



Preparation Guide

TOWES was developed by the BC Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council (*SkillPlan*) and **Bow Valley College**.

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TOWES

Preparation Guide

About the TOWES test

The Test of Workplace Essential Skills or TOWES, measures some of the essential or basic skills people use at work. These skills include reading, using forms and other documents and solving problems that involve numbers.

The questions are grouped in problem sets. Each problem set asks questions relating to a document sample, which is taken from a work situation. The documents used in the test include forms, maps and charts, as well as reading selections from service manuals and regulations.

Some of the work situations may not be familiar to YOU, but you probably have enough general ability to answer the questions. Remember TOWES tests your ability to find and use information. All of the information to answer the questions is in the document samples.

Writing the test:

1. Before the test begins, listen to the instructions. Ask questions if you aren't sure.
2. Survey the test by taking 3 minutes to look through the test booklet. This will give you an idea of how to plan your time.
3. Relax, there is plenty of time to complete all questions. Take the time to read each question carefully and study the workplace example. Imagine yourself as a worker who needs to solve this problem. What looks complex at first will start to make sense if you take it one step at a time.
4. Rephrase the question in your own words. What is the question asking for? when, why or how much? What is the number of hours, meters, people?
5. Attempt all questions in a problem set. Sometimes the first question is more difficult than later questions. Remember, no marks are taken off for wrong answers. Problem sets can be completed in any order.
6. If you change an answer, erase or cross out the previous answer.
7. Check to make sure questions were not missed, especially on fold out pages.

What will the exam cover?

- Reading text in sentences and paragraphs.

You will be asked to read selections from manuals, regulations, notices, brochures, journals and other reading materials used by workers.

Questions will ask you to find and use information.

- Using Documents

In these questions, you will read maps, tables, diagrams, plans and similar materials to find and use information. You may be asked to enter information on sales slips or other types of forms.

- Solving problems with numbers

Problems that use numbers may require you to count money, budget, measure, calculate, or use graphs.

All of the tasks are done by some workers in Canada every day.

Sample Question

The **Brewer Valve Problem** shown on the next 2 pages is typical of the type of question sets found in the TOWES test. It has been chosen as an example because it demonstrates the range of questions you will find on the actual test. Many TOWES questions are less difficult than this one, while others are more difficult. Practice your skills by doing this problem.

Now, turn over the page and answer
the questions in the
Brewer Valve Problem



Brewer Valve Problem

Look at the drawing and parts listing for the Eaton brewer valve on the page opposite.

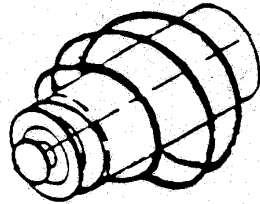


Brewer valves are found in automatic coffee machines. They open to allow hot water to mix with the coffee.

Question

1

What is the name of the part shown here?



Question

2

What is the part number of the two “O” rings used in this valve?

