

CPN CERTIFICATION

A Guide for Nurses & Those Supporting the
Journey to Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN®)



Thank you!

Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) appreciates your time in learning about CPN certification.

This PowerPoint is for:

- RNs considering certification
- No Pass, No Pay program facilitators
- Nurses mentoring interested RNs and nurse residency program staff
- Educators, professional development staff, and others supporting certification
- Leadership, Magnet Program Directors, HR, and other administrators

Why Get Certified?

There are many reasons to aim for certification, such as:

- Personal satisfaction
- Demonstration of expertise or meeting a recognized standard
- Increased confidence
- Commitment to patient care
- Professional rewards and growth

What does your employer offer for getting certified?

Ask a colleague or mentor why they sought certification.

About CPN

The **Certified Pediatric Nurse** credential is earned after taking a secure, proctored exam.

- More than 90% of RNs seeking pediatric certification choose PNCB's CPN exam
- There are 30,000+ active CPNs
- The first-time pass rate was 77% in 2022.
- CPN certification isn't limited to hospital RNs or direct care RNs
 - 60% direct care
 - 40% other: managers, consultants, faculty, researchers, nurse executives, school nurses, family nurse practitioners, and other roles

About PNCB

- Largest pediatric nursing organization in North America.
 - 53,000+ active certificants, including certified pediatric nurse practitioners in Acute Care or Primary Care, plus Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialists (PMHSs)
- Established in 1975 for Pediatric Nurse Practitioner certification (CPNP)
- Launched the CPN exam in 1989
- Endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Society of Pediatric Nurses, and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
- Supports our specialty in many ways, like the Institute of Pediatric Nursing
- Strengthening care for children is at the heart of all we do!



CPN Exam Eligibility

1. RN license

- Current, valid, unrestricted, and unencumbered Registered Nurse license in the U.S., Canada, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands or the U.S. Virgin Islands at the time of application

2. Experience requirement:

PATHWAY 1

A minimum of 1800 hours of pediatric clinical experience completed within the past 24 months as an RN

OR

PATHWAY 2

A minimum of 5 years as an RN in pediatric nursing **and** 3,000 hours in pediatric nursing within the last 5 years **with** a minimum of 1000 hours within the past 24 months (use only if unable to meet the option at left)

Eligibility tips

- You may have a diploma, associate's, bachelor's, master's, or higher nursing degree.
- Hours earned in a pediatric nursing residency program count toward the requirement.
- Have 1800 hours but haven't reached the 24 months of experience? You do not have to wait to apply. The 24 month requirement is to ensure experience is recent.
- The CPN exam is not just for hospital RNs. Other eligible experience could be direct patient care in ambulatory or public health settings **and/or** teaching, administration, clinical research, school-based care, home health care, or consultation in pediatric nursing.
- Only select Pathway 2 if you do not meet Pathway 1.

What's involved?

- Get ready: prepare & apply
- Take the exam
- Maintain certified status through recertification

STEP 1:
Get Ready



STEP 2:
Test



STEP 3:
Stay Certified



STEP 1

Prepare & Apply

Things to know before you test

What to expect

The exam is

- **Delivered at a testing center *or* via live remote proctoring**
 - *Test at a local Prometric Testing Center or at home or other quiet place*
 - *[Compare options here](#)*
 - *You will schedule an appointment after your application is approved*
- **Scheduled for a maximum time period of 3 hours**
- **175 multiple choice questions**
 - *Analysis and knowledge application type questions*
 - *Not knowledge recall questions*
 - *No penalty for guessing*

Preparation Basics

PNCB doesn't 'teach to the test' or offer review courses. We consider this a conflict of interest. You bring your knowledge to the exam.

PNCB offers these resources to support your study strategies:


- **Am I ready to test? checklist**
 - *A list of all resources in 1 place*
- **The exam content outline**
 - *Your #1 tool to start your studies... what knowledge will the exam test?*
- **Reference list**
 - *Choose 1 of the respected textbooks our item writers use*
- **Sample questions and practice tests**
 - *CPN exam questions test your ability to analyze and apply knowledge, not knowledge recall*

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PNCB
PEDIATRIC NURSING
CERTIFICATION BOARD

PNCB is serious about upholding test security. DON'T RISK THE CONSEQUENCES—
for yourself or other nurses. [Learn about PNCB's Ethics in Testing](#)

Certified Pediatric Nurse Certification Exam




Detailed Content Outline

Description of the Exam
This exam is for the nurse who has extensive experience in pediatric practice and who demonstrates knowledge and abilities related to pediatric nursing beyond basic RN licensure. Exam content includes: **health promotion**; **assessment** (physical and psychosocial); **planning and management** (acute and chronic care for both physical and behavioral health needs, psychosocial and child/family-centered care, palliative and end of life care) and professional responsibilities. Common threads throughout the domains of practice are safety, growth and development, and evidence-based practice.

