Structural Pest Control Board

BRANCH 1 OPERATOR CANDIDATE STUDY GUIDE



Effective May 2011

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INTRODUCTION

Branch 1 Operator Practice

Structural pest control involves the control of wood-destroying pests and organisms or such other pests which may invade households or structures, railroad cars, ships, docks, trucks, airplanes, or the contents thereof. Fumigation with poisonous or lethal gases is the scope of Branch 1 Operator duties.

The practice of structural pest control includes the engaging in, offering to engage in, soliciting, or the performance of the following:

Monitoring and evaluating fumigation procedures with the use of fumigation with poisonous or lethal gases for the purpose of eliminating, exterminating or controlling infestations or infections of such pests, or organisms.

How to Use This Study Guide

This study guide will provide you with the necessary information regarding the Branch 1 Operator examination.

Be familiar with references listed for the examination. Recognize that laws, rules, and standards are modified from time to time, and it is your responsibility to keep your knowledge current during the course of your future professional practice. Please read this study guide carefully and completely.

Purpose of Examination

To ensure entry-level competence, the Structural Pest Control Board administers an examination to assess the candidate's ability to apply knowledge of fumigation equipment, and fumigation procedures to the practice of structural pest control.

Candidates should also be familiar with the Department of Pesticide Regulations Safety Information Series that covers worker safety; storage, moving and disposal of fumigants; and safety rules for performing fumigations.

Eligibility and Fees

Pursuant to California Code of Regulations §1936, candidates for the initial operator's license must file an application with the Board with the required examination fee of \$25 at least 15 days prior to the next scheduled examination.

The examination application can be downloaded from the Board's website: http://www.pestboard.ca.gov/forms/43e-1.pdf

EXAMINATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Examination Security

California Business and Professions Code §123, §496 and §584 prohibit candidates who sit for the examination from engaging in any conduct that subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing examination or the administration of a licensing examination.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, obstruction of the standardized administration of the examination, removal of examination materials from the examination room, communicating examination information to another person, copying answers from another person, using unauthorized books, equipment, notes or other printed materials during the examination, and permitting an impersonator to take the examination (see full text in Appendix A).

Violation of these sections will result in disqualification from the examination and possible denial of license.

Abandonment of Application

The Board considers an application abandoned if a candidate fails to participate in the examination process. Per California Code of Regulations §1941, an applicant who fails to appear for the examination after proper notification forfeits the examination fee unless the applicant requests and is granted a postponement not less than 5 days prior to the examination or is excused by the Board for good cause from complying with this requirement.

An applicant who receives a postponement of not more than 6 months will not be required to file a new application.

Special Accommodations

All examination locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, the Board grants requests for reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to receive consideration, all requests and substantiating documentation must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the examination.

Arrival at the Examination

You should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the examination in order to sign in and have Board staff verify your identification.

Registration

Report to the registration area at the time and date specified on the Structural Pest Control Board Operator Examination Admission Letter.

The proctors will collect the Admission Letter and ask for your identification. The identification presented must include a current photograph, full legal name as submitted during registration and your signature. This information may be presented in more than one form of identification.

Acceptable forms of identification include:

- California drivers license
- Government issued identification cards
- Passport
- Alien residency card
- Military identification

Candidates that fail to provide appropriate identification at the time of examination will not be allowed to participate in the examination.

No show policy

Candidates who fail to appear for the examination must re-register for the examination and pay the prescribed fees.

Tardiness

An examination will not be disrupted to accommodate late arrivals. If a candidate reports late, the candidate will not be permitted to take the examination and will need to reschedule and submit any applicable fees.

Materials to Bring

Other than photographic identification, you will be provided with all material necessary to take the examination.

Prohibited Materials

Candidates cannot bring communication devices, reference materials, photographic equipment or electronic devices into the examination room. The following items are examples of prohibited materials:

- Cellular phones and pagers
- Candidate study guides, technical reference books and dictionaries
- MP3s or miscellaneous playback devices
- Cameras and videographic recorders
- Radios and tape recorders
- Laptop computers
- Programmable electronic organizers, personal digital assistants (PDAs)
- Drinks and food unless medically necessary

Personal Belongings

Candidates may keep keys, wallets and purses on the floor near their seat during the examination. Larger items (e.g., backpacks, briefcases, duffel bags, handbags, tote bags) and outerwear (e.g. coats, hats) <u>cannot</u> be brought into the examination.