Question

3

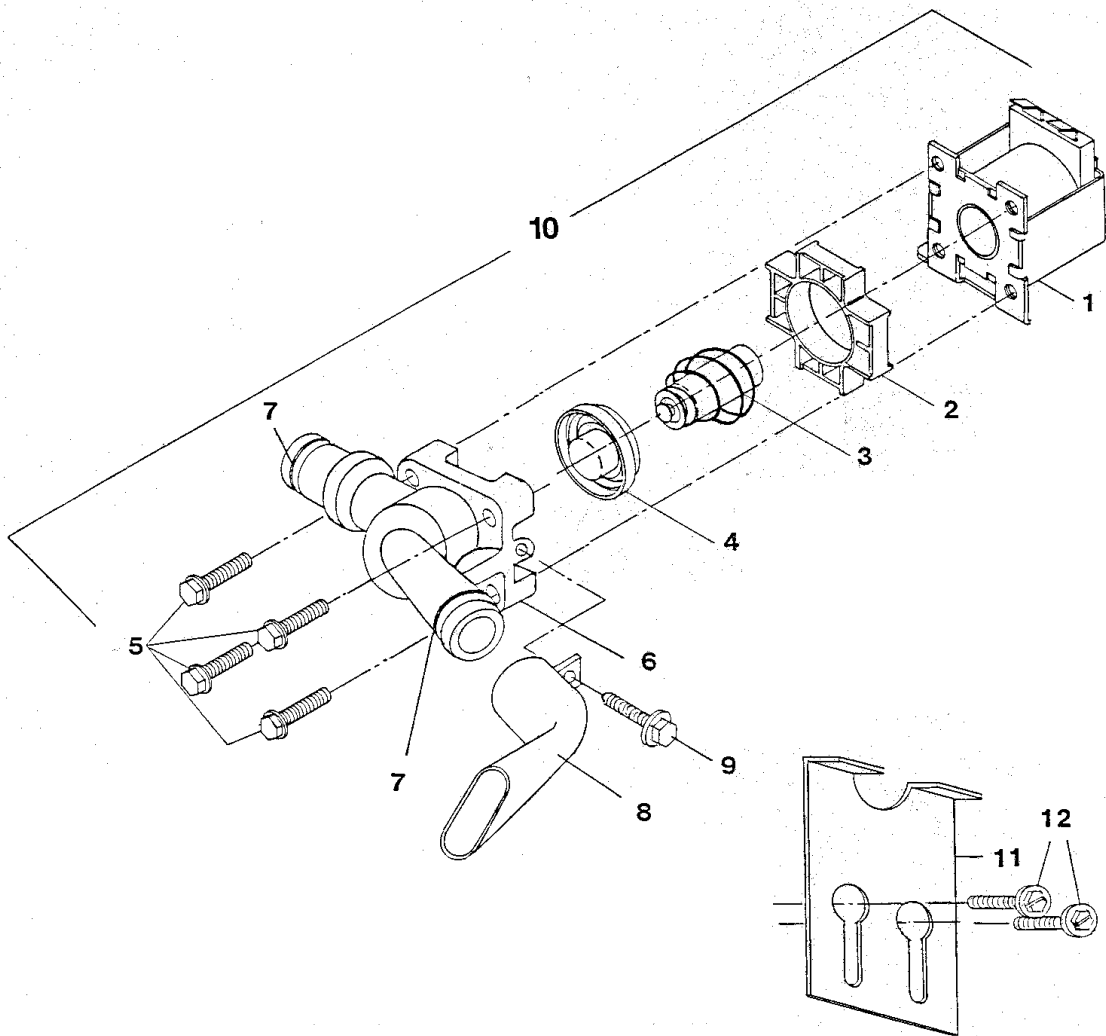
What part number would a repair person use to order the whole valve?

Question

4

On the drawing, highlight or circle the picture of the parts that are not included when Part 10 is ordered.

Mark the brewer valve diagram



EATON BREWER VALVE ASSEMBLY

Items with Part Numbers are Stocked by RMI

1.	Coil, Red	30596
2.	Adapter	27787
3.	Armature and Spring	30598
4.	Diaphragm	27793
5.	Screw, Valve Mounting	
6.	Body, Brewer Valve, White	28732
7.	"O" Ring, 1/2 x 5/8	14759
8.	Spout, Brewer Valve, Black	28733
9.	Screw, 6 x 5/16, PH, Type 25, SCP	28825
10.	Valve Asm Brewer (Includes Items 1-9)	30854
11.	Bracket, Brewer Valve Retainer	28814
12.	Screw, 8-32 x 3/8, HH, SCP	14806

NOTE: Items 11 and 12 are Sold Separately from Valve Asm, Item 10

How to Evaluate your Work.

Check your responses to the Brewer Valve Problem.

1. *What is the name of the part shown here?*

Answer **Armature and Spring**

If I answered this question incorrectly, what skills do I need to work on? This question tests your ability to use documents. The specific skills are:

- locating information in an assembly drawing
- identifying the correct number in a table

In order to locate the information needed, you must correctly match the object to the one shown on the drawing. Once you find the same part, you can see that it is **labeled with the number 3**. The next step is to find the row numbered 3 in the table below the drawing. Beside number 3. is the name of the part, Armature and Spring.

