



MONTANA NURSING ASSISTANT ACTOR TRAINING GUIDELINES

This is an instructional handout designed to quickly answer RN Test Observer-Independent Contractor questions regarding training Actors for participation during the administration of the Montana NA Skill Test.

BECOMING AN ACTOR:

To become an Actor, an individual must receive these instructions from a RN Test Observer, sign Form 1511 MT certifying that they received and understood these instructions. They should fill out and sign an Observer generated application and must sign Form 1501 MT to be submitted to Headmaster/D&S DT and must be trained with the Montana approved materials that are included in this handout. The individual must also meet the criteria listed below. After accomplishing these tasks, they may then be used as an Actor. This manual will be given to the Actor for their continued review.

RN Test Observers or Actors: Please do not hesitate to contact HEADMASTER at 1-800-393-8664 with questions.

This manual may also serve as the framework for an Actor Job Description, though RN Test Observers may design the Job Description as they require.

WHO CAN BE AN NA SKILL TEST ACTOR?

Note: It is not necessary to be a professional actor or have acting experience to be successful as a NA Skill test actor. If you have acting experience you may find this much more difficult than working from a script or within dramatic improvisational outlines and you may find it very frustrating. This work has nothing to do with finding dramatic moments or playing to an audience. It has everything to do with **disciplining** yourself within the needs of the skill exam. It can be very repetitive as **exactly the same simulation must be done for every exam candidate.**

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

1. Actors must be of legal working age in Montana. Minors must also have a work permit.
2. Actors must be trained with these materials.
3. Actors must fill out and sign a confidentiality Form 1501 MT and an Affidavit 1511 MT.
4. After completion, the original 1501 MT and 1511 MT must be mailed, faxed or emailed to HEADMASTER for inclusion into the Actor database.
5. An Actor may not be a NA Test Candidate who has not tested.
6. An Actor may **NOT** be a student in any NA Training Program.
7. Actors CAN BE State Tested CNAs, RN Test Observer family members, volunteers, etc.

COMPENSATION FOR BEING A NA SKILL TEST ACTOR:

Actors may be volunteers. For non-volunteer Actors, the RN Test Observer-Independent Contractor should pay Actors when they assist during the administration of an NA Skill test at a rate that is agreed upon by both parties. RN Test Observers must be sure to choose the Actor's name from the drop down box on the submission page when submitting the completed skill test for test tracking purposes.

SCHEDULING:

Actors will be contacted by RN Test Observers to be scheduled for testing dates.

TEST SECURITY:

Actors will be required to maintain, and never violate, the security of the tests or any testing situation. If Actors violate security they will be held legally accountable and prosecuted to full extent of the law. **Actors MUST NOT release any test content or information about any NA candidate's performance to ANYONE other than the RN Test Observer, HEADMASTER/D&S DIVERSIFIED TECHNOLOGIES or the Department of Health and Human Services, if requested.**

INSURANCE:

Actors will maintain any and all of their own insurance if they so choose.

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE:

Actors should wear comfortable clothes that do not restrict their motion in any way. Actors should wear a sweat suit, comfortable shorts, tank top, tee shirt, or similar non-restrictive clothing. Short sleeves that are easy to push up or no sleeves on shirts are recommended. Make sure the clothing is appropriate and not revealing.



SAFETY:

Actors should voice their concern to the RN Test Observer if at any time they believe that they are in danger. This would include concerns of falling, being bruised or hurt in any manner. In addition, the Actor may speak up if the NA candidate puts a gait belt on them too tightly or a blood pressure cuff has been inflated for a time duration resulting in pain or numbness. In some cases, these situations can be handled within the test experience. In other situations a time out (stopped testing) is necessary.

SKILL TASKS REQUIRING AN ACTOR:

Actors must be comfortable acting as a health care client. If the Actor has any hesitation in participating in the demonstration of any of the skill tasks they should not attempt to become an Actor.

- Ambulation with a gait belt.
- Bedpan and output—Actor remains clothed and is simply positioned on bedpan.
- Partial Bed bath – Whole Face (including eyes), arm, hand and underarm only are washed-no soap is used on the face. (Actor should be comfortable with no make-up)
- Denture care – Actor does not provide. Sample dentures will be at the test site.
- Dressing client – Actor will remain clothed. Candidates will use large oversized clothing to demonstrate dressing technique.
- Emptying a Urinary Drainage Bag – Actor will hold tubing under his/her gown.
- Feeding a dependent client – Actor will eat small amounts of solid food and drink small amounts of fluid.
- Foot Care – foot will be placed in basin with water and Actor will be asked s(he) wants toenails clipped. Actor will answer “NO”. Toenails will not be clipped.
- Making an occupied bed – Actor will be a weak client and remain in bed.
- Mouth care – Actor’s teeth will be brushed.
- Nail Care – Nails are filed.
- Position client in bed – Actor will be weak and positioned on one side.
- Range of motion exercises—upper and lower extremities (hip and knee and shoulder).
- Pivot-Transfer from bed to wheelchair using a gait belt
- Vital signs: pulse, blood pressure and respirations – Actor must have a pulse and blood pressure that is not difficult to recognize.
- Weight Measurement – Actor should be comfortable having their weight recorded.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE NA CANDIDATES:

In non test situations good care involves cooperative communication between the client and the NA. The client might tell the NA what is comfortable or ask for what they want. In the test situation Nursing Assistants must rely on their knowledge and training to give care and the actor/client responses must be TEST NEUTRAL. (Impact on the outcome of the skill task for any action or verbal interchange must be test neutral. Actor responds to questions by saying, “whatever you think” putting any decision that is made back on the candidate.) **Do not lead the candidate toward any conclusion about providing further care or care they may not have provided.** The actor may feel compelled to “help” a candidate during the exam. This is natural but must be avoided.

