

Just a note from me:

Hi!!

Of course I glad to share this info. Also, we all have to work together and help each other...that's what it's all about...ya know..."pay it forward"... we all should try!!

This is really good information. I hope it helps you. It is the listing that a woman named Arlene "and Company" put together after the exam in May. She did a really good job and I appreciate that she and the others took the time to do this so that we can prepare more efficiently! Also I am including some study tips. One is from Roz on the SHRM BB, the other is from Michael Losey, former President and CEO of SHRM. They are great and I think will be beneficial in studying and taking the exam. Also included are exam day tips from Mr. Losey and GK from the SHRM Bulletin Board.

Nick has also given much insight on topics which are important for HR. He has taken a great deal of time reviewing his study materials and presenting his insights. He has graciously included his e-mail address if you would like to contact him directly.

Now added to the document are additional study materials from Roz, Jamie, and many others who took the exam in December, 2002. There is no specific information that is on the exam. This is just a really good study guide which will help you begin to prepare for the exam and obtain a good HR info foundation.

NOTE: Many Thanks to all of those who participated in compiling this information.

Also, read the SHRM Bulletin Board. You will find invaluable information on the board...as well as many great HR people who are willing to listen, help, answer questions and just generally "be there" for encouragement. Also, there is a Study Group on Yahoo. Go to Yahoo and search for "SPHR". It will show up in the search listing and you can write and request to be added to the Group. It is GREAT!! I have never met a group of people so willing to help and work together so that all will have the information review to prepare for the exam, as well as information to "just" be a better HR person!! GK, Roz, Jamie, many others, have really good information that they post with sites to study from as well. I am not sure how long the Group will be able to accept new members since the exam is being given in May, which isn't too far away!

Another excellent source of information are the SHRM White Papers and the tool kits/information which are available on the SHRM site. Be sure to utilize these. The information is them is invaluable.

As I said, this is a really good study guide. It is not a listing of questions from the exams, nor is it specific information regarding the exams. It is an outline put together by those studying for the exams and by those who have assisted in study groups. It is compiled to be a listing of the many of the major HR topics that we all deal with each day. It is a very

useful tool for daily information, as well as a preparation guide for studying for the certification exams. Please feel free to share it with others.

Of course, as you know, the exam questions are multiple choice. There are scenario questions in the SHRM Learning System books. Read those and answer them. It will get you prepared to read information and then answer questions pertaining to the information you have read.

One test taking tip from me...since everyone has covered the other ones. When I took it there were several people there who took a hi-liter to mark their test books for the questions that they wanted to go back and review. I thought that was a really good idea because it shows up better than a pencil mark. The earplugs helped me a lot too. You never know when you are going to be sitting beside someone who pops their gum or shuffles their feet as they concentrate on answering those questions!

Write if you want and if you find anything that you think would be helpful...please remember me too. My e-mail address is AllenaK7@aol.com. Please put Certification Questions/Information or something like that in the "Subject" line, as I generally delete things that I don't know who they are from or what they pertain to.

Also, try HRCF info... address is www.hrcf.com It is \$285.00 with the flash cards and the information is very good, and worth checking on.

Good Luck and Happy Studying!!! Allena

Key Phrases, Ideas and Topics
SPHR/PHR Testing May 2003
Final Draft 2-1-03

Immigration/International Employees

- Visas - know types of visas and what privileges for work are covered by each
- H1B visa - know what occupations are covered and what the rules are for hiring individuals with H1B visas
- If a company closes, what happens to employees with H1B status?
- Understand host national, local national, etc.
- Compensation methods for expatriates and the benefits/drawbacks
- Foreign Corrupt Practices Act
www.sec.gov/news/testimony/testarchive/1998/tsty1198.txt
- Restrictions imposed by foreign countries on bringing employees in from other countries (including US) vs. hiring local nationals
- What social and/or family conditions need to be considered when assigning employees to work in other countries?
- What is overlooked by most companies in the expatriation and repatriation processes?
- Do expatriates need more or less HR support?

