



# Candidate Information Bulletin

## Commonwealth of Virginia

### Blaster Examinations

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, anyone who uses explosives, or supervises the loading or firing of explosives, must be certified as either a "restricted" or "unrestricted" blaster as part of the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). The Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) processes all certification applicants for compliance with Section 27-97.2 of the Code of Virginia and is the sole provider of blaster certifications.

The SFMO has contracted with Prometric Inc. to conduct its certification examinations. Your exam will be given by computer. You may test at any Prometric test center in the United States.

#### ***At a glance***

This bulletin describes the process of registering for and taking a Virginia blaster exam. The main steps in this process are listed below. For information about a step, go to the page listed.



#### ***To take an exam***

- 1 Submit the exam registration form on Page 7 to Prometric.
- 2 Once you receive your authorization letter, call Prometric at 800.899.3971 to pay for the exam and schedule an appointment to take your exam.
- 3 Prepare for your exam, using this bulletin and materials from other sources. The content outlines in this guide are the basis for the exams. (See Page 6.)
- 4 Take the scheduled exam, bringing required identification to the test center. (See Page 3.)



#### ***To get answers not provided in this bulletin***

##### **For questions about exams:**

Prometric  
1260 Energy Lane  
St. Paul, MN 55108  
Phone: 800.899.3971  
[www.prometric.com/virginia](http://www.prometric.com/virginia)

##### **For questions about certification:**

**Commonwealth of Virginia  
State Fire Marshal's Office**  
1005 Technology Park Drive  
Glen Allen, VA 23059-4500  
Phone: 804.371.0220  
[www.vafire.com/index.htm](http://www.vafire.com/index.htm)

<b>At a glance.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Registering for your exam .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Scheduling an exam appointment.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Rescheduling an exam.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Virginia test center locations.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Taking your exam .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Testing regulations .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Your exam results .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Appeals process .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Exam content outlines .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Exam Registration Form .....</b>	<b>7</b>

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### ***Registering for your exam***

To register for an exam, you must mail your completed exam registration form (on Page 7) to Prometric. Prometric will process your registration form and send you an approval letter informing you to call Prometric to schedule your exam appointment. This process usually takes 10 business days from the date Prometric receives your registration form.

Be sure to complete all information on the exam registration form accurately and completely as incomplete or illegible forms will delay this process.

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### ***Scheduling an exam appointment***

Once you receive your approval letter, you must call Prometric at 800.899.3971 to schedule an appointment to take your exam and pay your exam fee (\$100 per exam). You may call between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. (Eastern time), Monday through Friday. Please have your Visa or MasterCard information available when you call. Exam registration fees **are not refundable or transferable**.

At the end of the call, you will be given a number confirming your appointment. Record and keep this confirmation number for your records.

**Holidays.** Testing generally does not occur on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

Additional state holidays may be observed in the state where you schedule your exam appointment.

#### **Special consideration**

**ADA accommodation.** If you require testing accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please call Prometric at 888.226.9406 to obtain an accommodation request form. Reasonable testing accommodations are provided to allow candidates with documented disabilities recognized under the ADA an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

You will need to submit professional documentation of your disability to help us determine the necessary testing arrangements. Thirty days' advance notice is required for all special testing arrangements. There is no additional charge for these accommodations.

**ESL note.** If English is your second language, please note that a language barrier is not considered a disability.

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### ***Rescheduling an exam***

To avoid an additional fee, you must call Prometric at least **three full business days** (does not include weekends and holidays) before the day of your originally scheduled appointment.

Rescheduling fees will apply as follows:

- **No fee** if you reschedule on the fourth business day or sooner prior to your appointment date.
- **\$40 fee** if you reschedule **one to three business days** before your appointment date.
- **Another full examination fee** if you do not take your exam on the scheduled date.



**Note** If you do not pass your exam, you must re-register with Prometric, pay another \$100 exam fee and schedule another exam appointment.

### **If absent or late for your appointment**

If you miss your appointment or arrive late and are not allowed to test, your entire examination fee will be forfeited. You must then re-register with Prometric, pay **another full exam fee** and schedule a new appointment.

If you are unable to attend your scheduled exam due to illness or emergency, call Prometric. Under certain circumstances, the fee to reschedule may be waived. Prometric reserves the right to request documentation to support any illness or emergency claim.

### **Emergency closings**

Severe weather or an emergency could require canceling scheduled exams. If this occurs, Prometric will attempt to contact you by phone or e-mail; however, you may check for testing site closures by calling Prometric. If the site is closed, your exam will be rescheduled without a rescheduling fee.

If a test center is open for testing and you choose not to appear for your appointment, you must re-register with Prometric, pay **another full exam fee** and schedule a new appointment.

## **Virginia test center locations**

You may take your exam at any Prometric test center in the United States. Prometric test center locations convenient to Virginia candidates are listed below. If you would like to test at a site outside of Virginia, you may call 800.853.5448 to find test center locations by zip codes.