Actors may interact with the NA candidates as though they were a typical health care client. There is no need to act particularly sick. You are having a good day and unless specified have good bed and room mobility. If the scenario indicates that you are weak in general or on a specific side your movements will be slightly slowed and heavy but remember at no time are you to be “dead weight.” Let the candidate help you up or maintain contact during ambulation. In general they are evaluated on their assistance to you and should not be put into a position where they are bearing your weight to any great degree.

1. Actors *MAY NOT* initiate communication with the NA candidate.

2. Actors must not show any body language that may indicate that the NA candidate did something right or wrong.

3. Actors cannot prompt the NA candidate by asking or in any way indicating to them to provide privacy, or to place the call light within reach.

4. Many Skill Tests include some communication between the Actor and the NA Candidate. A few examples of appropriate communication follow: The actor NEVER initiates any communication, except for a safety concern.

These examples are relevant for nearly any Skill Task and are listed to give a general idea of expectations for an Actor’s general mind set, behavior and the range of communication allowable.



- **ENTERING A ROOM:** If the NA candidate knocks on the door the Actor should say, "Come in." The actor's communication as health care client can put the candidate at ease and help the candidate perform better, while still remaining test neutral. Convey non-verbal acceptance with a smile and a relaxed, accepting, positive, tone of voice.
- **AMBULATION WITH A GAIT BELT:** If the NA candidate asks, "Do you want to go for a walk?" the Actor should say "YES." Actors will not prompt the NA Candidate to put on their non-skid socks, but should say "YES" if they are asked if they want them. If the candidate asks "Is it too tight?" the actor would say "Whatever you think". Always put the decision back with the candidate.
- **DRESSING:** If the NA candidate asks, "Do you want to get dressed?" the Actor should say "YES." The Actor should not help, or resist, the NA candidate with any portion of getting dressed.
- **FEEDING DEPENDENT CLIENT:** Can you wipe your own hands? Answer: "NO." Be hungry and positive about eating.
- **MAKING AN OCCUPIED BED:** If the NA candidate asks, "Can you turn in bed?" The Actor should say "YES."
- **MOUTH CARE:** If the NA candidate asks, "Can you brush your teeth?" the Actor should say "NO." If the NA candidate asks, "Do you want your teeth brushed?" the Actor should say, "YES."
- **POSITIONING ON THE SIDE:** If the NA candidate asks "Do you want a pillow?" say "Whatever you think is best." This puts the decision making back on the candidate to get the correct amount of pillows to be placed during the positioning task.
- **TOILETING WITH A BED PAN:** If the candidate asks, "Are you comfortable?" when they have placed the bedpan a "Yes" or "No" response to this question is NOT SKILL TEST IMPACT NEUTRAL and therefore, not appropriate. The actor's answer must be vague to remain SKILL TEST IMPACT NEUTRAL. In this case the actor should answer, "I can't tell for sure" or "I'm not sure" or "I don't know".
- **VITAL SIGNS – BLOOD PRESSURE, PULSE AND RESPIRATIONS:** The Actor should not tell the NA candidate their blood pressure, etc. If the NA candidate asks, the Actor would respond, "I don't know."

OTHER COMMUNICATION:

If the candidate asks:

- "Do you want water?" Say, "Whatever you think" or "I don't know." A step calls for the NA candidate to place water within easy reach of the actor; therefore, the decision needs to be placed back on the candidate.
- "Am I causing any pain?" Say honestly, "Yes" or "No" or "I'm fine or okay."
- "Are you okay?" or "Are you comfortable?" or "Do you need anything." Answer: "Whatever you think is best" or "I don't know." All usually asked at the end of a skill as the candidate is preparing to exit the skill test. Remember all decisions must be placed back with the candidate, so you can remain a test neutral participant.
- If you are in the wheelchair at the end of a skill and far from the call light and water and they say "Do you want to stay here?" or "Are you okay here?" It is best to say, "I don't know" or "Whatever you think."
- Infrequently a nervous candidate's reaction may be to become giggly and tempt the actor into the silliness. You will not be helping the candidate if you engage in this overcompensating behavior and it will further distract the candidate. You must remain professional and act out your role as a client that always remains test neutral for each and every candidate, being sure every candidate has the exact same opportunity to perform their best care without any impact on the outcome of the candidate's test coming from you.

Questions: Please call HEADMASTER toll free at 1-800-393-8664.