Employment/Hiring

- Requesting ethnicity info from prospective hires
- Voluntary or mandatory for candidates to supply ethnic info?
- Employer obligation when receiving a resume with picture and date of birth or other potentially discriminatory information
- When can employers request I-9 verification documents of prospective or new employees?
- What should an employer do if the employee doesn't produce the documents within 72 hours.
- Is a receipt for documents sufficient for hiring? Within what time limit must an employee produce actual documents?
- Retention requirements for I-9
- Rehiring former employees and I-9 requirements
- What questions are appropriate and legal to ask in an interview?
- Employment at will doctrine and exceptions to employment at will
- Non compete agreements
- Reference checking - are employees obligated to give references?
- Negligent referrals
- Credit check/background check
 - What type of approval is needed?
 - For what types of jobs are employers allowed to do this?
 - Use of credit reports
 - EEOC guidelines regarding use of credit reports

- Rejection for non-financial reasons
- Temporary employees
 - Lease to hire
 - Definition of temp employee
 - Definition of contract employee
 - Benefits to employers of using temp agency
- Uniform guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures
- Drug testing policies on applicants and new hires
- Definition of job analysis

ADA

- HIV in the workplace
 - What are the rights of the employee with HIV?
 - What are the rights of employees working with HIV infected co-workers?
 - What are the responsibilities of the employer?
- Drug and alcohol usage under ADA

Polygraph Test

- What are the rights and responsibilities of an employer?
- When can a polygraph test be administered in the employment process?
- What are the rights of the employee?
- When can a polygraph be administered in an investigation?

EAP

- Employer rights and responsibilities
- Confidentiality issues
- When an EAP has knowledge of potential harassment or criminal acts, how should the EAP appropriately deal with both employer and employee?
- Intervention strategies (constructive confrontation)

Search/Security Guards/Violence

- Security guard arrest rights and responsibilities
- Guard obligation to make an arrest if he/she witnesses a crime
- Circumstances under which an employee's locker can be searched.
- What are the rights and responsibilities of an employer when violence occurs in the workplace or threats of violence are known?
- In the case of a threat or violence, what steps should an employer take?
- Privacy in the workplace - private employee vs government employee

EEO

- Sexual harassment <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-sex.html>
 - Sexual orientation discrimination
- Comparable worth
- Pregnancy discrimination <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-preg.html>
 - Warning an employee about dangerous chemicals in the workplace
- Time limit on filing EEO complaint <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/howtofil.html>

- EEO investigations <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html>
 - Know procedures and terms
- EEO Court Cases
 - Griggs vs. Duke Power - be able to identify a scenario under which this law would come into play
- Vietnam Vets Affirmative Action
 - What employers are covered?
 - Where are they required to post open job notices?
- Affirmative Action
 - What is the OFCCP and what do they enforce?
 - What is underutilization? How to correct?
- 1991 Amendment to the Civil Rights Act
<http://www.eeoc.gov/35th/thelaw/index.html>
 - Discriminatory intent
 - Compensatory and punitive damages
 - Jury trials
 - Other provisions - race norming, international employees, government employee rights
- Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII
 - Provisions
 - Who is covered

Erisa/Retirement Plans/Benefits

- What does ERISA require of employers?
<http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/handbook/erisa.htm>
- Who has financial and administrative control of the plan?
- Who takes the risk (employer or employee) in different types of plans?
- Understand difference between defined contribution and defined benefit.
- Vesting - know types and ERISA regulations covering vesting
- What makes a plan "qualified" vs. "non qualified"?
- Standard 106 (FAS 106) accounting for post retirement benefits
http://immediateannuities.com/library_articles/!fasb106.htm
- Offering different benefits to different employees
 - Offering different medical plan to highly compensated employees
- Cafeteria plans and flexible spending accounts - what is included, what is not included, how does employee qualify for reimbursement, how is \$\$ level of reimbursement calculated?
- What information would you find on a QDRO (Qualified Domestic Relations Order)?
<http://www.dol.gov/pwba/pubs/qdro.htm>
- ESOP - understand what it is and how it is used
<http://www.the-esop-empowner.org/whatis/index.html>
- Understand Flexible spending accounts including employee forfeiture of funds
- Cash balance plan http://money.cnn.com/1999/07/01/life/q_cashbalance/
- What is excess deferral?

