

The Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB) first offered its entry-level nuclear medicine examination 40 years ago in September of 1978. The NMTCB continues to update the arsenal of credentialing programs designed to serve, recognize, and advance the nuclear medicine technologist in the profession. Most recently, the NMTCB developed and deployed a radiation safety certification program for nuclear medicine technologists. The intent of the NMTCB(RS) certification examination is to assess that a technologist has a reasonable level of expertise in radiation safety regarding radioactive materials and CT safety issues, as well as a basic understanding of and competency in the dangers and regulatory concerns in other areas within radiology, such as MRI, fluoroscopy, and radiography.

The NMTCB has been very pleased with the public reception of, and overwhelmingly positive interest that has been shown in, our newest certification program on radiation safety. In November 2017, 68 nuclear medicine technologists sat for the inaugural delivery of the NMTCB's radiation safety certification exam, and 55 (81%) successfully passed. A second delivery of the exam in August 2018 saw another 65 individuals sit for it, with 51 (79%) passing. With the addition of 17 beta examinees who were granted the NMTCB(RS) credential after passing the exam in June 2017, there are now 123 certified technologists who hold the new radiation safety credential.

The NMTCB board has recently fielded a variety of inquiries from non-nuclear medicine individuals (including physicians, scientists, and physicists) who have questioned whether they might be permitted to sit for the examination in order to gain this unique radiation safety credential. However, NMTCB developed the NMTCB(RS) credential with the technologist in mind—particularly, by recognizing and considering a nuclear medicine technologist's education, training, and experience. Therefore, currently, only a

certified or registered nuclear medicine technologist can sit for the NMTCB(RS) examination.

Eligibility requirements to sit for the NMTCB(RS) certification exam also include documented experience performing tasks directly associated with radiation safety extended over a minimum of 1 calendar year. The applicant must provide a letter of attestation from a supervisor or the facility's radiation safety officer regarding this experience. This requirement will be assumed to have been met if the candidate is on or has been on a radioactive materials license in the 7 years prior to the application.

While NMTCB does not intend for the radiation safety credential to fulfill the required criteria for an individual to be recognized as a radiation safety officer by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, a technologist who is credentialed as an NMTCB(RS) certificant should be able to demonstrate knowledge in regulatory safety issues. The credential can help ensure that facilities are properly and continually compliant with their radioactive materials licensing requirements. The NMTCB(RS) certification should also help supervisors and radiation safety officers be able to identify nuclear-certified individuals who have obtained sufficient knowledge regarding radiation safety, regulatory issues, and emergency procedures for a medical-use license.

The next administration of the NMTCB radiation safety exam will be in 2019. Applications for the NMTCB(RS) certification examination are available on the certifications page of the NMTCB website (www.NMTCB.org).



Katie Neal

Katie Neal
Executive Director