

PREPARING FOR THE PLS EXAM - 2012

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(1) **WHAT'S NEW?** - The 2012 CA PLS Exam will use computer based testing (CBT). The national (PS) exam will still use the conventional paper and pencil format.

- (A) Friday - April 13 - The PS exam contains 100 multiple-choice questions. It lasts 6 hours and is split into a 4-hour morning session (67 questions) and a 2-hour afternoon session (33 questions). The PS exam uses USCS measurements.
- (B) The PS exam is open-book. You can bring bound reference materials to the exam. They must remain bound during the exam. Place any loose papers in 3-ring binders, brads, plastic snap binders, spiral-bound notebooks, and screw posts. Staples are not allowed. Any sticky notes or flags must be attached to book pages.
- (C) Monday - April 23 - An all multiple choice answer format for the 4-hour CA PLS exam.

(2) **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IN CLASS**

- (A) NOTE the instructor's name and phone number in case you want to call with a follow up question afterwards.
- (B) TAKE notes, keeping them brief and clear. Write down all formulas given (and know how to use them!) Get the main points and enhance the notes later when you're away from class. Be sure to do this before you forget what was discussed.
- (C) DON'T get behind the class pace by trying to understand everything; take the notes but **keep up**.
- (D) KEEP your notes in order; organization is important and it will pay off later.
- (D) Make note of any questions which you may want to ask the instructor. *The only dumb question is the one that didn't get asked.*

(3) **DON'T** think that you're going to "know it all" when you take the exam... nobody does. If you've worked hard and studied a lot, you'll be ready for it.

(4) **COMMIT TO STUDYING A LOT IN THE COMING DAYS**

(A) ATTENDING this class will not make you pass the exam if all you do is attend.

(B) YOU must be willing to work hard... be really dedicated to studying land surveying for the next three weeks.

(C) DO as many of the old exam questions as possible.

(D) TALK to the other surveyors you know if you have a question. Tap all of your information sources. Try not to get hung up on deep conversations; you're just trying to work problems. Don't waste any time!

(E) DISCUSS the importance of your endeavor with your family including your need for their support; they are your partners in this effort. Let them know their support will be a big help and during your studying and during the exam.

(F) Be sure to review the test plan for the CA PLS exam and the NCEES PS exam.

(5) **METHODS OF ORGANIZING YOUR REFERENCE MATERIALS**

(A) DECIDE what materials you will take with you to the exam, and **use these materials** to get thoroughly familiar with them; items such as calculators, reference books and notes, etc. Keep all material together in the same way you will carry it into the exam. You should put everything in a box or crate as you study.

(B) KEEP each subject separate from others. Put all of your class notes, previous exam questions and notes from other sources (which are all on the same topic) in one binder. Don't over-fill your binders so you can turn the pages easily.

(C) LABEL your binders on the front and end with the subjects they contain.

- (D) IF you've worked questions from old exams, file your work with the question in your binder. This organization will pay off.
- (E) REMEMBER that all of your materials must be in a bound book or three-ring binder. Don't put loose papers in or you may lose them to the proctor.
- (F) GET tab markers from office supply store. You may go through several packages; use as many as you think you need. You can also use the sticky post-it notes.
- (G) PUT tabs in your books where you think you need to. As you're reading or skimming, and you think something is worth marking, think about putting a tab there. As you work the problems and you find yourself looking something up, mark that too. If it was worth looking up, it's worth marking. **Fill in the label with whatever makes sense to you, you're the one that has to use it.** Quick reference is the key. Also keep in mind that too many tabs would make you search through a sea of markers before finding what you want; since quick reference is the key, don't overdo it with too many.
- (H) USE a high lighter throughout your reference material as you see necessary. If you looked up something to answer a previous exam question, mark it with your high lighter. Mark the topic and main points or key words only, not the whole paragraph. Also, if you looked something up and highlighted it, consider marking the page with a tab. At the same time, remember not to overdo it or your highlighting won't serve its purpose. Don't be afraid to mark in your books; they're *your* books!
- (I) PUT all of your references and materials in a box or crate, or whatever works good for you. Only one box per person will be allowed into the exam, so spend a little time deciding the most important things to take. Be Sure to take a wrist watch since your cell phone cannot be taken into the exams, and don't forget to take extra batteries for your calculators. Even borrow a friend's calculator as an extra, but only if you know how to use it!

TAKING THE LAND SURVEYORS EXAMINATION

- (A) YOU should go to the exam area the day before the exam. Find out where to park, and where the building is. Consider getting a room close to the exam site and bringing a packed lunch for additional convenience.
- (B) BE sure to bring your driver's license or other picture ID. You will be given paper and pencils to draw sketches you need while taking the exam, we're told. You will also be given a formula page to use during the national NCEES exam. Also, don't forget that calculator.
- (C) DRESS comfortably, in layers. You can adjust how much you're wearing, depending on the room temperature. Most likely, it will be a bit cool.
- (D) ARRIVE at the exam location at least 30 minutes early. This allows for you to find your seat, get set up, and locate and use the restroom. Don't drink too many liquids before going to the exam; your time is too crucial to spend it in the restroom.
- (E) SET your box of references up on the floor, looking down at the binding edge. This allows for quick access to everything.
- (F) PAY close attention to the proctor's instructions and follow them completely. You've worked too hard to lose out at this point for not following instructions!
- (G) THE PS exam is broken into two parts, the morning and afternoon sessions, being four hours and two hours, respectively. The ending time is exactly four hours or exactly two hours after the session begins. Your wrist watch will help you know the remaining time. The CA PLS exam is a single four-hour session.
- (H) As the PS exam is multiple choice, it's reasonable to answer as many questions as you can when just reading thru it the first time. Save the more difficult questions for a second run-thru and even a third. Check your watch after each pass thru the exam to gauge the when to start guessing. Don't turn in your answer sheet with unanswered questions; there is a point where you have to guess at an answer!
- (I) The CA PLS exam is a four-hour open-book test. The place you go to take the exam may differ from the location of NCEES PS exam. Currently there are test centers numbering in the mid-twenties for the CBT. The exam is open-book like the PS exam. It is also a multiple choice exam, at least for now.