- End of year testing for highly compensated individuals
<http://www.401k.com/401k/pfp/rp/conlimit.htm>
 - What does it mean?
 - What do you do to rectify the situation if the test fails?
 - SEC definition of highly compensated individuals
- Merging companies with different benefit plans
 - Best method
 - What to take into consideration
- Coordination of benefits
 - Know how to figure out what is covered and what the deductible for an employee is when covered by both directly insured and insured on spouse plan.
- OWBPA (Older Worker's Benefit Protection Act)
<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/age.html>
- COBRA
 - Know what triggers a company to be required to provide COBRA
 - Know length of time COBRA is offered to employee
 - Know length of time spouses and children or other dependents qualify in varying circumstances

OSHA

- Penalty structure
- Requirement for written plans
- Tag out/lock out procedures
- Inspections
- Posting requirements
- OSHA 300 log
- Correcting hazards in the workplace
- Hearing conservation standard - how do companies check and train?
- Who is ultimately responsible for safety in a company?

FLSA

- What differentiates an employee from an independent contractor?
 - IRS 20 factor test
- Back pay and penalties for violation
- Wage and hour laws
- Overtime calculation and base to use for computing overtime
- Calculating overtime when employee uses PTO (paid time off) during a week
- Calculating hours an employee can work during the second week when he has overtime the first week and you want to keep the biweekly payroll at the employee's regular wages.
- Who enforces FLSA?
- Walsh Healy and Davis Bacon Acts (minimum wage requirements)

Union

- Organizational Picketing
 - During an organization campaign, what are the rights of the employer?
 - During an organization campaign, what are the rights of the prospective union members?
 - What constitutes an employer ULP during an organizing campaign?
 - What constitutes a union ULP during an organizing campaign?
 - NLRB
 - Purpose
 - Processes and procedures used
 - Electromation - understand significance of case
 - Union right to post list of non-union employees
- Decertification
 - Process
 - Under what circumstances is it appropriate and legal?
- Grievance procedures
- Contract negotiation procedures
 - Who approves the negotiation before it goes to the members for a vote?
- Strikes
 - Subcontractor strikes on construction sites (common situs picketing).
 - Union penalties for union members who quit the union during a strike.
- Arbitration and mediation
 - Understand similarities and differences
 - Know which would be used in what circumstances
 - Understand binding or non binding nature of any agreements
 - Arbitration and Supreme Court - what is relationship?
- Right to work states
- Featherbedding
- Yellow dog contracts
- What is an economic strike? How is rehiring affected?
- Administrative Law Judge (ALJ)
- Interest-based bargaining
- Public sector negotiations and compulsory arbitration
- "Showing of interest"
- Most typical form of union and company bargaining (how many unions bargain with how many companies?)

FMLA

- What qualifies an employee for FMLA?
- What disqualifies an employee for FMLA?
- What special circumstances apply to employers with multiple sites?
- Intermittent leave
- Ragsdale vs. Wolverine (employee notification rights)
- What are the rights of employer and employee if FMLA is approved?
- How is maximum length of FMLA calculated?

- Loco Parentis (stand in parent) - definition and how this status is interpreted when stand in parent requests FMLA leave
- Best way to track FMLA to reduce abuse
- When does FMLA end?
- How is FMLA affected when the spouse, parent, child that qualifies the employee for FMLA leave dies before the FMLA leave is up?
- In the absence of a policy on how FMLA year is calculated, what method will be used?

