

TCRA SPECIALIZATION EXAMS

CANDIDATE PACKET



Table of Contents:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Standards for Specialization Exams | 2 |
| Specialization Certification Guidelines | 5 |
| Texas Certified Realtime Reporter (TCRR) | 5 |
| Texas Merit Reporter (TMR) | 6 |
| Texas CART Certification Exam | 8 |
| Rules and Regulations | 10 |
| Exam Instructions | 11 |
| General (All Exams) | 11 |
| Texas Certified Realtime Reporter (TCRR) | 11 |
| Texas Merit Reporter (TMR) | 11 |
| Texas CART Certification Exam | 12 |
| Grading Guidelines | 13 |
| Texas Certified Realtime Reporter (TCRR) | 13 |
| Texas Merit Reporter (TMR) | 14 |
| Texas CART Certification Exam | 15 |

STANDARDS FOR SPECIALIZATION EXAMS

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Section 1 – Policy Statement

These standards for certification of specialization exams are established by the Texas Court Reporters Association Specialization Exams Committee. The standards require that individuals certified by the Texas Court Reporters Association Specialization Exams Committee possess an enhanced level of skill and expertise.

Section 2 - Definitions

As used in these Standards:

- (A) “Applicant” refers to both a certification and recertification applicant unless specifically stated otherwise.
- (B) “Application” is a generic term and refers to all forms used in the examination application process.
- (C) “Association” means the Texas Court Reporters Association.
- (D) “Board of Directors” refers to the composition of the TCRA Officers and Directors.
- (E) “Specialization Exams Committee” refers to the composition of professional TCRA members who hold various certifications, the Chair of which is appointed by the TCRA President.
- (F) “CE” refers to Continuing Education.
- (G) “CRCB” means the Texas Court Reporters Certification Board.
- (H) “CSR” refers to a Certified Shorthand Reporter certified by the Supreme Court of Texas.
- (I) “Equivalency” refers to a national, federal, or other state certification that is equal or similar in achievement as the specialization exam.
- (J) “Exam” refers to the certification examination.
- (K) “TCRA” means the Texas Court Reporters Association.

Section 3 - Authority

The authority to certify and revoke certification is vested in the Specialization Exams Committee as approved by the Texas Court Reporters Association Board of Directors. Certification by the Specialization Exams Committee is not intended to, and shall not be

interpreted to, preempt nor usurp the authority of the court reporter licensing agency for the State of Texas.

Section 4 – Requirements for Certification

In order to obtain certification, an Applicant must meet all eligibility requirements and examination requirements.

Section 5 - Requirements to Maintain Certification

In order to maintain certification status, individuals shall maintain a continuous TCRA membership and maintain a Texas CSR license in good standing, if applicable.

Section 6 - Expiration of Certification

Certification of any specialization exam shall expire upon non-payment of TCRA membership dues.

Section 7 - Revocation of Certification

Any certification may be revoked upon verification of professional misconduct or unethical conduct as set forth in the rules and statutes governing certified shorthand reporters in the State of Texas; failure to maintain specialization exam certification requirements; or by any other means as set forth in the bylaws or policies and procedures of TCRA.

Section 8 – Application for Specialization Exam

An individual seeking certification must file an Application for Specialization Exam with the required fee. A Confirmation of Registration will be sent to Applicant upon receipt of payment and eligibility status of Applicant.

All applicants seeking a waiver shall provide verification of equivalent certification(s) at the time of filing for Application for Specialization Exam. *See Section 10*

Section 9 - Re-Application for Specialization Exam

Where applicable, Application for Specialization Exam must be made within 365 days of the failed portion of the exam in order to retain any and all grades of the exam passed. All eligibility requirements must be met upon re-application.

Section 10 – Application for Waiver

The Specialization Exams Committee may waive testing requirements upon verification of Applicant's eligibility for the specified exam, verification of equivalent certification(s), review of Applicant's credentials, if applicable, and upon payment of required fee. A copy of the equivalent certification must have the applicant's name, address and expiration date of equivalent certification.

Section 11 – Eligibility

All Applicants must meet the mandatory eligibility requirements for each specialization exam as contained in the *Specialization Certification Guidelines*.