Description of the Specialty
Pediatric nurses practice in a variety of settings and roles such as direct caregiver, educator, consultant, advocate, and care coordinator. In these roles, they assess, analyze, plan, implement, and manage nursing interventions and evaluate outcomes. Utilizing a patient- and family-centered approach, pediatric nurses provide care for newborns through young adulthood with a focus on protection, promotion and optimization of health and abilities. (Scope and Standards of Practice: Pediatric Nursing 2nd Edition 2015).

Credential
An RN who passes this exam is called a Certified Pediatric Nurse and earns the CPN credential. CPNs are entitled to use this credential if they actively maintain their certification.

How to use this Content Outline
The CPN exam content outline (also known as a test blueprint) is an essential tool as you study for your exam. It describes all the subject areas covered by the exam and number of questions per category. PNCB certification exams are comprehensive, so be sure to study all areas of the content outline, including areas that you may not be as familiar with in your daily practice. This exam tests your ability to apply knowledge and use critical thinking skills to determine one best answer among answer choices.



Category	Number of Items	Percentage
I. Health Promotion	34	23%
II. Assessment	53	35%
III. Planning and Management	50	33%
Professional Responsibilities	13	9%

Exam Details
This exam is based on US standards of practice. See www.pncb.org for eligibility requirements. The exam has 150 scored and 25 unscored items (included to determine statistical performance). The 150 scored items are distributed among four (4) content areas. See chart.

Preparation Basics

Watch our [recorded webinar](#) for an in-depth walk-through of the exam content outline/test blueprint plus other resources to support your study plan.



Reference List

- You don't need to study all the references listed on the [CPN Exam Resources page](#).
- PNCB recommends you use ONE pediatric nursing textbook that you are familiar with to review for the exam.
- This text should also focus on the subject areas covered by the CPN exam content outline.
- PNCB does not endorse nor have any proprietary relationship with any of the following textbooks or their publishing companies.

Tester Tip! Know colleagues who recently passed? Ask which texts and resources they found most helpful.

Gather Tools & Support

- Download the [CPN exam content outline](#). Review all topics.
 - What are your weak areas? Use a textbook or CE to help.
 - Growth and development can be a weak area for hospital-based RNs.
 - Sub-specialty RNs may need extra time in review for general peds.
- Can your employer offer study space, time to study, or help coordinate study groups?
- Is there a hospital or unit library?
- Does your employer offer a review class or other support?

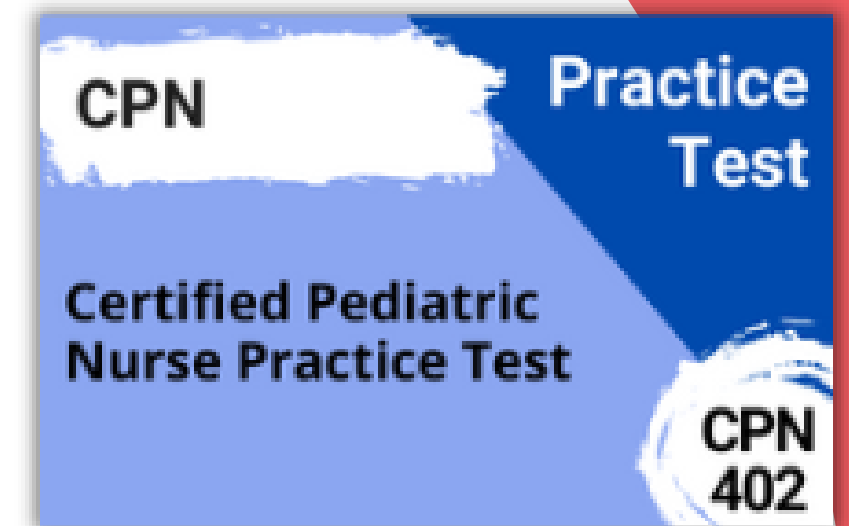
Got mentors?