Total Quality Management

- What do TQM theories have in common?
- How do TQM theories differ?
- Systems theory

Drug Testing

- Drug Free Workplace Act
 - Who is covered?
 - What are the requirements?
 - Under what circumstances can a drug test be required of a current employee?
 - At what stage can an applicant be asked to take a drug test?
 - Private employees vs government employees

Compensation Methods

- Hay Method
- Point factor method
- Compa-ratio
 - How is it computed?
 - What does it do for you?
 - When you have figured out the compa-ratio, what is the value of the information you have?
- Job grades and ranges
 - Most commonly used methods
 - Midpoint - what does this tell you?
- Regulations regarding comp-time
- Market-based compensation - compare to similar companies or industry?
- Person-based compensation systems
- Benchmarking
- Considerations during the development of an HRIS
- Comp and benefits as they pertain to the organization life cycle
- Pay compression and how to counteract the effects
- Red Circle rates

Training

- Promoting the fastest upward growth of employees

- Career ladders
- Succession plans (management)
- Model of a training system
 - Assessment
 - Determining needs
 - Identify training objectives
 - Develop criteria
 - Pretest trainers
 - Assessment centers
 - Implementation
 - Select training methods
 - Arrange for training
 - Conduct training
 - Evaluation
 - Compare outcome against criteria
- Learning curves - stages of learning
- Maturity curves
- Copyright laws
- Steps/process to determine training needed
 - Surveys (interview, questionnaire, etc.)
 - Assessment of need
 - Levels of training needs assessment
 - Organization wide sources - observations, exit interviews, complaints
 - Task analysis resources
 - Job requirements - employee's KSA's
 - Job description requirements - job specifications
 - Individual employees sources
 - Tests, records, questionnaires, performance appraisals, assessment centers
- Establishing training objectives and priorities
 - Gap analysis
 - Quantity of work
 - Quality of work
 - Timeliness of work
 - Cost savings
- Training approaches
 - On the job training
 - Simulation
 - Cooperative training - internships, apprenticeships
 - Workforce Investment Partnership Act 1998
 - Behaviorally experienced training
 - Role playing, business games, sensitivity training, diversity training, in-basket exercises, case studies/incidents
 - Classroom and conference training
 - Training media
 - Audiovisual ads

- Computer assisted training
 - Distance learning
- How should training be administered
 - Self taught
 - Instructor led
- Transfer training
- Considerations when considering training approaches
 - Cost of training
 - Best method to determine cost
 - What is value to organization?
 - Is the cost too high?
 - Individual vs team training
 - Number of trainees
 - Completion time line
 - Time allotted
 - Nature of subject matter
 - Purpose of training
 - Self-paced vs guided
 - Training resources
- Evaluation of training
 - Cost benefit analysis - compares cost of training with the benefits received
 - Benchmark training
 - Levels of evaluation
 - Reaction
 - Learning
 - Behavior
 - Results
 - Evaluation designs
 - Post-measure
 - Pre/Post measure
 - Pre/Post measure with control group

Incentive Plans

- Intrinsic vs. extrinsic rewards
- Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory - know the motivation factors and the hygiene factors
- Long term incentive plans
- Maslow's Theory and relation to incentive plans and compensation
- Important factors in choosing incentives/rewards and how employee place value on a reward
- What is the best way to reward group members?

Testing and research

- Validity
 - Construct validity vs. content validity

- Criterion-related validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity, validity generalization
- Reliability
 - Various method of measuring (inter-rater, multi-rater)
- Regression analysis
- Predictive criterion, content valid selection procedures

WARN

- What circumstances trigger need for WARN notification?
- Requirements - how many employees, etc.
- WARN notification re plant closing for strike

Ethics

- What qualifies as "insider information"?
- What are the ethical obligations if you overhear "insider information"?
- Copying and distributing copyright material (subscriptions)
- Ethics facilitator

Management/Leadership Styles

- Types (delegator, dictator, micro-manager)
- Covey's 7 Habits
- Situational leadership
- Transformational leadership