Section 12 – Fees

Applicants shall timely pay all fees as established by the Specialization Exams Committee and approved by the TCRA Board of Directors.

Section 13 – Forms

Applications, forms, documents and examinations involved in the certification and renewal of certification process shall be approved by the Specialization Exams Committee.

Section 14 – Examination Location

All specialization exams shall be conducted in such location and on such date as set by the Specialization Exams Committee and approved by the TCRA Board of Directors.

Section 15 – Improper Conduct

If the TCRA Board of Directors determines that an Applicant engaged in improper or unethical conduct during the exam process or misrepresented any material fact requested, the Applicant will automatically be prohibited from filing any Application for Specialization Exam or any future Application for Specialization Exam.

Section 16 – Examination Results

All examination results will be mailed to Applicant within four to six weeks following the examination.

Section 17 – Cancellations

If cancellation of an examination is given by TCRA, a Notice of Cancellation will be given to all Applicants within 48 hours of an examination date.

Cancellations by Applicants must be made at least seven (7) days prior to the examination date. After cancellation deadline, no refunds will be given. A non-refundable processing fee of \$35 will be held by TCRA.

SPECIALIZATION CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

Texas Certified Realtime Reporter (TCRR)

- A. **Certification:** To certify Texas reporters by an Exam Committee of his/her peers that the reporter possesses an enhanced level of skills, knowledge, and experience required to make a realtime verbatim record in this state and that the reporter possesses a professional membership in the Texas Court Reporters Association while earning continuing education to advance his/her knowledge in all aspects of reporting that go above and beyond those required by statute.
- B. **Eligibility:**
1. **Mandatory Requirements**
 - a. Texas Certified Shorthand Reporter in good standing; and
 - b. TCRA Professional Member in good standing with dues paid in full
 2. **Examination Waiver**

The Specialization Exams Committee may honor an applicant's equivalent certification(s) after review of applicant's credentials and determining that the applicant currently holds an equivalent certification and meets all eligibility requirements.
- C. **Machine Exam (skills):**
1. **Administration of Exam:** Audio or Oral
 2. **Exam Content:** Q&A @ 200 wpm
 3. **Duration of Exam:** Seven (7) minutes. Applicants will be graded on a five (5) minute segment pre-selected by the Exam Committee. Applicants will not be told where the five minute segment begins/ends.
 4. **Accuracy Percentage for Certification:** 96% or higher accuracy
- D. **Requirements to Maintain Certification:**
1. Maintain continuous Professional Membership in TCRA in good standing; and
 2. Maintain Texas Certified Shorthand Reporter license in good standing

SPECIALIZATION CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

Texas Merit Reporter (TMR)

- A. **Certification:** To certify Texas reporters by an Exam Committee of his/her peers that the reporter possesses an enhanced level of skills, knowledge, and experience required to make a verbatim record in this state and that the reporter possesses a Texas Certified Shorthand Reporter (CSR) certification and maintains a professional membership in the Texas Court Reporters Association while earning continuing education to advance his/her knowledge in all aspects of reporting that go above and beyond those required by statute.
- B. **Eligibility:**
1. **Mandatory Requirements**
 - a. Texas Certified Shorthand Reporter in good standing, practicing for three (3) years continuous; and
 - b. TCRA Professional Member in good standing with dues paid in full.
 2. **Examination Waiver**

The Specialization Exams Committee may honor an applicant's equivalent certification(s) after review of applicant's credentials and determining that the applicant currently holds an equivalent certification and meets all eligibility requirements.
- C. **Knowledge Exam (administered online):**
1. **Administration of Exam:** Online exam of 100 multiple-choice questions. [The online exam will not be given on the same day as the machine (skills) exam. The online exam is to be taken by the applicant at any time prior to or after the machine (skills) exam.]
 2. **Knowledge Exam Content:**
 - a. Texas Rules and Statutes relating to the duties and responsibilities of reporters
 - b. English, including grammar, punctuation and spelling
 - c. Medical, legal and technical terminology
 - d. Record production and management
 3. **Time Allowed for Completion:** 1 hour in total
 4. **Accuracy Percentage for Certification:** 70% or higher
- D. **Machine Exam (skills):**
1. **Administration of Exam:** Audio or Oral
 2. **Exam Content:**
 - a. Literary @ 200 wpm
 - b. Jury Charge @ 240 wpm
 - c. Testimony/Q&A @ 260 wpm
 3. **Duration of Exam Segments:** Five (5) minutes

