1. Suspected candidate misconduct. In such cases, NRPA may initially withhold test scores and notify the candidates that they have the opportunity to provide additional information as requested by NRPA. NRPA may also undertake a confidential review if the circumstances giving rise to the questionable score validity. If it is determined that there is sufficient cause to question score validity, NRPA may cancel the score(s) and inform the involved parties.
2. Irregularities. Scores may be withheld and/or cancelled because of circumstances beyond candidate's control, such as defective test materials or mistiming. In such cases, candidates will be informed and offered an opportunity to retake the examination if NRPA determines that scores must be cancelled.

In addition to the reasons listed above, NRPA may withhold or cancel examination results if, upon investigation, violation of NRPA policies outlined in this publication has been committed.

Your Status as a Certified Playground Safety Inspector

If you pass the CPSI Examination you will be awarded the CPSI designation as a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. The NCB will issue a Certified Playground Safety Inspector certificate to each individual who passes the examination six (6) - eight (8) weeks after the results are released.

Your certification is valid for three (3) years beginning the day you pass the examination and ending the first day of the month following examination date, three years later. CPSIs are required to maintain current knowledge of the standards/guidelines described in the CPSI examination references. NRPA will provide information about maintenance of certification with your certificate. To facilitate communications Certified Playground Safety Inspectors are required to advise NRPA of address, phone and email changes.

Recertification

Renewal of the CPSI Certification is to ensure that professionals are knowledgeable of the current best practices in the field of playground safety. Individuals wishing to renew their CPSI certification must successfully complete the CPSI examination prior to their expiration date.

Expiring CPSI's will receive a renewal reminder letter no later than two months prior to their expiration date. Email renewal reminders are sent for the three months prior to expiration. It is an individual's responsibility to keep NRPA updated with current contact information.

Lapse Policy

Expiring CPSI's will receive a 90 day lapse at the end of their certification cycle during which they may inspect playgrounds until the examination is taken or the 90 day lapse policy is expired.

Special Certification Procedures

It is NRPA's policy to grant additional time (commensurate with deployment/active duty time) to active duty military, reservists, civilian employees recalled to active duty and civilian employees deployed into war/hostile fire zone, or any equivalent area designated by the armed forces, for renewal of their certification. It is the responsibility of the individual to request an extension and to provide official documentation regarding the circumstance.

Extension requests, along with all documentation, should be provided to NRPA within 30 days before certification deadline. All extension requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis. If an extension is granted, a letter will be sent to the individual stating their new certification deadline as up to one year from the present deadline.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The National Recreation and Parks Association, National Certification Board and the testing company shall not discriminate on the basis of race, disability, religion, color, national origin, age, gender, covered veterans status, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, place of business or residence, pregnancy, childbirth, or any other unlawful basis. This policy is in compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

SECTION II: STUDY GUIDE

General Examination Preparation

The study and test-taking advice described here may be helpful as you prepare for the examination. Try to be objective about yourself and your individual learning needs when you are deciding how best to proceed with your study.

A. Study Advice

Determine how you study best. Some students seem to learn faster by hearing the information, while others need to see it written or illustrated, and still others prefer to discuss material with colleagues. A combination of these alternatives can often produce the most effective study pattern. If you had success in lecture courses with little outside review, it may be that you need to hear information for best retention. If you find that you prefer to read material, then you might consider jotting down important facts on a 3x5 card. You can refresh your memory by periodically reviewing these cards. This technique is especially effective if you write the material thoughtfully and concisely, allowing you to digest the material through both reading and writing. You may wish to organize a study group or find a study partner. Once you decide on the method most effective and comfortable for you, focus on that preference and use the other techniques to complement it.

Plan your study schedule well in advance. Use learning techniques, such as reading or audio-visual aids. Be sure you find a quiet place to study where you will not be interrupted.

B. Test-Taking Advice

The advice offered here is presented primarily to familiarize you with the test directions.

- 1. Read all instructions carefully.**
- 2. The actual examination will be timed.**
- 3. For best results pace yourself by periodically checking your progress. This will allow you to make any necessary adjustments. Remember, the more questions you answer, the better your chances of achieving a passing score.**
- 4. Be sure to record an answer for each question, even those of which you are uncertain. You can answer questions and mark them for review if time allows. Avoid leaving any questions unanswered; this will maximize your chances of passing. It is better to guess than to leave a question unanswered; there is no penalty for guessing.**

