

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: Why is FPDA offering this exam?

A: The Board determined that although various exams are offered throughout the industry, none address both sales and technical expertise. This exam was developed specifically to support the development of well-rounded sales professionals in the fluid power industry. Having a sales force that understands a variety of technologies along with appropriate sales strategies and techniques will increase a company's competitive edge, while improving quality and customer satisfaction.

Q: Who is eligible to take this exam?

A: For 2011, any employee of an FPDA member company may take this exam. The certification is intended primarily for those in jobs such as Inside or Outside Sales, but companies may find the exam benefits other customer-facing roles. After 2011, exams will also be offered to non-FPDA companies.

Q: How was this exam created?

A: A special team of FPDA companies worked together with the National Occupation & Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) to define the skills and knowledge needed by a well-rounded, competitive sales professional in the fluid power industry. Over 200 exam questions were generated covering all of these skills and knowledge areas, and a pilot exam process was conducted with 40 FPDA member company employees to fine-tune these questions, select the final list of questions, and set a passing score.

Q: What is the exam like? What kinds of questions are included?

A: The exam is composed of approximately 95 multiple choice questions with only one correct answer. Questions are based on material found in the suggested reference materials which you should read and study prior to testing. The exam includes eight sections - six technical (mechanical, electrical, pneumatic, hydraulics, electro-mechanical, and automation), along with integrated sales and business sales. "Integrated sales" reflects the candidate's ability to design and trouble shoot customer solutions, while "business sales" focuses on general business knowledge, sales profitability, and the sales process. Roughly half of the exam is devoted to sales skills and knowledge.

Q: What is the passing score?

A: The passing score is 87% - this is challenging, but represents a solid indication that the candidate does in fact know the material.

Q: Can I use any materials during the exam for reference?

A: Yes, this is an open book exam. Participants are encouraged to study the recommended resources prior to the test, but any materials may be referenced during the exam. Recommended resources include: Industrial Fluid Power, Vol 1 – 3rd Edition, the FPDA Fluid Power Data Book, the Lightning Reference Handbook, the Closed Loop Electro-hydraulic Systems Manual, Eaton's Industrial Hydraulics Manual, Parker Hannifin's Motion Control Catalog (the engineering section) as well as their Industrial Motor Drives, Financial Transactions of the Wholesale Distributor, by Don Rice, and Industrial Distribution – the Sales Process by Mitch Harper.

Q: Do I have the option of taking a paper and pencil version of the exam?

A: No – the exam is only offered on-line.

Q: Is there a time limit?

A: Yes – you may take no longer than 120 minutes to complete the exam.

Q: What happens if my computer crashes during the exam?

A: A technical hotline is provided for this exam by the company that hosts the actual exams (NOCTI) and they can reset your exam.

Q: **May I take this exam at home?**

A: No. You need to take it in your company's office. You may not discuss the questions or answers with anyone during the exam.

Q: **Is there a fee for taking the exams?**

A: Yes. Exams may be purchased for \$249 for a single exam; quantity discounts apply for larger orders: a pack of five exams may be purchased for \$1100 (\$220 per exam), and a pack of 10 exams may be purchased for \$1900 (\$190 per exam.) Special introductory pricing is available for purchases completed by December 31, 2010: \$199 for a single exam, \$850 for a pack of 5 exams (\$170 each), or \$1400 for a pack of 10 exams (\$140 each.)

Q: **Do exam codes expire?**

A: Yes. Once codes are assigned to an individual, they may be used at any time, but will expire six months from the date they were issued.

Q: **Do I get anything for passing the exam?**

A: You will receive a Certificate of Completion stating you are now an M+CSP Professional.

Q: **What happens if I fail the exam?**

A: You and your manager will need to discuss next steps. It is recommended that you spend additional time studying the appropriate reference materials, and then retake the exam.

Q: **Is there a charge to retake the exam?**

A: One free "retake" is included in the original exam price. If you are unsuccessful in passing on the second try, any further exams will need to be purchased at the same price as the original exam.

Q: **I'm ready to take the exam. What do I do next?**

A: Notify your manager and have him/her complete the exam order form on the FPDA website (www.FPDA.org) Once this is submitted, Debbie Mitchell will send the designated M+CSP Coordinator the appropriate user identification number and instructions for taking the exam. The M+CSP Coordinator should also access the FPDA website for instructions for setting up a computer in the office that can access the on-line exams.

Q: **What is a "designated M+CSP Coordinator"?**

A: Each participating company is asked to identify a single point of contact for managing the exam process. FPDA staff will send instructions, exam codes, and related information to that person. The M+CSP Coordinator will also receive exam results and certificates, and will be responsible for passing those along to participants and/or their manager.

Q: **What happens if I leave any questions blank during the exam?**

A: Those questions will be marked as incorrect, BUT the exam will allow you to mark a question and come back to it later during the exam session; it will also remind you at the end if you have skipped any questions so you can go back and answer them.

Q: **Is there a way to practice the on-line mechanics of the exam before I take the real one?**

A: Yes. When you log on to take the exam, there will be button you can select called "go practice". The time you take practicing will not be counted against the actual exam time.

Q: **How soon will I know if I passed the exam?**

A: The results will be sent to you and your manager within 3 business days.