

NREMT EMT Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

120 Scored questions	2h Time limit	Pass/Fail (CAT, scaled 95... Passing score
\$104 Exam fee	NREMT Governing body	

The fast-facts you must have locked in before test day, plus the high-yield clinical rules EMTs are tested on most.

Exam Logistics (memorize the numbers)

- Time limit: 120 minutes (2 hours).
- Passing standard: 950 on the scaled ability scale — this is a competency threshold, not a raw percentage.
- Application fee: \$104 USD.
- Computer-adaptive test (CAT): each question adjusts to your ability, so you can't skip or go back — answer your best and move on.

Scene Size-Up — Do This First, Every Call

- BSI / PPE -> Scene safety -> MOI/NOI -> # of patients -> need for additional resources -> C-spine consideration.
- On NREMT, "scene safe, BSI" is almost always the correct first action.

Primary Assessment — XABCDE

- X — control massive/life-threatening external hemorrhage first.
- A — Airway (open with head-tilt/chin-lift; jaw-thrust if trauma).
- B — Breathing (rate, depth, effort).
- C — Circulation (pulse, skin, bleeding).
- D — Disability (AVPU, gross neuro).
- E — Expose/Environment.
- AVPU: Alert · Verbal · Painful · Unresponsive.

Normal Adult Vital Signs

- Heart rate: 60–100 bpm.
- Respiratory rate: 12–20 breaths/min.
- Systolic BP: roughly 90–140 mmHg.
- SpO2: $\geq 94\%$ on room air is the general target.

Oxygen Delivery — Rates to Remember

- Nasal cannula: 1–6 L/min -> $\sim 24\text{--}44\%$ O₂.
- Non-rebreather mask: 10–15 L/min -> up to $\sim 90\%+$ O₂.
- Bag-valve-mask (BVM): 15 L/min; ventilate an adult about every 5–6 seconds ($\sim 10\text{--}12/\text{min}$).

CPR / BLS Quick Numbers

- Compression rate: 100–120/min.
- Adult compression depth: at least 2 inches (~ 5 cm), no more than ~ 2.4 in.
- Compression:ventilation (no advanced airway): 30:2 (1 or 2 rescuers, adult).

- Allow full chest recoil; minimize interruptions; switch compressors ~every 2 minutes.

High-Yield Mnemonics

- SAMPLE (history): Signs/symptoms · Allergies · Medications · Past history · Last oral intake · Events leading up.
- OPQRST (pain): Onset · Provocation · Quality · Region/Radiation · Severity · Time.
- DCAP-BTLS (trauma exam): Deformities · Contusions · Abrasions · Punctures · Burns · Tenderness · Lacerations · Swelling.
- Cincinnati Stroke Scale (FAST): Face droop · Arm drift · Speech · Time.

Shock & Bleeding Priorities

- Bleeding control order: direct pressure -> tourniquet for uncontrolled extremity hemorrhage (apply high and tight, note the time).
- Signs of compensated shock: tachycardia, pale/cool/clammy skin, anxiety — hypotension is a late sign.
- Treat for shock: keep warm, high-flow O2, position supine, rapid transport.

Common EMT-Assisted Medications

- Oral glucose — hypoglycemia in a patient who can protect their airway.
- Aspirin — suspected cardiac chest pain (per protocol, no contraindication).
- Nitroglycerin — chest pain (check BP first; hold if systolic too low or ED drugs taken).
- Naloxone — suspected opioid overdose with respiratory depression.
- Epinephrine auto-injector — anaphylaxis.
- Albuterol — bronchospasm/wheezing per protocol.
- Remember the rights: right patient, medication, dose, route, time, documentation.

Test-Day Strategy

- When in doubt, choose the answer that treats the most life-threatening problem first (airway/breathing/circulation before splinting or bandaging).
- Always assume you have adequate BSI and a safe scene only after you've stated them.
- Because the CAT ends when it's confident, treat every question as if it decides the outcome.

Official sources

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics — Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, May 2025 — Emergency Medical Technicians (SOC 29-2042): <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes292042.htm>
- NREMT — National Continued Competency Program (NCCP): <https://www.nremt.org/Document/nccp>
- NREMT — EMT Recertification Requirements and Pathways: <https://www.nremt.org/EMT/Recertification>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/practice/exams/healthcare/nremt-emt