4. **Time Allowed for Completion of Transcription:** 1 hour per segment
[Three hours total]
 5. **Accuracy Percentage for Certification:** Each 5-minute exam must be passed with 95% or higher. This exam may be passed in segments.
- E. **Requirements to Maintain Certification and/or any part thereof:**
1. Maintain continuous Professional Membership in TCRA in good standing;
and
 2. Maintain Texas Certified Shorthand Reporter license in good standing
- F. **Re-Application for Examination:**
If applicant fails either the Knowledge Exam or any segment of the Machine Exam, he/she may re-apply for testing of the failed exam without taking both exams if all eligibility requirements are met. All eligibility requirements must be met upon re-application. The Reporter will not receive Texas Merit Reporter (TMR) certification until the Knowledge Exam and all segments of the Machine Exam are passed.

SPECIALIZATION CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

Texas CART Certification Exam

NOTE: The following are the new Guidelines effective 2016

The Texas CART Certification Exam is a two-part exam consisting of a Written Knowledge Test (WKT) and a Skills Test (SKT).

Eligibility:

Mandatory Requirements:

- a. Texas Certified Shorthand Reporter in good standing; and
- b. TCRA Professional Member in good standing with dues paid in full.

Skills Exam:

The CART exam consists of a six-minute skills exam, dictated (live or oral) at the following speeds:

Minutes 1-2, 180 wpm (Entry Level)

Minutes 3-4, 190 to 200 wpm, varying speeds (Advanced Level)

Minutes 5-6, 210 wpm (Master Level)

Each two-minute section is graded separately, but the exam candidate must pass the preceding two-minute section in order to qualify for the succeeding level. For example, if one passes Entry and Master Levels, but not Advanced Level, that candidate receives an Entry Level certification.

The exam will be graded using the TCRA CART Grading Guidelines. A 96% accuracy rate is required to pass the Skills Exam. Results will be emailed to the exam candidates within two weeks.

The text of the exam will be taken from an actual CART assignment and only minimal prep material (such as the subject of the exam and proper names) *may* be given to the exam candidates.

There are at least four elements that will be included in the exam dictation, as follows:

1. Ability to fingerspell
2. Conflict resolution
3. Accuracy in writing numbers
4. Ability to write email addresses and/or websites

The exam may be written in mixed case (upper/lower case) or in all-capital text. It is your responsibility to know how to alter the text case within your specific software.

Having the proper equipment and functional knowledge of your software, saving or verifying that a file is on your removable media, etc., are all integral parts of the examination. Anyone found asking for or receiving assistance from another exam candidate is subject to automatic failure.

Any STENO in file will result in automatic failure. It is your responsibility to know your specific software to ensure no raw steno is output.

Written Knowledge Test

The Written Knowledge Test is a 45-minute, 50-question, multiple-choice test based on, but not limited to, the following areas of knowledge needed to perform the duties of a CART provider. [The online exam will not be given on the same day as the machine (skills) exam. The online exam is to be taken by the applicant at any time prior to or after the machine (skills) exam.]

A candidate must pass with a score of 70% or higher.

- Sec. 1 - 25% General CART Questions
- Sec. 2 - 10% Punctuation/Grammar**
- Sec. 3 - 25% Deaf/deaf/HOH Sensitivity (Ethics)
- Sec. 4 - 15% Delivery method (Display Options/Remote CART options)
- Sec. 5 - 25% Spelling and Vocabulary

Certification

Certification will be achieved after both the Skills Test and Written Knowledge Test have been passed. The level passed on the Skills Test, in addition to passing the Written Knowledge Test, will determine the level of certification achieved.

Once you have achieved a certain level of certification, you may continue to re-take the Texas CART Certification Exam to achieve a higher level. If your re-exam grade results in a lower certification level, your highest certification level to date will stand.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

The knowledge and machine exams are the exclusive property of the Texas Court Reporters Association. No part of the examination may be copied or reproduced in whole or in part by any means whatsoever, unless authorized by TCRA.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO APPLICANTS:

* Applicants are prohibited from using any electronic devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, audio sync, Bluetooth, wireless connections, digital recorders, and cell phones.

