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The ACTAR Examination

The ACTAR Examination Explained

The accreditation examination is a two part examination – Theory and Practical or Case Study. Candidates are allowed a maximum of four (4) hours per portion or eight (8) hours total with a break for lunch between portions.

The Theory examination question formats include multiple choice, True/False and questions requiring mathematical calculations for a solution. The following topics: Airborne, Kinetic Energy, Momentum, Time and Distance, Tire Evidence, Change in Velocity (Δv), and Principal Direction of Force are presented in all format types. The following topics: Lamp Examination, Scene Examination, Scene Measurements, Tire Mark Evaluation, and Vehicle Evidence are presented in multiple choice and True/False format only.

Though airborne equations are based on the theory of uniform projectile motion, and Newtonian physics apply to all collisions, there are nuances that demand consideration with regard to motor vehicle crashes which are not necessarily intuitive. Nomenclature specific to accident reconstruction are used to define roadway marks and segregate those marks into specific sub-categories such as chips, chops, grooves, scratches and gouges.

The Practical, or Case Study, portion of the examination requires the candidate complete an accident reconstruction analysis based on problem data provided by ACTAR. The case problem is based on an instrumented crash test conducted by ACTAR. The examination will have objective and definitive answers rather than subjective answers based on the opinion of one reconstructionist or another as would be the case if the crash were drawn from someone's files.

The candidate will be given a scale diagram depicting the physical evidence documented at the scene of the crash, photos of the vehicles and other information in narrative form. Using this information, the candidate will analyze the crash, locate and draw scaled vehicle positions at specific points on their diagram and answer a series of questions regarding the crash. A determination of the speeds of the vehicles at impact will require a momentum analysis. Other issues addressed or information sought will include, but not be limited to, PDOF angles and Delta-V values for each vehicle, occupant motion, time-distance solutions and vehicle center of mass locations.

Computers are not allowed in the examination room. While ACTAR acknowledges the use of computers and computer software is common in the field, the purpose of the examination is to evaluate the candidate's subject knowledge, not their ability to use computer software. As such, candidates should be familiar with the process of reconstructing collisions using pencils, paper, templates and rulers.

Candidates participating in the examination will be allowed a reasonable amount of reference material with them in the examination room during their participation in both portions of the examination. All reference materials must be in printed form. No electronic (pdf) reference materials are permitted. Calculators are permitted, but only those on the approved list. See [Approved List of Calculators](#).

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions or need additional information regarding the examination process, call the ACTAR office (800) 809-3818 or use the [Contact Page](#) to send a message to the ACTAR Administrator.

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