Test Sites	Address
<b>Bristol</b> 276.591.1140	14343 Lee Highway, Unit B Bristol, VA 24201
<b>Fairfax</b> 703.204.9060	2810 Old Lee Highway, Suite 100 Fairfax, VA 22031
<b>Glen Allen</b> 804.346.8777	11547 Nuckols Road, Suite B Glen Allen, VA 23059
<b>Lynchburg</b> 434.832.0778	8116 Timberlake Road, Suite 200 Lynchburg, VA 24502
<b>Newport News</b> 757.873.0208	894 J. Clyde Morris Boulevard, Newport News Shopping Center Newport News, VA 23601
<b>Roanoke</b> 540.344.3688	2149 Electric Road Roanoke, VA 24018

## **Taking your exam**

Your exam will be given by computer at a Prometric test center. You do not need any computer experience or typing skill to take your exam. Before you start the exam, you will receive a personalized introduction to the testing system. You can also take an introductory lesson on the computer.

Scores are based on the number of questions answered correctly. You will not be given credit for any question answered incorrectly or left blank. There is no penalty for guessing, so be sure to mark an answer for each question.

**Arrival.** You should arrive at least **30 minutes before** your scheduled exam appointment. This allows time for you to sign in and for staff to verify your identification.

**Identification required.** You must present a valid form of identification before you can test. That identification document **must**:

- Be government-issued (e.g., driver’s license, state-issued identification card, military identification card or passport).
- Contain **both** a current photo (or a physical description) and your signature.
- Have a name that exactly matches the name used to register for the exam (including designations such as “Jr.” and “III”).



**Important** Failure to provide appropriate identification at the time of the exam is considered a missed appointment.

If you cannot provide the identification listed above, contact Prometric **before** scheduling your appointment to arrange an alternative way to meet this requirement.

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## **Testing regulations**

To ensure that all candidates are tested under equally favorable conditions, the following regulations and procedures will be observed at each test center. Failure to follow any of these security procedures may result in disqualification of your examination. Prometric reserves the right to audiotape and videotape any examination session.

### **References**

- Only approved references are allowed during the exam. No handwritten or additional notes (letters, words, diagrams, etc.) are allowed in reference books. Any reference material that has been written in during the exam will be confiscated. Highlighting and permanent tabbing added before your arrival at the test center is acceptable. Post-it® notes are not considered permanent tabbing and will not be allowed.
- If you download the *Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code*, the handbook should be stapled prior to your bringing it to the test center. All rules listed in the previous paragraph apply to the handbook as well. Photocopies of the handbook may **not** be used.
- Reference materials will be checked at the examination site before and after the examinations. Any reference material that has been written in during the exam will be confiscated. Photocopies of reference materials may **not** be used.
- Sharing reference materials is not allowed.
- No other reference materials, papers or study materials are allowed at the test center. If you are found with these or any other aids, you will not be allowed to continue the exam and your answers will not be scored.

### **Calculators**

- Candidates may bring a silent, handheld, solar or battery-operated, nonprogrammable calculator (without paper tape-printing capabilities or alphabetic keypads) to use during the exam.

### **Personal items**

We recommend that you avoid bringing personal items to the test center. Note the following:

- Electronic equipment—cell phones, PDAs, pagers, cameras, tape recorders, laptops, etc.—is not permitted in the testing area.
- Pocket items—keys, wallet, etc.—must remain in your pocket during testing.
- Other personal items—digital watches, outerwear that is not being worn while testing (sweater, jacket, etc.), briefcases, purses, etc.—are not permitted in the testing room.

- Breaks**
  - If you leave the testing room while an exam is in progress, you must sign out/in on the roster and you will lose exam time.
  - You are not allowed to use any electronic devices or phones during breaks.
- Visitors**
  - No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the testing area.
- Misconduct or disruptive behavior**
  - Candidates who engage in any kind of misconduct or disruptive or offensive behavior may be dismissed from the examination. Examples are: giving or receiving help, sharing supplies, taking part in an act of impersonation, removing test materials or notes from the testing room, using rude or offensive language and behavior that delays or interrupts testing.
- Weapons**
  - Weapons are not allowed at the test center.

**If questions arise.** Test center administrators are not allowed to answer any questions pertaining to the exam content. If you do not understand a question on the exam, you should answer the question to the best of your ability.

**Copyrighted questions.** All test questions are the copyrighted property of Prometric Inc. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these test questions by any means, in whole or in part, without our written permission. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties, including up to five years in prison and/or a \$250,000 fine for criminal violations.

## ***Your exam results***

At the end of your exam, your score will be shown on the screen and you will receive a printed score report. The report will indicate **Pass** or **Fail**. Exam results are confidential and will be revealed only to the applicant and the SFMO.

**Passing score.** A score of 75 percent or above is required to pass each exam. Once you pass your exam, you should contact the SFMO for information on completing the Application for Certification as a Blaster.

