

NIAGARA COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE ALTERNATE TEST DATE POLICY

It is the policy of the Niagara County Civil Service Department to provide an alternate test date to those candidates who are unable to appear on the announced scheduled date for a written and/or performance test due to religious beliefs, an emergency or a scheduling conflict beyond their control. However, with respect to each written and/or performance test administration, this policy will be weighted against the overriding need of the Department to maintain the security and integrity of the written and/or performance test. The written and/or performance test represents considerable planning, preparation and expense. Therefore, candidates are expected to make every effort to take the test on its scheduled date. Wider leeway is extended for performance test alternate test dates since the candidates are given only ten (10) days or less notification of the performance test date.

Basis and Parameters for Alternate Test Date

Alternate written and/or performance test dates may be provided for candidates who can establish one of the following:

1. A death in the immediate family or the household in which the candidate resides within the week immediately preceding the announced written test date. Immediate family shall include the spouse, domestic partner, children, siblings, parents and grandparents of the candidate or of his or her spouse.
2. Religious beliefs which preclude a candidate from taking an examination on the announced date.
3. Military duty.
4. A conflict with a previously scheduled commitment to participate as a member of a ceremonial party, such as a wedding, baptism, bar mitzvah or graduation, or as a member of the immediate family or household of the individual for whom the ceremony is being held.
5. A conflict with a professional or educational examination. Examples of professional examinations include the Certified Public Accountant or Professional Engineer examination. Examples of educational examination include the Scholastic Aptitude Test and Graduate Record Examination.
6. A conflict with a previously scheduled vacation, professional conference or retreat for which a significant non-refundable deposit was made prior to the date the examination announcement was issued.
7. A conflict with a court ordered appearance.
8. Hospital confinement or medical emergency or health problem of the candidate or member of the immediate family or household in which candidate resides, if documented by attending physician.
9. Emergency weather conditions, verified by the local public safety agency, that result in the closing of specified roads, highways or independent transportation services, which prevent a candidate from reaching the test center.

Procedures for Requesting an Alternate Test Date for a Written and/or Performance Test

1. When a candidate is aware of a conflict prior to the scheduled test date, the candidate should notify the municipal service agency in writing as soon as possible. The request should contain a complete explanation of the reason the candidate cannot take the test on the scheduled date and be supported by appropriate documentation. It is essential that such requests be received before the date of the test. Requests received on the date of the test or thereafter will not be considered.

2. For emergency situations which occur on the scheduled written test date, the candidate must notify the municipal civil service agency no later than five (5) business days following the Saturday on which the written and/or performance test was held. In the case of a death in the immediate family or the household in which the candidate resides, or serious illness of the candidate, the request may be made by a member of the immediate family or household of the candidate or by a person in an agency, rather than the candidate.

In the event of a serious illness or injury renders a candidate physically unable to take a test for a lengthy period of time, that candidate may still request an alternate test date provided the candidate is tested prior to returning to the workplace and before the examination results are released by the New York State Department of Civil Service.

3. Candidates on short term military duty, which is typically a weekend or a two week training commitment, must request an alternate test date prior to the scheduled test date. Candidates on long term military duty will be allowed 60 days after their return from active duty to request an alternate test date, provided such candidate filed an examination application during the appropriate filing period and the eligible list is still in existence. All requests for alternative test dates based upon military duty must be accompanied by complete written military orders signed by the commanding officer.

Limitations in Applying Alternate Test Date Policy

1. A candidate who takes a test on an alternate date has a responsibility to avoid exposure to any of the test content. The risk of such exposure is increased after the pre-rating review, which is usually held the Saturday following the written test, and for that reason, alternate test dates will generally not be granted later than the date of the pre-rating review. No candidate will be tested, under any circumstances, after the candidate has been in contact with other candidates after the pre-rating review.
2. Candidates approved to take the test on the alternate date will be required to sign an affirmation that they have not discussed the test content with any individual. If the affirmation is found to be false, the candidate will be disqualified.
3. When a candidate requests an alternate test date because of an emergency, the candidate will be required to provide documentation proving the emergency nature of the event which precluded him or her from taking the written test. Documentation must be provided no later than five (5) business days following the Saturday on which the written and/or performance test was given.
4. If two or more members of a household are candidates for the same examination and one member requests an alternate test date, all members of the household participating in the examination will be required to take the test on the alternate date. If any member of the household has taken the test on the scheduled date, no other member of the household will be permitted to take the test on an alternate date.
5. Where an alternate test date request can only be accommodated by administering a test on an individual basis, the candidate may be assessed the cost of the monitoring services unless there is a compelling reason to waive the fee. Candidates will be advised of the approximate cost at the time arrangements for an alternate date are being made.