Miscellaneous

- Board of directors "inside members"
- Constructive discharge
- Defamation
 - How might a supervisor or employer trigger a complaint of defamation?
 - How would a charge of defamation be proven in court?
 - Difference between defamation and malice
- Garnishments - maximum allowed (from gross or from net pay)?
- Behavioral modeling
- Progressive discipline
- Matrix reporting structure
 - Dotted line and solid line relationships
 - Centralization and decentralization
- Balanced scorecard
- Stop-loss coverage
- Inter-rater reliability
- Imputed income
- Pre test, post test
- Reengineering the organization
- Seamless organization
- Zero base budgeting www.swb-inc.com/zbb.htm
- Top-down approach to budgeting

- Projected revenue and expenses - cash flow, operating budget, capital budget
- Who should be part of a safety committee?
- Who should be involved in developing a safety program?
- Thorough knowledge of Welfare to Work programs (case study)
- Know how to handle culture clashes after a merger
- Corporate philosophy, mission, values
- What is meant by a high-context organization?
- What assumption is made about performance appraisals?
- Critical incidents
- Judgmental forecasts and statistical forecasts
- Open-door policy and two-way communication
- Importance of employee surveys

Sample Question: Here is a question (somewhat tongue in cheek but to be taken seriously) that is worded similarly to questions on the test. (Thanks to Cynthia Letsch)

What is the "most likely" way a Human Resource Professional would change a light bulb?"

- a. use a ladder instead of a chair.
- b. complete a union work order.
- c. comply with OSHA standards and use a bulb that does not exceed the recommended wattage for the receptacle.
- d. use a bulb that is energy efficient in an effort to remain within the zero based budget for the department.

It should be strongly stressed that you must not only be familiar with a topic but also be ready to read and comprehend questions and answers that are confusingly similar or where all the answers are correct but you must figure out which is "most" or "least" likely to be true. You will also be given a scenario and 4 steps, all of which are valid components of an ongoing plan, and asked to identify which you would do "first".

Many people commented that the scenarios were very confusing because they briefly described complex situations leaving confusion as to what steps had already been taken and not giving adequate information about the company or companies involved to make an informed decision.

Other topics to study:

Top down budgeting

What is not required of ERISA; what is required of ERISA

Drug Free Workplace Act—ER responsibilities

Bloodborne Pathogens—ER responsibilities

Arbitration—the permanency of decisions

OWBPA—purpose of the act

Health insurance and experience ratings

USERRA—ER responsibilities

BARS—characteristics; when best to use them
Forced Distribution—characteristics
Compa-ratio of a pay system
Salary surveys and what they provide
System that describes jobs according to k,s,a's
Welfare to Work—what was the outcome
Shortage of leadership and causes in the workforce
OSHA—what type of incident must be recorded
Sexual Harassment and FCRA
Hostile work environment—definition
Partial Pay deductions for exempt employees—exceptions
FMLA—key employee exception
O/T & comp time calculations and rule
Availability Analysis and minimum hiring requirements
Uniform Coverage Rule
OSHA—ER duties
Federal Laws—what groups are protected and not protected
Federal Laws vs. State Laws
EE discipline in absence of a policy
Tax deductible relocation costs
Merit increases
EE branding—characteristics
Strategic management—HR role
Balanced scorecard—HR responsibility

From Nick on the SHRM BB:

Study the exam as well as the content. Basically, you really need to be aware what it is that you are being asked. Having taken the exam, I am sure you are well aware of this, but I will bring it up anyway. I really had to focus on what the questions really wanted. I picked this up from practice exams. The best way to describe this would be as follows:

Suppose that there is an HR practice that involves steps A, B, C, and D. Company ABC had implemented step A. What is the FIRST thing you should do as the HR Manager for that company? The answer would be B. The first step of the process (step A) has been done, and now it is time to begin step B. So, B becomes the first thing to do in that scenario.