- (J) BE careful to thoroughly read the question. You must understand exactly what is required and answer what is requested. Too much speed here could hurt you. If you intend to highlight key points of questions, be sure this is okay with the proctor as the he/she may not want you writing in the exam booklet.
- (K) IF you take two calculators, use them both. You can have a program going in one and use the other for quick calcs or another program. This really speeds you up, so borrow a calculator if you can, but be familiar with it.
- (L) THE questions are not intended to be complicated, tricky or confusing. They are looking for an understanding of a professional concept or procedure. Try to recognize this at the beginning of each question. Don't read more into the question than what is stated.
- (M) THIS is a professional examination and not a party chief's job application. The exam is determining which of you are qualified to recognize and solve land surveying situations that require **specific** experience and knowledge. You are not expected to be an expert land surveyor. You are expected to know procedures, laws, techniques and land surveying principles that are substantially more detailed than what is required of a party chief.
- (N) WHEN you have finished all questions for the session, **don't** get up and leave! Instead, go back through your work and verify your answers. Make sure to check any mathematical calculations, as this is where it's easy to make a mistake.
- (O) DON'T discuss the questions from the morning session with the other candidates during the lunch break. You will probably get no benefit from it and may only serve to confuse yourself about a topic that you might otherwise be confident in. Save your confidence for the afternoon session, and save your discussions of the exam until it is all over.
- (P) EAT a light lunch and take a walk or just rest, which ever would work best for you. If you stay to yourself, you will probably hold your concentration better. Remember to go to the restroom before returning to the exam, and again, don't consume too many liquids. You don't want to spend test time in the restroom.
- (Q) If you've studied hard, prepared good notes and have your reference material indexed, you're nervous but ready. Don't allow distractions to reduce your sharp edge. Good Luck!!

Useful Web Links

CLSA State Web Site

<http://californiasurveyors.org/>

California Laws & Regulations

<http://www.dca.ca.gov/pels/laws.htm>

California Law Codes

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>

BPELSG

<http://www.dca.ca.gov/pels/>

California State Exam Info

http://www.dca.ca.gov/pels/e_exam.htm

PLS License Lookup

[http://www2.dca.ca.gov/pls/wllpub/wllqryna\\$!cev2.startup?p_qte_code=LND&p_qte_pgm_code=7500](http://www2.dca.ca.gov/pls/wllpub/wllqryna$!cev2.startup?p_qte_code=LND&p_qte_pgm_code=7500)

ALTA/ACSM Standards

<http://www.acsm.net/alta.html>

California Land Law (Court Case Links)

<http://members.aol.com/e52berg/pubpage.htm#R>

CALTRANS Geom etronics Info

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/geom etronics/>

National Geodetic Survey

<http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/>

Professional Publications, Inc.

<http://ppi2pass.com/catalog/servlet/MyPpi>

Paul Cuomo Press

<http://www.pcpresinc.com/index.html>

NCEES

<http://www.ncees.org/>

NGS Online Publications

http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/PUBS_LIB/pub_index.html

California Spatial Reference Center

<http://csrc.ucsd.edu/>

USGS

<http://www.usgs.gov/>

National Atlas (Maps Of The U.S.)

<http://www-atlas.usgs.gov/index.html>

BLM

<http://www.blm.gov/nhp/index.htm>

Recommended References

(Bring only references you are familiar with. You do not want to be searching thru material you are not familiar with looking for something you may never find!)

1973 / 2009 Manual of Surveying Instructions (BLM)

Boundary Control & Legal Principles - Brown

Restoration of Lost and Obliterated Corners & Subdivisions of Sections

Writing Legal Descriptions - Gurdon H. Wattles

A Basic Survey Text Book - Moffitt & Bossler or other

Black's Law Dictionary

Definitions of Surveying & Associated Terms - ACSM

1001 Solved Surveying Fundamentals Problems - John Van Sickle

Projection Tables CCS NAD 83 - Ira & Robert Alexander

Construction Surveying and Layout - Wesley G. Crawford

Elements of Photogrammetry - Paul Wolf

Ethics for the Professional Land Surveyor - Dennis Mouland

GPS for Land Surveyors - John Van Side

Global Positioning System and GIS - An Introduction - Michael Kennedy

Land Surveying Law - John Keen

Water Boundaries - Latest Edition - George Cole

HP Calculator Help Websites

<http://www.softwarebydzn.com/>

<http://www.hp33surveyor.com/>

<http://homepage.mac.com/nwjh/>

Don't forget your extra Batteries