Certified Playground Safety Inspector Content Outline

1. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION	45
questions	
A. Identify hazards: playground related standards/guidelines (ASTM 1487, 325 & CPSC)	
B. Identify hazards: rationale of standards/guidelines	
C. Identify hazards: causes of injury	
D. Identify hazards: injury patterns	
E. Identify hazards: ranking/prioritizing hazards	
F. Identify hazards: methods of corrective actions and injury prevention	
G. Entanglement hazards: causes	
H. Entanglement hazards: tools to identify	
I. Impalement hazards: causes	
J. Impalement hazards: tools and gauges to identify	
K. Head-entrapment-hazards: causes	
L. Head-entrapment-hazards: tools and probes to identify	
M. Crush/shear hazards: causes	
N. Crush/shear hazards: tools and dowels to identify	
O. Identify hazards: equipment-specific performance requirements	
P. Identify hazards: ADA requirements for equipment	
2. PROTECTIVE SURFACING	20
questions	
A. ASTM standards (ASTM 1292, 1951, 2223)	
B. Impact attenuation (critical height and accessibility lab test reports)	
C. Field testing to verify compliance	
D. CPSC Guidelines (critical height)	
E. ADA requirements for accessible routes	
F. Use zones	
G. Fall height	
H. Manufacturers' installation recommendations	
I. Material selection	
J. Maintenance requirements	
3. PLAYGROUND ENVIRONMENT	7 questions
A. Child development	
B. Age-appropriateness of equipment	
C. Evaluation of playground environment including shade, drainage, site selection, etc.	
D. Equipment materials and manufacturing	
E. Play-environment design	

**Certified Playground Safety Inspector
Content Outline (Effective January 1, 2012)**

4. INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE	14 questions
A. Development of audit forms	
B. Development of inspection forms	
C. Use of audit forms	
D. Use of inspections forms	
E. Factors affecting inspection frequency	
F. Methods of corrective action and maintenance	
G. Procedures for taking equipment out of service	
5. RISK MANAGEMENT	14 questions
A. Requirement for record keeping/storage	
B. Requirement for site history file	
C. Compliance documents from equipment and surfacing manufacturer and installer	
D. Injury reporting within agency	
E. How to establish standard of care	
F. How to implement program based on standard of care	
G. Components of safety audit	
H. How to develop a system of hazard identification/prioritization	
I. Long-range corrective planning	
J. Accident Investigation	

The exam questions are taken from the following sources

The Consumer Product Safety Commission Handbook for Public Playground Safety (*The CPSC Handbook is available for download at no charge from their website, <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/325.pdf>)*

Read every page of this document. Do not try to memorize Tables One and Two. Concentrate on understanding the meaning of the tables. Pay special attention to the sections relating to surfacing materials, use zones, equipment not recommended for public playgrounds, equipment not recommended for pre-school age children, specific recommendations for types of equipment, and recommendations for guardrails and barriers.

The ASTM F1487-07 Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use (*The ASTM standard is available to download, however there is a fee, www.astm.org)*

Read every page of this document. Again, it is not necessary to memorize the tables. You must be very familiar with this document. The audit is based on the ASTM Standard. Much of the exam is based on this document.

ASTM F2223-04 Standard Guide for ASTM Standards on Playground Surfacing (*The ASTM standard is available to download, however there is a fee, www.astm.org)*

Playground Safety Is No Accident, 5th Edition (*This book can be purchased at the NRPA store*)

SECTION III: Certified Playground Safety Inspector - *Code of Professional Conduct*

This code sets forth the standards of professional conduct to be observed by CPSIs upon confirmation by the NCB as they act in the capacity of that certification. Individuals shall, in their professional activities, sustain and advance the integrity, honor and veracity of their certification by:

- holding the safety of playground users paramount in all professional services;
- utilizing the most current standards of care (as delineated by the American Society for Testing and Materials Standards on Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Public Use, Playground surfacing, and Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specifications for Public Use Play Equipment for Children 6 months through 23 months, as well as the US Consumer Product Safety Commissions Public Playground Safety Handbook);
- maintaining currency and competency in playground safety inspection procedures including use of testing tools and knowledge of current safety criteria;
- identifying and documenting all situations which are in non-compliance with the standards of care along with the citation of the specific reference portion of the criterion document, using a standard playground safety inspection process;
- prioritizing all identified non-compliances according to a standard norm of foreseeable consequences;
- advising employers or clients of seriously dangerous conditions in the most prompt manner as well as part of a written report, omitting no adverse findings from the official documentation of the safety inspection;
- never conducting a safety audit or inspection without the knowledge and consent of the playground owner;
- never contradicting the findings of another CPSI without first consulting directly with the first Inspector regarding the basis for these findings;
- never conducting a safety audit of a playground with the intent to discredit an owner or manufacturer or to promote sale of other equipment or products; and
- never providing findings of an inspection to anyone other than the playground owner unless authorized by the owner to do so.

Individuals failing to practice these professional standards shall be subject to loss of professional certification upon a negative finding by a review process and enforcement procedures established by the Executive Committee of the Certified Playground Safety Inspector Certification Committee.