I am not sure how I picked up on it, but it saved me on several questions in the SPHR, I'm sure. I saw questions like this over and over. I don't think that anyone was trying to fool us. I really think that the exam writers wanted us to focus on each individual situation. I felt like I had to make a quick decision, based upon the specific scenario presented. As one of the people who posted on shrm.org mentioned, you had to pick the most right answer in theory. This was a difficult mental shift to make.

I also believe that studying as many practice exams as possible will help. I am a big believer in simulating the test. Locking yourself in a room with practice exams helps to get used to the volume of questions that need to be answered.

Business Ethics
Conflicts of interest, etc.

Internal/External Scanning Techniques

- SWOT analysis
- Porter's Five Forces
- HR Audits
- Cost-benefit analysis etc.

How they apply to strategic HR management.. All of this comes from general business and HR strategy. A big complaint we consistently heard in grad school was that HR people do not know enough about business. The SPHR had many questions about a company's situation, and what HR practices should be implemented to meet the organizational goals. Learning these and other business theories will help you to think on a more broad level. There are several good case studies out there (Harvard Business Review comes to mind). Many of these have to do with strategic HR, people issues, and change management. If you have access to a university library, you may be able to read or even photocopy some. Anyway, I always thought case studies were great ways to learn.

Organizational Development

How OD concepts and practices should be aligned with business needs.

Labor Relations

- Knowledge of ULPs, when certain things can and can't be done
- Unions in a merger
- Certification
- De-certification
- Union avoidance
- Union motivation
- Collective bargaining
- Negotiation strategies
- Arbitrations
- What is theoretically the best thing to do in specific situations?

Leadership Theories

Characteristics of the major theories (situational, transactional, path-goal, etc.) and the behaviors associated with each.

Motivation

- Theory X & Theory Y
- Hierarchy of Needs
- Hygiene Factors Theory
- Goal Setting Theory, etc.

Reliability & Validity

Look at a situation (exams for hiring or promotion), trying to understand what was happening, and what was the best solution. Knowing reliability and validity inside and out really gave me confidence in my analysis of other questions.

Anyway, I hope all of this helps. I realize that it is extremely wordy, but I wanted to give something back. These are just my humble observations and opinions, so take them for that they're worth. I still believe that the key to cracking this test is knowing what the questions specifically want, because memorizing facts and figures is not enough.

Anyone who wishes, may contact me directly at Nick_Saban@US.Vesuvius.com. Best of luck to you and all, and I will see you on the discussion boards.

Nick

Roz's Tips from a SPHR—

1. Circle the number of a question if you are unsure. When you review the test you will return to those questions first. Put a check mark in the upper corner of that page so you don't miss it to go back to for review purposes.
2. A subsequent question often gives you the answer to a prior question. Now those check marks come in handy to quickly find the page!
3. I found the beginning of the test extremely easy. After 70 questions there were some that required more concentration. Don't get bogged down or you will lose too much time. If you don't know it, eliminate the answers you know to be wrong and circle the question for future review. The last 40 questions were also incredibly easy. You will miss this gift if you don't get to them!
4. Read the question slowly and carefully. Look for double negatives, trick words, and key phrases.
5. Underline the key words and phrases in a question.
6. Cross out wrong answers to eliminate. It helps if you have to go back to this question and it also helps in general review.
7. Mark your correct answer on the test booklet as well as the answer sheet. See number 9 for the reason why you want to do this.
8. Remember that 25 of the 225 questions are experimental. There is a good possibility that if you have never encountered the information required in a question, it is experimental.
9. Double check that you marked the right bubble on your answer sheet—it is easy to mark the wrong bubble by accident.
10. Take your time—don't be intimidated by those that leave early. All of the above steps add time to the process. Others are not doing this and, therefore, finish more quickly. But you will get a much better score doing this. I know you only need a 500 on the test to pass. But that is only a 71%. We can do better than that. Just think of all the lawsuits you could subject your company to if you handled recruitment, hiring, discipline, COBRA, benefits administration, payroll and firing correctly only 71% of the time!
11. Bring earplugs. Some sites do not allow water. If you get parched, bringing tic-tacs is a good alternative.
12. Wear layers of clothing.
13. Arrive by the easiest means possible to relax—i.e.: take the train if you can because parking may be scarce and that will increase your blood pressure.
14. To review for the test, answer as many questions as you can. The HRCI \$20 guide has sample questions. The CD has questions. There are other texts out there, which may or may not be helpful to you. But some have separate study guides that have more questions. Just get used to answering many questions quickly.