Exceptions: electronic devices used prior to testing for individual warm-up are allowed until instructed to be removed from the testing room; and wireless connections used for transmitting steno to applicant's computer (i.e., StenoCast) is acceptable as long as all "recording" connections are disabled

* Applicants shall disable their computer's microphone.

* Exam Monitors have the right to inspect an applicant's equipment

* By signing in on exam day, you acknowledge that you understand and agree to abide by these Rules and Regulations. Failure to follow these or any TCRA specialization exam rules and regulations, instructions, or guidelines may result in your automatic failure and being barred from taking TCRA-administered exams.

Equipment and Transcripts:

1. No instruction will be given on how to operate your equipment.
2. TCRA and the exam site assume no responsibility for an applicant's equipment.
3. Additional transcription time will not be allowed, period, if the exam requires transcription.
4. Applicants must label their steno machine disk or other removable media with their ID# given at the exam site.
5. No instruction will be given on how to produce your transcript or how to create an ASCII file for those exams that require an ASCII.
6. Applicants must perform all functions relating to transcript production or ASCII creation on his/her own.
7. Applicants must bring steno machine; security keys; software; laptop computer; printer, if producing a transcript; one 3.5" disk, CD, or other removable media, if creating an ASCII; extension cord and power strip.
8. The exam site will not provide paper for those exams that require printing.
9. Applicants are encouraged to confirm that all equipment is working properly prior to exam date.

EXAM INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL (All Exams):

Applicants **MUST**:

1. Arrive early and have all equipment set up and checked to ensure proper functioning prior to exam.
2. Bring a photo ID.
3. Sign in at exam site.
4. Turn OFF all cell phones prior to entering examination room.
5. Place ID# given at exam site on files and/or removable media when instructed.

Instructions for Texas Certified Realtime Reporter (TCRR) Exam

Exam Format:

1. The format for this exam will be in accordance with the Texas Uniform Format Manual unless otherwise listed below.
2. Your ID# should be in the header or footer position. No other header or footer is allowed except for page numbers.
3. Transcripts must be in mixed case. **Upper case only is NOT allowed on TCRR exam.**
4. Paragraphing is encouraged but not required.
5. An ASCII or PDF will be created by the applicant when instructed by the Examiner in charge.

Exam:

1. A warm-up exam will be given prior to the exam.
2. One file may be used as long as it is clear to the Examiner in charge where the exam actually begins after the warm-up material.
3. At the conclusion of the exam, you **MUST** move away from your steno machine and computer. Failure to do so will be an automatic disqualification and considered cheating.
4. When instructed by the Examiner in charge, you will create an ASCII or PDF, verify your file is on your removable media, and hand it to the Examiner in charge. Be sure your ID# is on your removable media.

Instructions for the Texas Merit Reporter (TMR) Exam

Exam Format:

1. The format for this exam will be in accordance with the Texas Uniform Format Manual unless otherwise listed below.
2. Your ID# should be in the header or footer position. No other header or footer is allowed except for page numbers.
3. You will have three hours total to complete all three segments of exam. No exceptions.
4. You must print your exam and turn into monitor within time allotted.

Exam:

1. A warm-up exam will be given prior to the exam.
2. At the conclusion of the exam, you **MUST** move away from your steno machine and computer until the proctor says you may begin your transcription. Failure to do so will be an automatic disqualification and considered cheating.
3. There will be two printers available on site for printing of **final transcripts only**. When transcription is completed, you will put your ASCII or PDF file transcripts on a CD or USB flash drive, verify your files are on your removable media, and bring it to the Examiner in charge for printing of your final transcripts. If the removable media (CD or flash drive) you provided is blank or is not in one of the appropriate formats (ASCII or PDF), you will only be allowed to try once more to get your appropriately formatted exam files on to the removable media for final printing. If you choose to print your transcripts for proofing, prior to printing your final transcripts, you must bring your own printer.
4. You must bring your own paper for printing.
5. You will be given warnings at 30 minutes remaining, 5 minutes remaining, and 1 minute remaining. When instructed by the Examiner in charge, you will cease transcribing.

