

NHA Phlebotomy (CPT) Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

120 Questions	2h Time limit	390 (scaled, 200-500) Passing score
— Exam fee	NHA Governing body	

Fast-reference facts, must-know rules, and formulas for the NHA CPT certification exam. Bold items are the numbers to memorize cold.

The Exam at a Glance

- 120 items: 100 scored + 20 unscored pretest (indistinguishable)
- 120 minutes (2-hour) time limit
- Passing = scaled score of 390 (scale 200–500)
- Pace: ~ 1 min/item — flag-and-move, don't stall

Domains (2024 job analysis) — scored items

Domain	Items
Safety and Compliance	26
Patient Preparation	20
Routine Blood Collections	28
Special Collections	12
Processing	14

Capillary (dermal) puncture is Routine Blood Collections, not Special Collections.

Order of Draw (memorize — most-tested rule)

Sterile blood cultures first, then tubes in additive order to prevent cross-contamination:

1. Blood cultures (yellow / sterile)
2. Light blue — sodium citrate (coagulation; must fill completely for 9:1 ratio)
3. Red / gold / tiger (SST) — clot activator / serum
4. Green — heparin (plasma)
5. Lavender / purple — EDTA (whole blood, CBC)
6. Gray — sodium fluoride / potassium oxalate (glucose, lactate)

Mnemonic: "Stop Light Red Stay Put Green Light Go."

Coagulation Tube Fill Rule

Light-blue (citrate) tubes require a 9:1 blood-to-anticoagulant ratio. Underfilled or overfilled tubes = rejected specimen.

Must-Remember Safety & Compliance Rules

- Two patient identifiers before every draw (name + DOB); never rely on room/bed number.

- Never recap a used needle; activate safety device and dispose in the sharps container immediately.
- Standard Precautions: treat all blood/body fluids as infectious.
- Tourniquet time: ≤ 1 minute to avoid hemoconcentration.
- Antiseptic order for routine venipuncture: alcohol; for blood cultures use chlorhexidine and let it dry fully.

Site Selection

- Preferred vein: median cubital, then cephalic, then basilic (basilic last — near the brachial artery and median nerve).
- Avoid: mastectomy-side arm, hematoma, IV/infusion arm, scarred/burned sites.

Common Errors & Fixes

- Hemolysis: vigorous mixing, small-gauge needle, drawing from a line — redraw.
- Hematoma: needle through the vein — release tourniquet, remove, apply pressure.
- Missed vein: reposition slightly; limit to 2 attempts before escalating.

Test-Taking Formula

- Budget checkpoints: ~ 60 items by the 60-minute mark to stay on pace.
- Answer every question — no penalty for guessing on a scaled-score exam; eliminate two distractors first.

Official sources

- NHA — Current NHA Phlebotomy Technician test plan:
<https://info.nhanow.com/hubfs/Test%20Plans/nha-2025-cpt-test-plan.pdf>
- NHA — Pass Rates for NHA Examinations Administered in 2025:
https://www.nhanow.com/docs/default-source/annual-pass-rates/nha-annual-pass-rates-2025.pdf?sfvrsn=fc76c3a8_1
- NHA — NHA Candidate Handbook:
https://www.nhanow.com/docs/default-source/test-plans/candidate_handbook.pdf?sfvrsn=2dc93c04_8

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/exams/nha-cpt/practice-test