FREE PRACTICE QUESTIONS · 404C

TWELVE FREE RED SEAL PAINTER AND DECORATOR PRACTICE QUESTIONS.

Edited by Trevor Mulder · Sources: Red Seal Program · Last checked October 27, 2026

Twelve 404C Painter and Decorator questions in the format of the Red Seal exam: four options, one correct answer, no trick questions. They are free to use, print and share. There is nothing to sign up for on this page.

01 How to use these

The questions come from the TicketPrep 404C bank and are spread across the exam's work activities in the order and roughly the proportion the Red Seal Program publishes for this trade: A (performs common occupational skills), B (prepares surfaces), C (prepares and applies residential, institutional and commercial paints, coatings and finishes), D (prepares and applies wall coverings), E (prepares and applies wood finishes), F (prepares and applies industrial paints and coatings). Answer each one before opening the explanation. Every explanation covers all four options, because, in the Red Seal Program's words, the incorrect options on the exam are not always obvious, and knowing *why* they are wrong is most of the skill.

- **Pace.** The Red Seal Exam Preparation Guide gives four hours of writing time; for the 130 questions on this exam that is about 1 min 51 s per question. Try these at that pace.
- **Print.** The printed version shows the questions and the answer key without the explanations, so it works as a handout. The explanations are on the web page.
- **Mark.** The Red Seal Exam Preparation Guide gives the pass mark as 70 percent; nine of twelve here is the same bar.

02 The questions

Q1 · RECALL · PERFORMS COMMON OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

A painter puts on a half-facepiece respirator with organic-vapour cartridges, covers the cartridge inlets with the palms and breathes in gently. What shows that the facepiece is sealed?

A. The facepiece bulges out slightly and holds.

B. The exhalation valve opens with each breath in.

C. Air is drawn in easily through the cartridges.

D. The facepiece pulls in slightly and stays in.

Q2 · PROCEDURAL · PERFORMS COMMON OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

A painter will spray a solvent-borne alkyd enamel on doors in a ventilated shop, and the SDS calls for an air-purifying respirator. Which cartridge set-up suits the job?

A. Particulate filters fitted on their own.

B. Acid-gas cartridges with particulate pre-filters.

C. Organic-vapour cartridges with no pre-filters.

D. Organic-vapour cartridges plus pre-filters.

Q3 · PROCEDURAL · PREPARES SURFACES

The flaking exterior trim on a house built in the 1950s is to be scraped and sanded before repainting. Nothing is known about the old paint. What is the first step?

A. Mist the trim with water and start scraping.

B. Lay drop cloths and dry-scrape by hand only.

C. Soften the paint with a heat gun to avoid dust.

D. Have the old paint tested for lead.

Q4 · PROCEDURAL · PREPARES SURFACES

Old oil paint that has tested free of lead is being removed from wood window trim with a heat gun. At what point is each section scraped?

A. As soon as the paint softens and blisters.

B. After the paint cools and turns brittle.

C. Once the paint begins to smoke and darken.

D. After stripper is brushed over the hot paint.

Q5 · RECALL · PREPARES AND APPLIES RESIDENTIAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMERCIAL PAINTS, COATINGS AND FINISHES

In a can of paint, which component holds the pigment particles together in the dried film and makes the film stick to the surface?

A. The binder.

B. The drier.

C. The solvent.

D. The pigment.

Q6 · RECALL · PREPARES AND APPLIES RESIDENTIAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMERCIAL PAINTS, COATINGS AND FINISHES

A painter says a white paint hides well because one coat covers a grey primer completely. Which component of the paint gives it that hiding power?

A. The solvent.

B. The pigment.

C. The vehicle.

D. The binder.

Q7 · RECALL · PREPARES AND APPLIES WALL COVERINGS

Size is brushed onto a porous plaster wall before wall covering is hung. What does the size do?

A. Seals ink and water stains so they cannot bleed.

B. Fills small dents and scratches in the plaster.

C. Keeps the plaster from soaking up the adhesive.

D. Neutralizes free lime left in the new plaster.

Q8 · RECALL · PREPARES AND APPLIES WALL COVERINGS

Ballpoint ink and permanent-marker scribbles cover a classroom wall that will receive a light paper-backed vinyl. What goes on the marks before the wall-covering primer?