Examination staff will <u>not</u> be responsible for monitoring candidates' personal items during the examination. If a candidate reports with prohibited materials or belongings, the candidate will be asked to make alternative arrangements before starting the examination. The Board is not responsible for the loss of, or damage to personal items.

If securing belongings results in the candidate being late for the examination, the candidate will not be permitted to take the examination and will need to reschedule and submit any applicable fees.

Check-Out Procedure

All examination materials including test booklets, answer sheets, pencils and any notes taken during the examination must be returned to the examination staff. Failure to do so will void your examination.

Disruptive Behavior

Candidates who engage in behavior that is disruptive to other candidates may be disqualified from the examination process. Examples of disruptive behavior include:

Eating or drinking during the examination;

- Allowing the alarm features of programmable wrist watches or other timepieces to emit sound;
- Talking, whispering, or otherwise attempting to communicate with other candidates for any reason.

Leaving the Room During the Examination

Candidates will not be permitted to leave the examination room for any purpose unless accompanied by a member of the examination staff. Candidates who leave the examination room will <u>not</u> be permitted to receive extra time to complete the examination. Failure to follow these rules will result in the candidate's examination being voided.

THE EXAMINATION

Format

The examination consists of 200 multiplechoice questions from major duty areas. There is one correct answer for each question. There is no penalty for guessing; therefore, candidates should answer all of the questions.

Time Limits

Candidates are allowed a total of 3 hours to complete the examination. Candidates may complete the multiple-choice questions in any order; however, they are responsible for managing their own time. At the end of the three-hour period, all remaining candidates will have their examinations collected.

Passing Score

Business and Professions Code §8560 states that the passing score for the examination is 70 percent.

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR DUTY AREAS

I. Setup: 15%*

II. Funigation (Application): 15%*

III. Aeration: 25%*
IV. Safety: 25%*

V. Administrative Duties: 20%*

CONTENT SPECIFICATIONS

The content specifications for the examination are based upon an occupational analysis of Branch 1 Operator practices conducted by the Department of Consumer Affairs. The occupational analysis involved interviews with practitioners, focus groups to validate the tasks and knowledge identified, a survey questionnaire, which asked licensed practitioners to rate the importance of tasks and knowledge identified in the interviews, an analysis of the ratings, and development of content specifications based on the ratings.

^{*}Percentages are approximate

CONTENT SPECIFICATIONS

I. SETUP (15%)*

Job Tasks

- T1. Calculate amount of fumigant to be used.
- T2. Measure cubic footage of structure prior to fumigation.
- T3. Inspect structure to verify bagging requirements have been met.
- T4. Determine number of tarps to be used.
- T5. Determine type of fumigant to be used.
- T6. Prepare soil surface where bottom seal occurs to minimize loss of fumigant.
- T7. Identify potential obstructions on exterior of structure.
- T8. Identify potential obstructions in interior of the structure.
- T9. Place fans, hoses, pans and other items for introduction of fumigant.
- T10. Determine placement of tarps.
- T11. Identify tears and gaps of tarps to ensure proper seal.
- T12. Secure doors with secondary locking devices to prevent re-entry.
- T13. Place warning signs on structure at or near all entrances, on each side of structure, on outside surfaces of tarps and joint seams.
- T14. Notify public and/or governmental entities prior to commencement of planned fumigation.
- T15. Notify neighbors to gain access to property if required.
- T16. Verify processes have been completed to protect integrity of tarps.
- T17. Place monitoring lines to determine half loss time.
- T18. Determine condition of tarps and seal.
- T19. Determine amount and type of sealing materials.
- T20. Determine gas has been shutoff.