- Is there a CPN Champion where you work? They can help you navigate the process and cheer you on.
- Identified your weak areas on the exam content outline? Connect with an experienced nurse with these areas as their strengths.

Using a CPN Practice Test

Some of PNCB's practice tests have in-depth rationales for right answers. Our Drill has correct answers only.

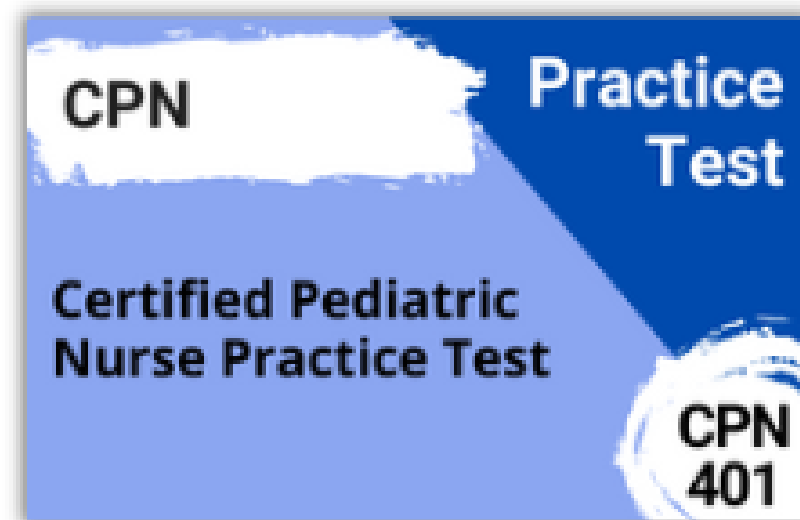
- Don't wait until right before your exam day to take a practice test. Use and re-use it well in advance to get the most benefit.
- Consider taking a full practice test in 1 sitting.
 - Get familiar with how PNCB asks questions.
 - See the questions' level of complexity.
 - Ask yourself, "What knowledge is being tested in this question?"
- On this first attempt, do not grade as you go/reveal answers.
- Check your score.
- Next, take the practice test again. This time, focus on a small number of questions in multiple sittings, and grade as you go to reveal the answers.



Try a CPN practice test sample question

Q: When educating the parents of a newborn with Down Syndrome, which of the following recommendations is MOST appropriate?

- A. position prone for sleep due to flat occiput
- B. apply emollient lotions to protect infant's rough, dry skin
- C. perform nasal suctioning needed because of inadequate drainage
- D. feed infant by bottle to overcome challenges with tongue protrusion

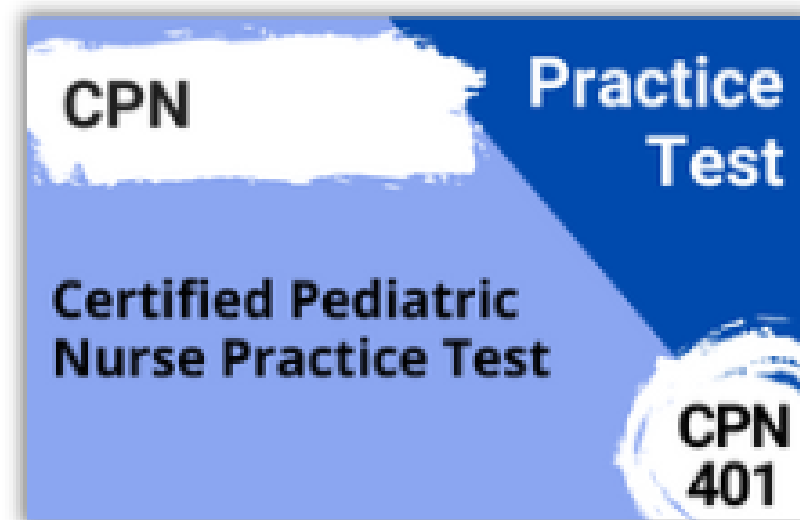


[Find all practice tests here](#)

Here's another

Q: A child admitted with severe dehydration has received a normal saline fluid bolus. Which of the following assessments is the HIGHEST priority before implementing an order to change to an IV fluid with added potassium?