A. A stain-blocking primer.

B. A coat of size.

C. A skim of patching compound.

D. A wash of TSP and warm water.

Q9 · RECALL · PREPARES AND APPLIES WOOD FINISHES

Before a water-based stain goes on new red oak handrails, the painter wipes the wood with a damp sponge and lets it dry. Why?

A. To draw tannins out so they cannot bleed later.

B. To swell the pores shut so less stain is absorbed.

C. To slow the stain's drying for a longer working time.

D. To lift loose fibres so they can be sanded off first.

Q10 · PROCEDURAL · PREPARES AND APPLIES WOOD FINISHES

A penetrating oil-based stain on the first of twelve pine cabinet doors has come out blotchy, with dark patches beside light ones. What is done to the remaining doors before they are stained?

A. Seal with a pigmented stain-blocking primer.

B. Fill the grain with paste wood pore filler.

C. Sand with coarser abrasive to open the wood.

D. Apply a wash coat or wood conditioner.

Q11 · RECALL · PREPARES AND APPLIES INDUSTRIAL PAINTS AND COATINGS

A two-component epoxy for a reservoir's steel hatch comes as a base and a hardener. What does the hardener do?

A. It reacts with the base so the film cures.

B. It speeds the evaporation of the solvent.

C. It thins the base to a sprayable consistency.

D. It keeps the pigment in the base from settling.

Q12 · RECALL · PREPARES AND APPLIES INDUSTRIAL PAINTS AND COATINGS

Why is the wet film of an unthinned epoxy applied thicker than the dry film the specification calls for?

A. The extra allows for sanding between the coats.

B. Wet film gauges read low against dry film gauges.

C. Solvent evaporates and only the solids remain.

D. Its film shrinks by half as the hardener reacts.

03 Answer key

QUESTION	ANSWER	WORK ACTIVITY
Q1	D	Performs common occupational skills
Q2	D	Performs common occupational skills
Q3	D	Prepares surfaces
Q4	A	Prepares surfaces
Q5	A	Prepares and applies residential, institutional and commercial paints, coatings and finishes
Q6	B	Prepares and applies residential, institutional and commercial paints, coatings and finishes
Q7	C	Prepares and applies wall coverings
Q8	A	Prepares and applies wall coverings
Q9	D	Prepares and applies wood finishes
Q10	D	Prepares and applies wood finishes
Q11	A	Prepares and applies industrial paints and coatings
Q12	C	Prepares and applies industrial paints and coatings

04 More free questions

For the 404C exam itself, the 404C exam guide covers the work activities, their weights and how the exam is scored, and the 404C Painter and Decorator practice exam page describes the full TicketPrep 404C question bank. The same free format is available for the other 17 trades, plus the free guides on the pass mark, question counts, exam day and how to study.

310S
Automotive Service Technician questions

310T
Truck and Coach Technician questions

309A
Electrician questions

403A
Carpenter questions

421A
Heavy Duty Equipment Technician questions

332A
Hairstylist questions

433A
Industrial Mechanic Millwright questions

313A
Refrigeration & AC Systems Mechanic questions

415A
Cook questions

307A
Steamfitter/Pipefitter questions

456A
Welder questions

306A
Plumber questions

429A
Machinist questions

442A
Industrial Electrician questions

240P
Parts Technician questions

420B · 420A · 452A
Ironworker questions

308A
Sheet Metal Worker questions

HUB
All free practice questions

GUIDES
The Red Seal exam, explained

How these questions are written and checked: how our questions are made. Found a mistake? Tell us and we will fix it.

05 Questions by exam block

Working on one part of the 404C exam? Each block has its own page with five more free questions, the tasks the block covers and their weights.

BLOCK A · 15.4% OF THE EXAM
Safety, Tools & Access

BLOCK B · 23.1% OF THE EXAM
Surface Preparation

BLOCK C · 23.8% OF THE EXAM
Paints & Coatings

BLOCK D · 6.9% OF THE EXAM
Wall Coverings

BLOCK E · 8.5% OF THE EXAM
Wood Finishing

BLOCK F · 22.3% OF THE EXAM
Industrial Coatings