Instructions for the Texas CART Certification Exam

Exam Format:

1. The format for this exam will be in accordance with the Texas Uniform Format Manual unless otherwise listed below.
2. Your ID# should be in the header or footer position. No other header or footer is allowed except for page numbers.
3. Transcripts may be in mixed case or upper case for CART exam ONLY.
4. An ASCII or PDF will be created by the applicant when instructed by the Examiner in charge.

Exam:

1. A warm-up exam will be given prior to the exam.
2. One file may be used as long as it is clear to the Examiner in charge where the exam actually begins after the warm-up material.
3. At the conclusion of the exam, you **MUST** move away from your steno machine and computer. Failure to do so will be an automatic disqualification and considered cheating.
4. When instructed by the Examiner in charge, you will create an ASCII or PDF, verify your file is on your removable media, and hand it to the Examiner in charge. Be sure your ID# is on your removable media.

GRADING GUIDELINES FOR TCRR

The following count as ½ point off:

- a. Each incorrect or missing punctuation
Example: Tell me what you did sir.
- b. Each incorrect or missing capitalization
Example: He worked at Ford motor company.
- c. Each untranslate or phonetic that is likely to be readable by a layperson
Example: I had an ace of /HARTS.
Example: Her name was sinder ella.
- d. Each incorrect homophone
Example: Did you eat the plumb?
Example: I herd the doorbell ring.
- e. Each incorrect spacing or word compound
Example: The vehicle did not have enough horse power.
Example: The car would breakdown often.
- f. Each misspelling that is likely to be readable by a layperson
Example: Did the rabbit eat the care ot?

The following count as 1 point off:

- a. Any steno stroke translating as a conflict
Example: Where did they say [they're/their/there] going?
- b. Each omitted word
Example: He was riding the ___ and fell off.
- c. Each added word not dictated
Example: He was were was not going to the store.
- d. Each wrong number
Example: The wreck happened on June 10, 209. (1 error)
- e. Each misplaced period that would materially alter the meaning
- f. Each wrong word
- g. Each contraction read as two words
- h. Two words where read as a contraction
- i. Each misplaced word
- j. Each misspelled word

The following will NOT be counted as errors:

- a. Use of the word “dollars” instead of the \$ symbol.
- b. Use of the word “percent” instead of the % sign.

GRADING GUIDELINES FOR TMR

The following count as 1 point off:

- (1) each wrong word;
- (2) each omitted word;
- (3) each word added by the applicant that was not dictated;
- (4) each contraction interpreted by the applicant as two words;
- (5) two words interpreted by the applicant as a contraction;
- (6) each misplaced word;
- (7) each misplaced period that materially alters the sense of a group of words or a sentence;
- (8) each misspelled word;
- (9) the use of the plural or singular if the opposite was dictated; and
- (10) each wrong number.

GRADING GUIDELINES FOR CART EXAM

Any STENO in transcript will result in an automatic failure!

The following count as ½ point off:

- a. Each incorrect or missing punctuation
Example: Tell me what you did sir.
- b. Each incorrect or missing capitalization
Example: He worked at Ford motor company.
- c. Each incorrect homophone
Example: Did you eat the plumb?
Example: I herd the doorbell ring.
- d. Each incorrect spacing or word compound
Example: The vehicle did not have enough horse power.
Example: The car would breakdown often.
- e. Each misspelling that is likely to be readable by a layperson
Example: Did the rabbit eat the care ot?

The following count as 1 point off:

- a. Any steno stroke translating as a conflict
Example: Where did they say [they're/their/there] going?
- b. Each omitted word
Example: He was riding the _____ and fell off.
- c. Each added word not dictated
Example: He was were was not going to the store.
- d. Each wrong number
Example: The wreck happened on June 10, 209. (1 error)
- e. Each misplaced period that would materially alter the meaning
- f. Each wrong word
- g. Each contraction read as two words
- h. Two words where read as contraction
- i. Each misplaced word
- j. Each misspelled word

The following will NOT be counted as errors:

- a. Use of the word “dollars” instead of the \$ symbol.
- b. Use of the word “percent” instead of the % sign.