- A. intravenous insertion site
- B. level of consciousness
- C. urinary output
- D. heart rate

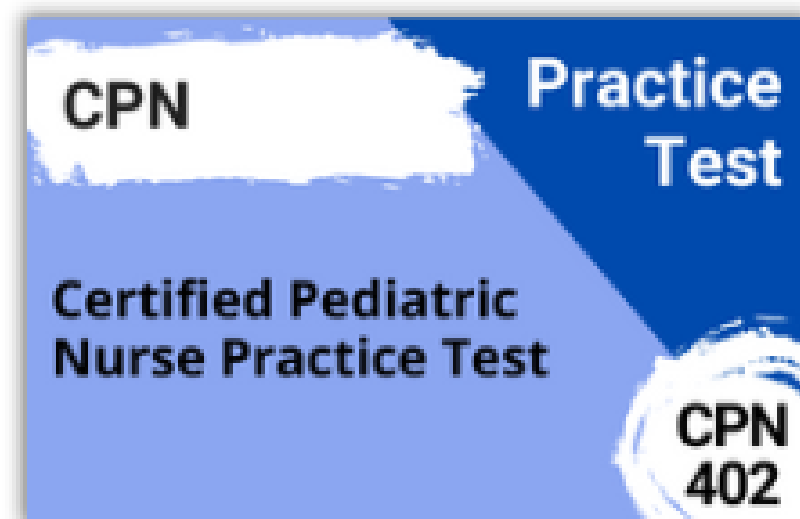


[Find all practice tests here](#)

And one more

Q: When evaluating a young child's technique using a metered-dose inhaler, which of the following are the MOST frequently encountered errors?

- A. lacking coordination and inhaling rapidly
- B. inhaling rapidly and neglecting to shake the inhaler
- C. breathing in through the mouth and lacking coordination
- D. neglecting to shake the inhaler and breathing in through the mouth



[Find all practice tests here](#)

Create your plan

Now that you know about available resources, create a solid plan to support your success.

- Set specific, measurable goals
- Put study days on your calendar
- Shorter, more frequent study periods may be more productive
- Tell your family and friends... get them on board for babysitting or other support
- Step away from the phone—minimize social media distractions

Tester Tip! Talk with a clinical educator if you need help creating or focusing your study plan.

Supporter Tip! Know a CPN who had an effective study plan? Ask them to share structure/ideas via PowerPoint or at informal meetings.

*I'm studying for
this national exam.*



Wish me luck!

Make your goals

Here are some examples:

- *I will brush up on topics in section 1.A. Physical Assessment of the exam content outline using a reference list textbook. I will allow at least 30 minutes per item. I will complete all these topics in my first 2 weeks of preparations.*
- *For any weak areas on the content outline, I will seek out at least 1 recent CE activity from a respected source to increase my knowledge. I will also ask my educator for ideas to support this. I will complete each weak area within 1 week.*
- *I will use a reference list textbook to review the first 5 procedures and interventions on the exam content outline. I have allotted 1 hour per item. I will complete this task within 1 week.*

Does your employer offer No Pass, No Pay?

If so, it's an awesome benefit they're providing!

- Before you apply, request the charge code from your site's designated contact.
- You use the code instead of up-front payment on the application.
- If unsuccessful on the exam, you can use the code a second time during your employer's current contract year.
 - Max of 4 attempts with a code per nurse over time.
- Cancellations count as a code use.

Important note: If you can't make your testing appointment, please cancel with the exam delivery partner. If you do not show for your appointment ("no-show"), you can no longer use the code benefit.

Don't have access to No Pass, No Pay?

- Ask educators or supervisors if your site is considering joining, or contact nnpn@pncb.org to learn how employers join.
- No cost for employers to participate.
- No minimum number of RNs required to test per year.
- Nurses use a code instead of up-front payment on the application.
- If unsuccessful on the exam, RNs won't be charged. Neither will your employer.

Learn about No Pass, No Pay and personalize this justification letter.

Before you apply

- Are you ready to receive your 90-day testing window in just a few business days? PNCB processes applications very quickly.
- Will you need Americans with Disabilities Accommodations (ADA)?
 - If so, please indicate this on your application.
 - Your healthcare provider will complete a form for you to submit to us.
 - English as a second language is not covered under ADA.

Steps in applying

Complete
online
application



Receive
scheduling
notification



Schedule
exam with test
vendor

Complete online application

Go to www.pncb.org and...

- Allow about 15 minutes to fill out the application.
- Create your online account.
- Have your RN license info handy.
- Attest to the eligibility and honor statement.
- Type in demographic and contact info.
- Submit payment unless using a No Pass, No Pay code.