Test Taking Tips for the HRCI Exams

How to Approach and Take the Test

MOST IMPORTANT: Remember -- HRCI WANTS YOU TO PASS!

This is NOT a trick test.

Also remember: Most people do pass the test. **And the answer is always on the page.** If you have studied you will probably find the right answer.

Now for an approach:

- Do the questions in order since the first ones are easy, by design. HRCI wants you to get over the test anxiety. By the time you hit your stride you will see the questions getting harder. Don't panic because towards the end of the test the questions will start to get easier again.

NOTE: Change in exam - Please read the following from Mr. Losey:

Mike Losey

Posted 11/22/2002

7:18:46 AM

I reviewed what I had created earlier and you posted. Thank you for remembering and posting this again. But one change--

I understand from HRCI that they have discontinued the practice of starting the test with relatively easy questions (to help overcome the candidate's test jitters) and then working up to harder questions in the middle of the test period (when the candidate is on a role) and then easier ones at the end of the test when the person might start to get tired .

Now questions can appear in any order, so if the first question knocks you for a loop, don't get excited or discouraged. Just go on knowing that you will miss some questions (no one has ever got all of the questions right) and easy ones will come up sooner or later. Everything will be fine, I am sure.

And one more thing. Some people see the low weighting of the Health, Safety and Security module and think they do not have to really study that issue.

And "yes" for the PHR test the HSS module is only 6% (14 questions) and even less, 5% or 11 questions, for the SPHR test. BUT, they are also some of the easier questions, I think.

So, remember you get the same credit for an easy question as you get for a hard question. This is especially important for people who have previously missed passing the test by 1 or 2 questions.

I hope this helps.

Mike Losey

- ❑ Mark on the test booklet. Check any question you are not sure of and then go back later. Sometimes another question on the test will make you think of something.
- ❑ You will also have to do all math on the booklet itself. No calculators or additional paper is permitted. Make sure you have # 2 pencils and a good eraser. The math questions are not difficult and there will not be too many of them usually.
- ❑ Trust your first impressions. Again, this is not a trick test. HRCI goes out of its way to make the test clear. DON'T OVER ANALYZE a question. If you think the answer is "too clear" or "too easy" remember that some questions will have 90% of the people get the question right.
- ❑ Don't skip around the test and make sure you are always marking the answer in the correct box --- do not get out of order.
- ❑ If someone gets up and walks out at 45 minutes into the test don't think that they are necessarily done. They may have "hit the wall." That is what we call giving up. Remember some people don't study at all, although the percent who do not study is low --- only 4% on the last test. In almost all cases, if they have not studied, they are doomed.
- ❑ 54% of the people who took the last test studied in excess of 40 hours.
- ❑ Try to eliminate the distracters (alternate answers) that are obviously wrong. Usually two are goofy.
- ❑ Plus a real good approach is to simply lay your hand over the answers and after reading the question ask yourself what is the answer? Then look for IT.
- ❑ The skill is finding the right answer or what HRCI calls the "best" answer from the 4 possible answers. Again, if you can eliminate two of them then --- even if you do not have a clue --- you can and should guess. At least then, you have increased your chances to a 50/50 chance of getting the question right.
- ❑ Don't look for answer patterns such as the last 2 have been "C" so this must be "C" or something like that.

