

# How to Pass the PHRca Exam

## Study Tips & Resources

The **PHRca® (Professional in Human Resources – California)** is a specialized certification designed for HR professionals focused on California employment law. Unlike general HR certifications that emphasize federal laws and practices, the PHRca dives deep into the complex and ever-evolving legal landscape of the Golden State.

If you're preparing for the PHRca, you're making a smart move, but success requires the right strategy and the right study tools. This guide will walk you through what to expect, how to study, and which resources (including *Train Me Today*) can give you a competitive edge.

### What is the PHRca Exam?

The PHRca is administered by **HRCI (HR Certification Institute)** and validates your understanding of:

- California-specific labor laws
- State-mandated benefits
- Leaves of absence
- Health and safety requirements (Cal/OSHA)
- Risk management and termination rules

### Who Should Take the PHRca?

You should consider this certification if:

- You live or work in California as an HR professional
- You're based out of state but support California-based employees
- You're an HR consultant working with California clients
- You already hold a PHR/SPHR and want to specialize in California law

### PHRca Exam Overview

Feature	Details
Length	2 hours
Questions	90 (65 scored, 25 unscored)
Format	Multiple choice
Delivery	Pearson VUE test centers or online
Cost	\$395 exam fee + \$100 application fee



## What's on the Exam?

The content is divided into 5 functional areas:

1. **California HR Operations (20%)**
2. **California Compensation and Benefits (20%)**
3. **California Leaves of Absence and Workers' Compensation (20%)**
4. **California Health, Safety, and Security (20%)**
5. **California Employee and Labor Relations (20%)**

Each area is tested with real-world scenario-based questions that require both factual knowledge and contextual understanding.

## Study Tips to Help You Pass

### 1. Start With the Official Content Outline

Download HRCI's official PHRca content outline to understand the scope of the exam. Use it as your master checklist while studying.

### 2. Choose California-Specific Study Materials

Avoid relying solely on general HR materials like SHRM or PHR prep books, they won't cover California law in depth. Instead, use **resources tailored to California**, such as:

**Train Me Today:** One of the most trusted and long-standing PHRca prep providers. Their study guide, first published in 2016, is updated **every year**, something you won't find with most other study materials. It's designed specifically for the PHRca and reflects the latest changes in California law and exam structure.

### 3. Follow a Structured Study Plan

Give yourself at least **7–10 weeks** to prepare. Break down topics week by week based on exam weight, and set measurable goals (e.g., chapters completed, practice questions taken).

### 4. Practice Under Timed Conditions

Taking full-length practice exams under timed conditions is critical. This helps with pacing and builds the stamina you'll need on test day.

## 5. Understand the “Why” Behind California Laws

Many exam questions test application, not memorization. Knowing **why** California laws differ from federal ones (and how they protect employees) will help you choose the best answer in nuanced scenarios.

## 6. Stay Informed

California law is in constant flux. Use tools like HR newsletters, legal alerts, Train Me Today email blasts and the **Train Me Today** study guide (which is regularly updated) to stay ahead of changes.

### Top Study Resources for the PHRca Exam

Resource	Description	Why It's Valuable
<b>Train Me Today – PHRca Study Guide</b>	A comprehensive, California-specific training program that includes videos, practice exams and other resources and is updated annually since 2016	Up-to-date, written by experts, tailored to the exam
<b>HRCalifornia (CalChamber)</b>	Access to current labor law guidance, forms, tools	Trusted by HR professionals across the state
<b>California Labor Law Digest</b>	Detailed book on CA employment regulations	Ideal for in-depth legal reference
<b>HRCI Practice Exams</b>	Practice questions from the exam provider – however, they are not the questions on the exam.	Closest match to the real test
<b>Quizlet Flashcards</b>	Free flashcards based on PHRca concepts	Great for quick review and memorization

### On Test Day: What to Expect

- Arrive early (or log in 30 minutes before your online exam)
- Have your government-issued ID ready
- Use your time wisely. You have about **1.3 minutes per question**
- Don't second-guess your first instinct unless you're sure



## Final Thoughts

Passing the PHRca exam requires a focused understanding of California employment law, and preparation is everything. With the **right study plan, current materials, and California-specific resources like Train Me Today**, you can go into the exam confident and ready to succeed.

This certification not only strengthens your resume, it also empowers you to better navigate one of the most legally complex HR environments in the country.

**Tip:** If you're serious about passing on the first try, don't cut corners. Invest in a proven, annually updated program like the one from **Train Me Today**. It's a game changer.

### Contact us:

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PH: 714-269-9925 Available 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. California time

[Register today!](#)