Receive scheduling notification

- Look for an email saying that your eligibility was approved.
 - It will state your personalized 90-day testing window.
- This is your green light to schedule your exam!



If testing in person at Prometric

- Schedule your exam using Prometric's website or call them.
- PNCB does not schedule on your behalf. If you need to change or cancel a test date, this is also managed by Prometric.
- Prometric charges PNCB a fee whenever a tester doesn't show, so please honor your scheduled appointment or formally cancel it.
- Read the [candidate handbook](#) to understand rules and what you can and cannot bring into the testing center.

If testing with a live remote proctor

- Exams are administered 24 x 7, anywhere an internet connection is present. Live remote proctored exams do not have time and date restrictions within the approved testing window.
- Create a profile with Examiity then schedule your exam in their portal.
- PNCB does not schedule on your behalf. If you need to change or cancel a test date, this is also managed by Examiity.
- Appointments must be cancelled online with Examiity and those cancelled within 24 hours may incur fees.
- Read the [candidate handbook](#) to understand proctoring rules and learn about technology requirements and other critical information [here](#).

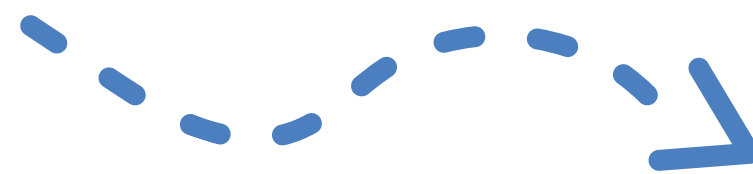
Exam Appointment Guidance

- Even if you plan to test later in the 90-day window, schedule soon after notification. Seats can fill quickly.
- A 90-day extension is available for self-pay applicants. No Pass, No Pay applicants cannot order extensions.
- **Check your IDs now.** Make sure you have the forms of ID that we require. If you have any name changes before you test let us know right away. There's a form you will need to fill out for PNCB.

Please read your handbook

Don't forfeit your exam fee or miss out on a use of your No Pass, No Pay code!

Read your testing handbook completely.



You'll find the answers to these questions and many more:

- Will I get a tutorial on the computer controls?
- Can I take breaks?
- Can I wear any jewelry?





STEP 2

Test

Things to know about the exam experience

How is the CPN exam different than the NCLEX?

- PNCB exams are different than NCLEX in that our exams do not use adaptive testing, which can vary the number of questions a tester sees, and ends when competence is determined.
- Your exam will only stop if you reach the end of the 3-hour testing period or if you finish and submit your answers for scoring.
- PNCB's exams only ask multiple choice questions with one correct answer, while NCLEX contains alternative item formats (fill in the blanks, hot spot items, etc.).
- With PNCB's exams, you can also return to questions and change an answer before final submission.

More FAQs

Is there a penalty for incorrect answers?

No, so it is better to answer every item rather than skip any.

How is the exam scored?

PNCB exams are criterion referenced. This means the passing score is based on predetermined criteria. Your ability to pass the exam depends on the knowledge you display, not on the performance of other candidates. PNCB uses a range from 200 (0 correct) to 800 (all correct) with 400 being the passing score.

What is the passing rate?

For 2022, the first-time pass rate was 77%.

After the Exam

You receive preliminary pass/fail status onscreen.

Do not share specific recollections of exam questions with others afterwards.

If you pass:

- Look for your wall certificate by mail in 2-3 weeks
- A free self-adhesive embroidered patch is included
- Let your supervisor and others know
- Ask if CPN can be added to your name badge
- Visit our [gear store](#) for more swag to celebrate like lapel pins, T-shirts, pens, drinkware, and wall plaques!



After the Exam Continue

If you were not successful:

- Look for a results report in 2-3 weeks
- There's no waiting period to re-apply, but use your results to build a new strong study plan

Can I see which questions I got wrong?

No, because certification exams are secure, and important efforts are made to ensure that security, some of which you'll notice during testing. This security is a requirement for exam accreditation.

While we understand that people want to learn from their mistakes, releasing questions (with or without answers) exposes exam questions that are still in use on exams.

Exam Ethics

Everyone wants to be successful when taking a board certification exam, even your supporters.

But do you know what you can and can't say about exam content?

Use PNCB's [exam ethics toolkit](#) to know what specific behaviors and practices are allowed or prohibited when it comes to sharing information about exam content.