- ❑ Don't think that the length of the answer is a clue. Some suggest the longer the answer; the more likely it is the answer. Don't believe it. HRCI watches for that.
- ❑ Also remember HRCI only scores 200 of the 225 questions. The other 25 are pre-test questions that have not been utilized before and are being tested for the first time to gather statistics and evaluate their effectiveness. There is no indication on the test as to just which 25 questions are the pre-test questions.
- ❑ And finally, don't forget --- you can miss questions and still pass. Actually for the PHR test, since 1998, the percentage of correct answers needed to pass ranged from 68 to 72% (Remember each test is slightly different than any other not only in the nature of the questions but their relative level of difficulty. Through the equating procedure an easier test will therefore require more correct answers in order to pass.) So if the average percent is 70% this means that of 200 questions a person would have to get approximately 140 correct, again, depending on the test. But what this also means is that a person **COULD MISS UP TO 60 QUESTIONS AND STILL PASS!**
- ❑ For the SPHR test, the average percent of correct answers to pass has been between 72 and 76% or on average about 74%. So in this case a person would have to get, on average, 74% of the 200 scored questions right or 148 right and again, could miss, on average, up to 52 questions.

And for the day of the test:

- ❑ Make sure you leave for the test location early.
- ❑ If you have to go a long distance or are not sure where you are going even consider getting a hotel room so that you are "there".
- ❑ Don't forget your photo ID and admission ticket. It always happens. People are ready for the test and forgot their positive ID. HRCI must prove that it is you taking the test and not someone else taking it for you.
- ❑ Wear clothes you can shed or add. Room temperatures are unpredictable even after the best of our efforts.
- ❑ Bring candy if you feel you might need some energy or balance (hard candy), especially diabetics or others with the possibility of low blood sugar. (But regular food is not permitted.) I have even heard of some people taking earplugs if they really need silence (but normally that should not be an issue).
- ❑ Try to find a seat where there is enough space. But usually that is not a problem either since our protocols require certain spacing.

- ❑ Be well rested.
- ❑ Eat breakfast, but in moderation.
- ❑ Relax, take breaks if you need to but only one person can leave the room at a time.
- ❑ You will have lots of time for the test. Don't think you won't. You will have more than one minute per question and that is plenty for most people. Plus the test is now only 225 questions down from 250 so you have more time than those who took the test prior to 2001.

And when you are done, congratulate yourself. Pass or fail you took the time and effort to try and most of all ---- you did it for yourself. You will be a better HR professional because of your efforts.

You may also wish to express appreciation to your family members who probably did not see as much of you as they wanted these past weeks. For those with children, remind them of the importance of the test and why you are doing this for your own self-satisfaction --- set the example for them. Build a case, that passing is not the issue. Self-development is the issue. You have already "won."

Let me know if this "Losey List" helps.

I know exactly how you and 25,000 people who will take the test this year feel --- I was there once also.

Good luck,
Michael R. Losey, SPHR, CAE

President & CEO (Retried) - SHRM
Past Board Member - HRCI

Mike Losey

gk
Posted 11/21/2002
2:55:41 PM

Hey it is good to see Mr. Losey posting here still.....These test tips are great. And remember that you have gained a lot of knowledge just studying for the exam.

I would like to stress to all those people like me who have high test anxiety to relax (I know, easier said than done). As you are sitting in your chair waiting for the exam to start, do

some deep breathing exercises or whatever you can do to relax. Don't dwell on the test. Remember that you have studied your rear end off for this. Also, a lot of this stuff you do every day at work already. You have to go to your supervisors and tell them why they can't do something. Look at this the same way, you are only putting it down on paper what the best solution for the situation would be....try not to get caught up in the testing mentality like we did back in college..... That really helped me when I took the SPHR. Also if you haven't already taken the test and know someone who has taken either test, contact them to find out exactly how the exam works at the test site. I was far more relax when I took the SPHR than the PHR because I knew what to expect at the test site....

Good luck to all of you who will be sitting for the exam.....