

CRCST Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

150 Scored questions	3h Time limit	— Passing score
\$140 Exam fee	Healthcare Sterile Proce... Governing body	— Pass rate

Steam sterilization at a glance

Cycle type	Air removal	Typical temperature	Relative exposure
Gravity displacement	Steam passively displaces air downward	About 250 F (121 C)	Longer
Dynamic air removal	Vacuum pulses or steam flushes evacuate air	About 270 F (132 C)	Shorter

- Rule: lower temperature needs longer time for equal lethality. Always run the parameters the device and sterilizer IFUs validate, including any extended cycles.
- Low-temperature methods: ethylene oxide penetrates lumens but needs long cycles, aeration, and exposure controls; vaporized hydrogen peroxide is fast with no aeration but cannot touch cellulose (paper, cotton, linen); dry heat handles powders and oils.

Indicators and monitors

- Type 1 external process indicator: processed vs unprocessed only.
- Type 2 specific test: Bowie-Dick air removal test, daily, empty chamber, before first processed load, dynamic air removal sterilizers only.
- Type 3 single variable; Type 4 multi-variable; Type 5 integrating, responds to all critical variables, the internal monitor of choice; Type 6 emulating, cycle-specific.
- Biological indicator: *Geobacillus stearothermophilus* spores for steam. Run with a positive control from the same lot. Failed BI: sterilizer out of service, recall to last negative BI, investigate, requalify.
- Implants: BI in a process challenge device, quarantine until negative, early release only for documented emergencies.
- Physical monitors: verify and initial the printout every cycle; a parameter excursion means the load is not released.

Workflow rules that answer many questions

- One-way flow, dirty to clean; never carry sterile items back through decontamination.
- Decontamination is negative pressure; prep and pack and sterile storage are positive.
- Keep soiled instruments moist at point of use; never saline (chlorides pit stainless steel).
- Clean before you disinfect or sterilize; no process works through soil or biofilm.
- Hinged instruments open and unlocked; disassemble per IFU; internal CI in the hardest-to-reach spot.
- Pouches: write on plastic side only, load on edge paper-to-plastic; no staples, pins, or rubber bands.
- Mixed loads: textiles above, metal below; cool on the cart before storage; a wet pack is contaminated.
- Event-related sterility: moisture, tears, crushing, dropping, or soiling ends sterility, not the calendar.

PPE by zone

- Decontamination: fluid-resistant gown, heavy-duty utility gloves, mask with eye protection or full face shield, hair cover; doff dirtiest first, hand hygiene last.

- Prep and pack / sterile storage: facility surgical attire, full hair covering, no artificial nails or loose jewelry; hand hygiene after glove removal.
- Chemical handling anywhere: check the SDS, know the eyewash location, use the spill kit.

Official sources

- Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA) — CRCST Exam Content Outline (Revised November 2023):
https://myhspa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/HSPA_CRCST_Content_Outline_2023.Revision.pdf
- Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA) — Certified Registered Central Service Technician (CRCST) — Hands-On Experience Verification:
<https://myhspa.org/certification/certification-overview/certified-registered-central-service-technician-crcst/>
- Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA) — Certified Registered Central Service Technician (CRCST) — Exam Structure and Application Fees:
<https://myhspa.org/certification/certification-overview/certified-registered-central-service-technician-crcst/>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/practice/exams/healthcare/crcst