

CITB

Wall & Floor Tiling Skills Test

Narrator:

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SPEAKER 1: CITB in Scotland, in partnership with SBATC, develop skills tests on behalf of the construction industry. It's the final part of your apprenticeship, and you need to pass this to become a qualified craftsperson and achieve your SVQ. Passing your skills test should not be too difficult. It's a way of proving that you're capable of doing your job. And if you are, you should be able to pass the test. So, here's what you need to know.

You will sit your skills test within the last six months of your apprenticeship. There are test centres throughout the country, maybe even in your college, and both you and your employer will get plenty notice of where and when your test will take place. At college, you're assessed all the time on what you've learned, and the skills test is just another assessment of your knowledge and hand skills. The only difference is that this test has been designed by CITB, SBATC, and employers.

The test has various elements, and all are things you have been trained and tested on before in your phase tests and other assessments in college. Skills tests are based on skills required to perform the sorts of tasks commonly used on sites. This proves to employers that you can work competently to commercially acceptable standards and at a reasonable speed. If you don't pass your skills test, you will struggle to find another job as a qualified craftsperson or even get onto a site.

It's really important that you do as much as you can to prepare for your test. You should download the Test Candidate Guide from the CITB website to familiarize yourself with the content of the test. You also need to make sure you carefully read the joining instructions you've been sent. You should speak to your employer as soon as possible if you feel you need any refresher training so that on the day you are confident and have the ability to pass.

Make sure you know where your test centre is and how long it will take to get there. If you don't live near a test centre, don't worry. CITB and your employer will help you sort this out.

On the day of your test, timekeeping is really important. If you are late, you won't be allowed to start the test. You'll be asked to prove who you are the test centre, so you'll need to take photo ID with you.

You also need to take your tools to the test. You'll get a list of what's needed from CITB. Don't forget to bring and wear the right personal protective equipment. If you don't, you'll be refused permission to sit the test. Before you start, you'll get a detailed induction and you'll be given a test booklet containing a description of the test. It's important that you read the information for each task before starting. Each task has a description, drawing, and a list of the standards and tolerances that must be met in order to pass each element.

What it doesn't tell you is how to plan the work, so you have to arrange your own work program. Only after you have read these notes and feel confident in what you have planned should you attempt the task. On the day, you will be allocated a test area and a stock of materials you need. If you're unclear on any aspect of the test, please ask the invigilator for advice. That's what they're there for.

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For your wall and floor tiling skills test, you have 12 hours over two days to complete the test, and you must attempt all tasks in the test booklet within the allocated time. It will be your responsibility to decide the best sequence of operations for you, taking into account drying times and preparation of materials. The wall and floor tiling skills test is essentially made up of four sections testing skills in various key elements of the industry.

Tiling to a wall. You have to fix plain-coloured glazed wall tiles to reveals and head using a ready-mix adhesive. You then have to grout the completed tiling. The test consists of just over 1 square meter of wall tiling fixed using dispersion adhesives incorporating 45-degree tiling, hole cutting, reveals, and finishing edge trims, all to be finished and grouted using a cement-based grout.

Tiling to treads and risers. You have to fix plain-coloured floor tiles to steps and risers, including a nosing profile to tread. You then have to grout the completed tiling. The test requires you to finish and tile two steps using cement-based reaction adhesives and cement-based grout incorporating a preformed nosing profile.

Tiling to a floor. The finished floor will incorporate a predetermined fall finishing flush with a fixed gully outlet. Completed model to be grouted using a sand and cement mix.

Wood float finish render coat. You will be asked to apply sand and cement render coat to brick work while covering a minimum area of 2 meters by 1 meter over a single elevation. The thickness of render will vary in order to ensure a plumb surface. The rendering should be true, free of hollow-sounding areas, and firmly banded to the background, and the surface is to be left with a wood or plastic float finish.

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The assessment process. Once you're finished and left the test centre, your test is marked by an independent assessor appointed by SBATC. They use a marking schedule which contains the same standards and tolerances as the test booklet you were given. They then record whether you have met the required standards for each point. Your test result will be either a pass or fail. There is no grading system, but you will be given your score later in a letter.

There's a national standard of testing in all test centres throughout Scotland, so it doesn't matter where you set your test. It's the same test and test conditions for everyone. When you're tiling the wall, you need to select which colour of tiles go in each section. This should be determined by the number of tiles provided. You'll get enough tiles with an allowance for damages and waste.

The tile trim depth will allow you to decide which face the trim should be fitted to. The tiles on the reveals will be a different thickness to those on the front face. Pay particular attention to the reveal tiling. They should be fitted square from the front face. Setting out the diagonal tiles should be as shown in the drawing. All tile cutting, including hole around pipe, must be carried out manually. No power tools are allowed during any part of the test.

When tiling the treads and risers, the exact type of nosing profile used will determine whether a joint should be shown between the tile and nosing profile. If you are in any doubt, speak to the invigilator. Particular attention should be paid to the bedding of tiles on steps. As with industrial standards, you should be working to achieve 100% solid bed.

When tiling the floor, take particular care with the setting-out points of the miter. Each miter should be marked individually from point to point. Miters should not be marked out in a crisscross. The finished floor tile is to be flush with the outlet height. This should be taken into consideration when screening to ensure a finished floor has the correct fall.

Ensure good coverage of slurry coat as this will be checked by the assessor. Remember, when rendering, to allow enough time between each stage for materials to take up. You will be required to render a minimum area of 2 meters by 1 meter. But remember, that the larger the area you cover, the more scope the assessor has to find the best tolerances. The

assessor may ask the invigilator to remove parts of the finished model for closer inspection of fixing standards. So just because it isn't seen doesn't mean it won't be checked.

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After the assessor has marked your test, the schedule is then sent electronically to CITB. CITB then check that your marks are within the pass limit agreed by the industry. And if they are, you pass. You and your employer will then receive a letter confirming this in the coming week. If you fail your skills test, your letter will explain in what areas you need further supervised experience on site and possibly further refresher training in college.

An application form to arrange a resit will be sent out, but you can also download it from the CITB website. However, it's important that before booking a reset you think about the areas you failed in and why. If you think you need more experience or training, speak to your employer or apprenticeship officer to arrange this. If you have only failed in one particular element and passed the rest, in some occupations you may get the opportunity to take a partial resit. This involves only resitting that section.

Once you have passed your skills test, you still have to complete the time-served elements of your apprenticeship to be a fully qualified tradesperson. Your SBATC registration form shows the date in which you will complete your apprenticeship. By this time, you should have achieved your professional developments award, core skills, and all other units of your SVQ. This, combined with passing your skills test, means you would then receive final certification for your SVQ level three and modern apprenticeship. You'll be fully qualified to work on a site in any country in the world, help you get any future employment, or even start your own business.

Finally, good luck when it's time to take your skills test. If you need any further information on skills testing, please look at our website-- citb.co.uk.