- K1. Knowledge of types of locking devices securing against entry of structure.
- K2. Knowledge of methods to calculate fumigant dosages.
- K3. Knowledge of requirements for fumigant disclosure.
- K4. Knowledge of amount of warning agent to be used with fumigant.
- K5. Knowledge of tarp conditions and their limitations.
- K6. Knowledge of methods for sealing structure.
- K7. Knowledge of various methods for sealing bottom edges of tarps.
- K8. Knowledge of materials to pad corners and other sharp areas prior to application of tarps.
- K9. Knowledge of methods for measuring single-story versus multistory level buildings.
- K10. Knowledge of methods to calculate cubic volume of area to be fumigated.
- K11. Knowledge of structural conditions that may impair or prevent fumigation.
- K12. Knowledge of the environmental conditions that could effect fumigations.
- K13. Knowledge of laws and regulations requiring that a structure and/or adjoining structures be vacated, locked, or barricaded before fumigation.
- K14. Knowledge of laws and regulations for posting warning signs and fumigation notices prior to fumigation.
- K15. Knowledge of procedures to prevent property damage during fumigation.
- K16. Knowledge of methods for securing tarps around power lines.
- K17. Knowledge of factors to be considered for site selection of fumigant release sites.
- K18. Knowledge of methods to prepare structures in close proximity to structure to be fumigated.
- K19. Knowledge of pre-fumigation requirements.
- K20. Knowledge of label requirements to determine type or brand of fumigant to be used.
- K21. Knowledge of placement of monitoring lines for equipment used in determining gas loss.

II. FUMIGATION (APPLICATION) (15%)*

Job Tasks

- T21. Determine at what point during exposure period half of the fumigant is lost.
- T22. Calculate half-loss time (HLT).
- T23. Release fumigant into structure according to label instructions.
- T24. Monitor actual concentration level of fumigant (e.g., fumiscope) during exposure period.
- T25. Release fumigant at the proper flow rate to prevent fog out.
- T26. Observe scale to ensure sufficient dosage.
- T27. Release additional fumigant when blow out, leakage or inadequate seal occurs.
- T28. Release warning agent into structure prior to fumigation.
- T29. Determine amount of warning agent necessary for fumigation.

- K22. Knowledge of various types of fumigants.
- K23. Knowledge of effects of improper release of fumigant.
- K24. Knowledge of regulations for release of fumigants into structure.
- K25. Knowledge of factors that affect half-loss time (HLT) of fumigants.
- K26. Knowledge of methods to prevent passage of fumigants through connecting structures or conduits.
- K27. Knowledge of factors that can affect rate of loss during exposure period.
- K28. Knowledge of factors to consider in selecting fans for fumigation.
- K29. Knowledge of dosages for target pests.
- K30. Knowledge of detection methods to determine location of leaks after fumigant is released.
- K31. Knowledge of procedures and equipment to monitor concentrations of fumigants.
- K32. Knowledge of methods to determine dosages for short-term fumigations.
- K33. Knowledge of methods and procedures for large-scale fumigations.
- K34. Knowledge of corrections to be applied for adding additional fumigant in cases of gas loss.
- K35. Knowledge of effects of size and configuration of structure of release sites on adequacy of fumigant circulation.
- K36. Knowledge of effects of fumigant introduction on fumigant dissipation (including nozzles and lines).
- K37. Knowledge of procedures for introducing warning agent into structure.
- K38. Knowledge of air circulation requirements needed for fumigation and disbursement of warning agent.

III. AERATION (25%)*

Job Tasks

- T30. Perform testing of fumigant's concentration level after aeration to determine clearance for re-entry.
- T31. Open downwind seam to initiate release of fumigant.
- T32. Open upwind seams to release fumigant.
- T33. Setup aeration tube to commence TRAP (Tarpaulin Removal Aeration Plan).
- T34. Aerate structure by opening doors, windows and running fans.
- T35. Remove tarps in a manner that minimizes exposure to fumigant.
- T36. Release property for occupancy by posting a Notice of Re-Entry.
- T37. Calculate aeration time.

- K39. Knowledge of factors that affect the exchange of air in a structure.
- K40. Knowledge of factors affecting aeration time.
- K41. Knowledge of safe methods for tarp removal.
- K42. Knowledge of procedures for aeration of a fumigant from a structure.
- K43. Knowledge of proper testing procedures and/or techniques for certification.
- K44. Knowledge of phases for aeration.

