

Registered Service Agency (RSA) Advisory Committee

Introduction

The RSA Service Agent Examination Process Working Group was established to evaluate the current examination process and recommend improvements. This report details the RSA Advisory Committee (Committee) findings and recommendations for modernizing the service agent exam while ensuring its effectiveness, accessibility, and security. The Committee respectfully submits this report to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Division of Measurement Standards for further consideration.

Methodology

Committee research included a review of relevant statutes (BPC § 12540) and regulations (4 CCR § 4083), a review of practices in other states, and considerations of member feedback.

Key Findings and Recommendations:

The Committee recommends the following improvements to the service agent examination process:

Examination Delivery:

- Transition from the current exam system to a secure, proctored online format offering immediate results.
- The exam should be offered regularly, with the possibility of on-demand options with additional fees for third-party proctoring services.
- Online video/audio platforms (Zoom, Teams, GoTo) or a reputable third-party proctoring service (Test.com) could be utilized for remote exam monitoring.
- Hybrid option: Continue to allow county offices of weights and measures the option to provide the test in person, at their discretion. Explore regional county collaboration for proctoring if possible.

Identification and Security:

- To ensure exam integrity, by implementing mandatory photo ID verification during testing, following existing regulations.
- Develop Service Agent ID cards with an agent's license number and photograph (similar to the BSIS model).
- Require that the service agent carry their ID card when performing the duties of a service agent, and present it to a sealer upon request.

Disqualification and Retake Policy:

- A disqualification period for test takers who do not pass the examination before taking it again. This will need to be aligned with 4 CCR § 4083 (e).
- Determine a reasonable limit on retake attempts based on the chosen proctoring method and other considerations.
- Require an applicant who fails the exam to reapply and pay the exam fee again.

Examination Content:

- Expand the bank of questions, emphasizing critical thinking skills and a broader knowledge base.
- The focus should be on the candidates' ability to locate information within relevant resources (BPC, CCR, National model regs, NTEP, CTEP, Placed in Service Reports).
- Offering separate exams for basic knowledge and specializations can be explored further.

Open-Book Format:

- Allowing an open-book format with a reduced time limit and a larger question bank is suggested to discourage memorization.

Fees:

- A cost analysis should be conducted to determine if fee adjustments are necessary. Consider aligning fees with other California regulatory agencies like CSLB and DCA.
- Researching average RSA income levels is crucial to ensure fees remain accessible.

Exam Time:

- Establishing a fixed time frame of approximately 50 minutes for the 35-question exam, with accommodations for those with approved needs.

Regulations Update:

- A detailed recommendation paper outlining specific changes to 4 CCR § 4083 will need to be developed for the RSA Advisory Committee.
- Proposing rulemaking modifications to 4 CCR §§ 4087 and 4088 to reflect the recommended process will be included.

Conclusion

The proposed changes aim to modernize the RSA Service Agent Examination process, ensuring its effectiveness, accessibility, and security. The Committee believes this will enhance consumer confidence in the professionalism of the industry.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The RSA Advisory Committee