**Retake information.** If you do not pass the exam, you must complete the exam registration process again, including mailing another exam registration form to Prometric.

## ***Appeals process***

Our goal is to provide a quality exam and a pleasant testing experience for every candidate. If you are dissatisfied with either and believe we can correct the problem, we would like to hear from you. We provide an opportunity for general comments at the end of your exam. Your comments will be reviewed by our personnel, but you will not receive a direct response.

If you are requesting a response about exam content, registration, scheduling or test administration (testing site procedures, equipment, personnel, etc.), please submit an appeal in writing. Your appeal letter must provide your name and Social Security number, the exam title, the date you tested and the details of your concern, including all relevant facts. Be sure to include your signature and return address. Mail your appeal letter to:

**Prometric**  
**ATTN: Appeals Committee**  
 1260 Energy Lane  
 St. Paul, MN 55108

**EXAM CONTENT OUTLINES**

The Appeals Committee will review your concern and send you a written response within 10 business days of receipt. **Faxed appeals are not accepted** because an original signature is required.

**Exam content outlines**

This section contains the content outlines for the Virginia Restricted and Unrestricted Blaster exams. Both exams are open-book. They consist of multiple-choice questions with all questions weighted equally. You will have three hours to complete each exam. A score of 75 percent or above is required to pass each exam.

The outlines list all topics covered in each exam and the percentage of questions asked about each topic.

**Exam references.** The references listed in the content outlines were used to develop the exams. You are allowed to use these references during the exam.

An extract version of the *Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code* may be obtained from either of the following sources:

- The Virginia Department of Fire Programs Bookstore. For information on making an online or FAX purchase, contact the Bookstore at 804.249.1976. Ask specifically for the "2006 SFPC for Explosives and Fireworks Handbook."
- Online at [www.vafire.com/state\\_fire\\_marshall/explosive\\_and\\_fireworks.htm](http://www.vafire.com/state_fire_marshall/explosive_and_fireworks.htm). Under "Publications," click on the link titled "2006 SFPC for Explosives and Fireworks." Please be aware of the testing regulations on references found on Page 4 of this bulletin.

**Virginia Restricted Blaster Exam  
Open Book, 32 questions, 2 hours**

**Scope** – Any person engaging in the use of explosives or blasting agents utilizing five pounds (2.25 kg) or less per blasting operation and using instantaneous detonators.

Subject Area	Percentage
Safety: Handling, Security, Electricity and Regulation	44
Storage: Magazines and Housekeeping	28
Shot Loading and Records	12
Certification	9
Transportation	6

**References**

The following materials were used to create exam questions and **are allowed** in the exam room.

1. *Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code "SFPC"* (2006 Edition), Effective May 1, 2008, International Code Council (ICC), 4051 West Flossmoor Road, Country Club Hills, IL 60478-5795, [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org).
2. *NFPA 495: Explosive Materials Code*, 2006 Edition, National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101, [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).

**Virginia Unrestricted Blaster Exam  
Open Book, 52 questions, 2 hours**

**Scope** – Any person engaging in the use of explosives or blasting agents without limit to the amount of explosives or type of detonator.

Subject Area	Percentage
Design: Preparation and Records	46
Safety: Handling, Security, Electricity and Regulations	27
Storage: Magazines, Clear, Inventory and Clean	23
Transportation	4

**References**

The following materials were used to create exam questions and **are allowed** in the exam room.

1. *Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code "SFPC"* (2006 Edition), Effective May 1, 2008, International Code Council (ICC), 4051 West Flossmoor Road, Country Club Hills, IL 60478-5795, [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org).
2. *NFPA 495: Explosive Materials Code*, 2006 Edition, National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101, [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).
3. *ISEE Blasters' Handbook*, Seventeenth Edition, 1998, International Society of Explosives Engineers, The Blaster's Library, 30325 Bainbridge Road, Cleveland, OH 44139-2295, [www.isee.org](http://www.isee.org).

# Exam Registration Form



## Virginia Restricted and Unrestricted Blaster exams

This application must be completed and mailed to: Prometric, ATTN: VA Blaster Program, 1260 Energy Lane, St. Paul, MN 55108.

Once you receive your approval letter, you must call Prometric to schedule an appointment to take your exam and pay your exam fee (\$100 per exam).

### Candidate Information

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Driver's License Number
Street Address (including Apt. number or P.O. Box, if applicable)			
City		State	ZIP Code
Daytime Phone Number (including area code) (       )		Evening Phone Number (including area code) (       )	
<input type="checkbox"/> This the first time I am taking this exam. <input type="checkbox"/> I am retaking this exam			

### Exam Selection

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Exam Selection</b>
	Virginia Restricted Blaster
	Virginia Unrestricted Blaster

### Signature of Candidate

By signing this form, I understand that I am responsible for making sure all of the information provided is completely true and correct. I understand that if information given is not true, my registration status may be jeopardized or my test scores may be invalidated.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Keep a copy of this registration form for your records.)