Job Tasks

- T38. Advise owner or tenant to follow safety precautions prior to fumigation.
- T39. Comply with requirements for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- T40. Maintain personal protective equipment (PPE).
- T41. Post emergency medical information on vehicle.
- T42. Verify two functioning self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBA) are onsite.
- T43. Comply with requirements for handling and storage of fumigants.
- T44. Identify potential hazards and situations that could impact worksite safety.
- T45. Identify type and location of the construction elements, conduits, drains or vacuum systems between connected structures.
- T46. Maintain measuring devices to ensure proper calibration.
- T47. Regularly inspect vehicles for regulatory compliance.
- T48. Testing of air space in structure prior to certification.
- T49. Verify non-presence of animals or conditions conducive for animal entry.

- K45. Knowledge of precautions that should be taken prior to fumigation.
- K46. Knowledge of requirements for safety equipment to be used in fumigations.
- K47. Knowledge of laws pertaining to worker safety standards.
- K48. Knowledge of laws pertaining to handling, storage and use of fumigants.
- K49. Knowledge of standards for respiratory protection to be used during fumigation.
- K50. Knowledge of methods for safe storage of fumigants.
- K51. Knowledge of procedures to contain fumes and spills.
- K52. Knowledge of regulations for accident response plans.
- K53. Knowledge of the components of fumigation safety kits.
- K54. Knowledge of regulations for safety of persons, animals, and property during fumigations.
- K55. Knowledge of regulations for planning emergency medical care of employees handling fumigants.
- K56. Knowledge of required furnigant levels for safe re-entry into a structure after aeration.
- K57. Knowledge of procedures for cleaning, storing and maintaining personal protective equipment (PPE).
- K58. Knowledge of special precautions for fumigating of connecting structures.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES (20%)*

Job Tasks

- T51. Notify the Board of principal or branch office address changes.
- T52. Maintain Fumigation notice to consumers and regulatory related documents.
- T53. Maintain business operation records, e.g., insurance, bonds, licenses, etc.
- T54. Maintain required safety and respiratory training records.
- T55. Comply with requirements of the Structural Pest Control Board as it relates to California contract law.
- T56. Comply with requirements of the Structural Pest Control Act as it relates to business operations.
- T57. Annual registration with county agricultural commissioners.
- T58. File monthly pesticide use reports.
- T59. File notices of intent prior to fumigation.
- T60. Conduct worker health and safety training.
- T61. Request gas company shutoff.
- T62. Provide pesticide disclosure notices to consumer.

- K59. Knowledge of record keeping requirements for principal and branch offices.
- K60. Knowledge of requirements for Operators to notify County Agricultural Commissioners of change of address or employment status of employees.
- K61. Knowledge of requirements for Operators to notify Board of changes regarding location of principal or branch office.
- K62. Knowledge of requirements for Operator to maintain current information regarding bonds or insurance policies.
- K63. Knowledge of record keeping requirements for fumigation records.
- K64. Knowledge of requirements for employee training programs.
- K65. Knowledge of requirements for maintaining records of employee training programs.
- K66. Knowledge of California mechanic's lien law.
- K67. Knowledge of potential liabilities that could result from subcontract agreements.
- K68. Knowledge of Structural Pest Control Board requirements regarding contents of fumigation contracts.
- K69. Knowledge of the Structural Pest Control Act as it relates to business practices.
- K70. Knowledge of laws and regulations regarding pesticide disclosure requirements.
- K71. Knowledge of requirements to provide proper notification/registration with county.
- K72. Knowledge of requirement for filing monthly pesticide use reports.
- K73. Knowledge of gas company requirements.
- K74. Knowledge of requirement for Branch 1 to provide furnigation log to prime contractor or Branch 3.

^{*}Percentages are approximate

LIST OF REFERENCES

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- University of California Statewide Integrated Management Project Agriculture and Natural Resources. (2000). The safe and effective use of pesticides (2nd Ed.). Oakland, CA: A University of California Publication.

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HELPFUL WEBSITE LINKS

- Structural Pest Control Act (includes relevant sections of the Business and Professions Code and the California Code of Regulations):
 Visit http://www.pestboard.ca.gov/pestlaw/pestact.pdf
- 2. Department of Pesticide Regulation (Pesticide Safety Information Series in English): Visit http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/whs/psisenglish.htm
- 3. Department of Pesticide Regulation (Pesticide Safety Information Series in Spanish): Visit http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/whs/pdf/hs2s.pdf
- 4. Department of Pesticide Regulation (Pesticide Safety Information Series in Punjabi): Visit http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/whs/pdf/hs2p.pdf

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Notification of Results

The Board will notify candidates of examination results within 2 weeks of the scheduled examination date. Examination results will not be released by telephone.