A quiz, video, infographics, and CE are available to educate nurses on the rules.

Don't risk the consequences—for yourself or other nurses.

Do your part to support ethics in testing and protect credentials from revocation. Moreover, unethical exam behaviors hurt the profession and allows people to pass who may not pass otherwise.



Tips to Recognize CPNs

When nurses get certified...

- Celebrate them in newsletters and public spaces
- Order a plaque from our [gear store](#)
- Ask the CNO to send the nurse a letter
- Ask physicians to host a breakfast or reception honoring new CPNs
- Send a press release to local papers
- Send photos and stories to info@pnpcb.org for sharing on the PNCB website and social media
- Recognize CPNs at
 - Certified Nurses Day: March 19
 - Nurses Week: May 6 – 12
 - Pediatric Nurses Week in October

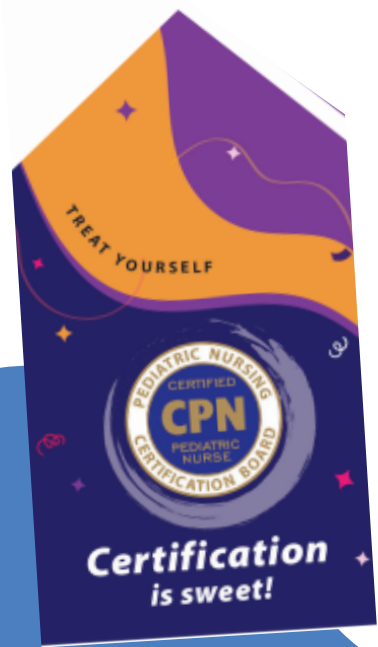


Use the Digital Kit

Show your support for your organization's current and aspiring CPNs with our CPN Digital Resources Kit!

Filled with fun, vibrant printable resources, you receive:

- Treat labels
- Greeting cards
- A fresh take on our most requested flyers



STEP 3

Stay Certified

Understand the renewal process to
maintain CPN status

Maintaining certification

All certification boards require a renewal process.

Recertification or “Recert” for short is the process used to document that you’re keeping your practice and knowledge current.

CPNs recertify annually.

- Fast online application
- Keeps cost and requirements more manageable
- Reduces time gathering CE certificates or other paperwork

What's involved?

Complete **15 contacts hours** (or equivalents that PNCB accepts) to document on the application.

- Clinical practice/work hours are **not required** but can count toward the 15. Academic credit, research, teaching, and posters can be used too.
 - See all options.
- It doesn't matter to PNCB which options you document as long as the hours are:
 - Already earned
 - In the accepted date range
 - Accredited (if true CE)
 - Not a PALS etc. refresher
 - Relevant to pediatric nursing **or** professional development in nursing

Learn & earn!

Use PNCB's no-cost module to understand basic requirements, flexible options, and due dates.

Earn 1 contact hour to apply to a future Recert application for successful completion

Visit www.pncb.org to get this module or use the QR code.



Recert Timing

Submit the application between November 1 and January 31.

- Avoid the late fee, which is added if you wait to recertify between February 1 and 28.
- You choose the day between 11/1 and 1/31 to recertify each year.
- Allow 15 minutes and know which 15 earned hours you want to document.
- Have your RN license information handy.
- If you fail to recertify by the last day of February, your CPN certification will have lapsed. If there is an unforeseen critical life event that prevents you from recertifying timely, please contact our staff.

Did you pass the CPN exam in this calendar year? You won't need to recertify until the next calendar year.

Recert Tips

- Does your employer offer No Pass, No Pay for the exam? Ask them if they offer it for Recert fees too.
- You don't lock in a specific date to recertify.
 - If you recertify on 11/17 one year, you don't have to recertify that day going forward. You are always in control of the date between 11/1 and 1/31.
- Once every 7 years, you can use a reduced fee option called Record Review Year. You will still complete the application. No CE or other activities are required that year. Helpful for major life events!
- You will see onscreen confirmation that your application and payment have been received. You also get an email confirmation immediately afterwards.



PNCB's most important tip?

PNCB is here to help!

Questions about any part of certification or Recert?

- exam@pncb.org
- recert@pncb.org

Need ideas to support interest in the exam?

Questions about No Pass, No Pay?

- nnpn@pncb.org

Or call us at 888-641-2767.

We wish you much success in testing!