2. *What is the part number of the two “O” rings used in this valve?*

Answer **14759**

If I answered this question incorrectly, what skills do I need to work on? This question tests your ability to use documents. The specific skills are:

- locating information in a drawing
- locating information in a table format
- locating information by matching a single word

This question also tests your ability to read carefully. The answer asks for a number not a name. To find the answer to this question, you could search the drawing if you happen to know what an “O” ring looks like. You could even eliminate all the parts that don’t look like a ring until you are able to select the correct answer, the part labeled 7 in the drawing. You will have to use the table with the title “**Eaton Brewer Valve Assembly**” and notice that it includes “**Items and Part Numbers . . .**”. Scan the table to find the row starting with 7 or showing the words “O” rings in the second column. Look across the row to find the part number in the third column (far right).

3. What part number would a repair person use to order the whole valve?

Answer 30854

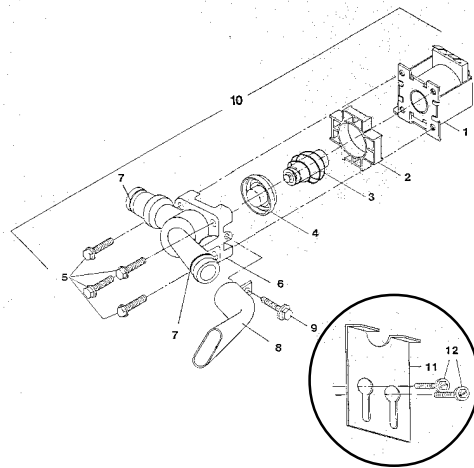
If I answered this question incorrectly, what skills do I need to work on? This question tests your ability to use documents. The specific skills are:

- locating information in a drawing and in a table
- interpreting a line to mean, includes multiple parts
- interpreting “(Includes Items 1-9)” as the “whole valve”.
- identifying the column which shows order numbers

This question also tests your ability to read carefully. The word “order” tells you a part number is required. In this question you can find the information in two ways. The first is to interpret the long line numbered 10 on the drawing as “**the whole valve**”. You could also scan the table and find the words “**(Includes Items 1-9)**”. Once you have decided that 10 is the part number, you must locate the correct order number in the column to the right and find 30854.

4. On the drawing, highlight or circle the picture of the parts that are not included when Part 10 is ordered.

Answer



If I answered this question incorrectly, what skills do I need to work on? This question tests your ability to use documents. The specific skills are:

- locating information in a drawing
- identify that the line numbered 10 includes items 1-9.
- infer that parts 11 and 12 are not included.

This question also tests your ability to read carefully. It is important to notice that the word “not” is underlined. In order to answer the question, you must determine that **Part 10 includes Parts 1 to 9**. Once those are eliminated, only 11 and 12 are left. Another way to decide this is to look at the chart and read the NOTE which tells you that “parts are sold separately” which means they are not included. Once the parts not included are identified, you highlight or circle them.

On Test Day

What do you need to bring?

- pen or pencil and highlighter pen if you have one
- basic calculator or adding machine. (If you are not comfortable using a calculator, the questions can be completed without using one.)
- Some of the print found in workplace documents is small. If you have trouble reading small print, bring a magnifying glass. If you wear glasses, bring them.

How long does the test take to write?

TOWES takes about 2 hours to write. If you have a choice of time, pick the time in which you can concentrate best.

Test Taking Tips

Before the Test:

- Be positive about your abilities. TOWES tests skills that you use every day.
- Read this booklet carefully and prepare for the test.
- Being prepared to write the Test of Workplace Essential Skills will help you to do well. Your ability to follow instructions, to be punctual and to be organized, will contribute to your success.
- Get a good night's sleep and have something to eat before the test.

Know the answers to these questions:

- What is the purpose of the test?
- What types of questions will be asked?
- How long will it take?
- Where do I take the test? Address and room number. Plan to arrive early.
- What do I need to bring?
- How will I get my results?

Where to Get Help.

Adults continue to learn all their lives, but most adults have some gaps in learning. For example, an individual may be very familiar with most math functions but never really understood fractions. Sometimes lack of use makes skills rusty. After writing the test, you may realize that you need to improve your skills in some areas. There are many drop-in learning centers and volunteer tutor programs in most communities that can help you to learn specific skills. If you prefer a more structured learning environment, you may want to enroll in a class to enhance your skills.

- Call your local Community College, School Board or other educational provider.
- Seek out other learning opportunities in your community. The local library may be able to help with books, video and other learning resources.
- Practice reading and problem-solving every day. Tackle those manuals and forms that look so difficult. Get someone to help you.

Good luck on TOWES !