Re-Examination

California Code of Regulations §1942 states that a candidate who fails the operator's examination may take another examination within 6 months thereafter on the same application by paying an additional examination fee.

APPENDIX A – BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE

Important Sections of the Business and Professions Code

Division 1, Chapter 1, Section 123:

It is a misdemeanor for any person to engage in any conduct which subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing examination or the administration of an examination, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Conduct which violates the security of the examination materials; removing from the examination room any examination materials without authorization; the unauthorized reproduction by any means of any portion of the actual licensing examination; aiding by any means the unauthorized reproduction of any portion of the actual licensing examination; paying or using professional or paid examination-takers for the purpose of reconstructing any portion of the licensing examination; obtaining examination questions or other examination material, except by specific authorization either before, during, or after an examination; or using or purporting to use any examination questions or materials which were improperly removed or taken from any examination for the purpose of instructing or preparing any applicant for examination; or selling, distributing, buying, receiving, or having unauthorized possession of any portion of a future, current, or previously administered licensing examination.
- (b) Communicating with any other candidate during the administration of a licensing examination; copying answers from another examinee or permitting one's answers to be copied by another examinee; having in one's possession during the administration of the licensing examination any books, equipment, notes, written or printed materials, or data of any kind, other than the examination materials distributed, or otherwise authorized to be in one's possession during the examination; or impersonating any examinee or having an impersonator take the licensing examination on one's behalf.

Nothing in this section shall preclude prosecution under the authority provided for in any other provision of law.

In addition to any other penalties, a person found guilty of violating this section, shall be liable for the actual damages sustained by the agency administering the examination not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and the costs of litigation.

(c) If any provision of this section or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the section that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this section are severable.

Division 1, Chapter 1, Section 123.5:

Whenever any person has engaged, or is about to engage, in any acts or practices which constitute, or will constitute, a violation of Section 123, the superior court in and for the county wherein acts or practices takes place, or are about to take place, may issue an injunction, or other appropriate order, restraining such conduct on application of a board, the Attorney General or the district attorney of the county.

The proceedings under this section shall be governed by Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 525) of Title 7 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

The remedy provided for by this section shall be in addition to, and not a limitation on, the authority provided for in any other provision of law.

Division 1.5, Chapter 5, Section 496:

A board may deny, suspend, revoke, or otherwise restrict a license on the ground that an applicant or licensee has violated Section 123 pertaining to subversion of licensing examinations.

Division 2, Chapter 1, Article 4, Section 584:

No person shall violate the security of any examination, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 123, or impersonate, attempt to impersonate, or solicit the impersonation of, another in any examination for a license, certificate, or registration to practice as provided in this division, the Osteopathic Initiative Act, or the Chiropractic Initiative Act, or under any other law providing for the regulation of any other system or method of treating the sick or afflicted in this state.

APPENDIX B – SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. For the purpose of safety to neighbors' pets, who is responsible for notifying neighbors prior to fumigation?
A. Fumigator at job siteB. Termite inspectorC. Owner of propertyD. Operator of fumigation company
2. Which of the following items must be included in a fumigation safety kit?
A. A chart of instructions for artificial respiration.B. The MSDS for the fumigant being usedC. A UL certified fire extinguisherD. Address and phone number for local hospital
3. What is the minimum aeration time required after shooting over 16 oz/MCF of sulfuryl fluoride?
A. 24 hours B. 10 hours C. 6 hours D. 8 hours
4. What sulfuryl fluoride fumigant is labeled for commodity fumigation?
A. Magtoxin B. ECO2FUME C. ProFume D. Fumi-cel
5. After a fumigation has been performed, who gets a copy of the fumigation log?
A. The Structural Pest Control Board B. Department of Pesticide Regulation C. The homeowner D. Prime contractor
6. How many years must a registered company preserve a copy of the fumigation log?
A. 3 B. 4 C. 2 D. 1

Answers:

- 1. C
- 2. A
- 3. D
- 4. C
- 5. D
- 6. A