

ACI Concrete Finisher Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. Portland cement will set and harden under water: True or False?**
 - A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Sometimes**
 - D. Only with additives**

- 2. Bulls floats are used when achieving which specific F-number floor flatness?**
 - A. F-10**
 - B. F-20**
 - C. F-30**
 - D. F-40**

- 3. The contraction joint spacing rule is described as spacing in feet should be 2-3 times slab thickness in inches. Which option correctly states this rule?**
 - A. Spacing in feet should be 2-3 times slab thickness in inches**
 - B. Spacing in inches should be 2-3 times slab thickness in feet**
 - C. Spacing in feet should be 1-2 times slab thickness in inches**
 - D. Spacing in inches should be 4-5 times slab thickness in inches**

- 4. The difference between two sections finished with different methods is most likely to affect which aesthetic aspect?**
 - A. Difference in colors**
 - B. Strength unaffected**
 - C. Thermal conductivity**
 - D. Acoustic properties**

- 5. Retarding admixtures used in hot-weather concrete reduce the possibility of surface crusting. True or False?**
 - A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Not sure**
 - D. It depends**

- 6. For floor flatness evaluation, which straightedge length is specified for measuring the gap?**
- A. 6 feet**
 - B. 12 feet**
 - C. 10 feet**
 - D. 8 feet**
- 7. The direction of the first machine floating pass should be _____ to the direction of the last finishing procedure.**
- A. Perpendicular**
 - B. Parallel**
 - C. Diagonal**
 - D. Irregular**
- 8. On a slab treated with both machine and hand finishes, what would a spec sheet most likely call out as an issue needing resolution?**
- A. Difference in colors**
 - B. Higher density**
 - C. Greater flatness**
 - D. Improved surface hardness**
- 9. When planning a floor installation, why is it important to standardize finishing methods across the entire area?**
- A. Difference in colors**
 - B. To ensure higher finishing speed**
 - C. To reduce curing time**
 - D. To increase air entrainment**
- 10. Truck-mounted conveyors are especially useful on jobs with which condition?**
- A. Height restrictions**
 - B. Limited space**
 - C. Poor weather**
 - D. Low visibility**

Answers

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1. A
2. B
3. A
4. A
5. B
6. C
7. A
8. A
9. A
10. A

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Explanations

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1. Portland cement will set and harden under water: True or False?

A. True

B. False

C. Sometimes

D. Only with additives

Portland cement is hydraulic, meaning it reacts with water to harden. When mixed with water, chemical hydration forms calcium silicate hydrates and calcium hydroxide that bind the paste and any aggregates, and these reactions proceed whether the mixture is in air or underwater. So it will set and harden underwater. Additives aren't required for underwater setting, though they can adjust setting time or workability and special underwater concrete methods can help control washout.

2. Bulls floats are used when achieving which specific F-number floor flatness?

A. F-10

B. F-20

C. F-30

D. F-40

A bull float is used to bring a plastic concrete surface to a uniform, mid-range plane right after screeding. It smooths ridges and closes the surface enough to be workable, without finishing it to an ultra-smooth state. The F-number scale measures how flat the floor is, with higher numbers meaning flatter surfaces. The bull float stage typically yields a flatness around F-20, which is why this tool is associated with achieving that level. If you aim for rougher finishes (lower flatness), you'd still see ridges or inconsistencies; for very high flatness (F-30 or F-40), you'd continue with finer finishing steps like additional troweling. So the bull float best aligns with reaching F-20 floor flatness.

3. The contraction joint spacing rule is described as spacing in feet should be 2-3 times slab thickness in inches. Which option correctly states this rule?

A. Spacing in feet should be 2-3 times slab thickness in inches

B. Spacing in inches should be 2-3 times slab thickness in feet

C. Spacing in feet should be 1-2 times slab thickness in inches

D. Spacing in inches should be 4-5 times slab thickness in inches

Contraction joints are placed to control where cracks form as concrete shrinks during drying, so the spacing is tied to how thick the slab is. The rule uses spacing in feet equal to 2 to 3 times the slab thickness in inches, meaning a thicker slab gets wider joint spacing. For example, a 6-inch slab would have joints about 12 to 18 feet apart. This approach provides a practical, reliable crack-control pattern. The other formulations would either swap units (using inches for spacing when thickness is in inches) or use an incorrect multiplier, which would change the spacing to an improper distance.

4. The difference between two sections finished with different methods is most likely to affect which aesthetic aspect?

- A. Difference in colors**
- B. Strength unaffected**
- C. Thermal conductivity**
- D. Acoustic properties**

Surface finishing methods change how light interacts with the top layer of concrete, which mainly shows up as color and sheen. When two sections are finished differently, moisture evaporation, the amount of cement paste exposed, and any color additives or sealers can alter the shade, making the colors look distinctly different. That makes color the most noticeable aesthetic difference. The underlying strength and bulk properties stay essentially the same, and while finish can slightly affect surface texture or how light reflects (which can influence perceived brightness), those are secondary to the color change.

5. Retarding admixtures used in hot-weather concrete reduce the possibility of surface crusting. True or False?

- A. True**
- B. False**
- C. Not sure**
- D. It depends**

Crusting in hot weather happens when the surface dries and stiffens faster than the interior can set, forming a hard skin that can affect finish and durability. Retarding admixtures slow the chemical reaction and the heat of hydration, which helps with workability and reduces the risk of thermal cracking, but they don't stop water from evaporating at the surface. Because crusting is driven primarily by moisture loss at the surface rather than just how quickly the mix begins to set, a retarder doesn't inherently reduce the chance of crust formation. In fact, if curing and moisture control aren't managed, delaying set can keep the surface in a plastic state longer while evaporation continues, potentially keeping a crust from forming the way you'd want it to. The practical way to curb crusting is proper curing and moisture retention (fogging, misting, covering, curing compounds), along with finishing procedures that minimize surface drying.

6. For floor flatness evaluation, which straightedge length is specified for measuring the gap?

- A. 6 feet**
- B. 12 feet**
- C. 10 feet**
- D. 8 feet**

When you evaluate floor flatness, you assess how much the concrete surface deviates from a straight, level plane by using a rigid straightedge and noting the gap between the edge and the surface as you test across the slab. The length of that straightedge sets the sampling span: long enough to average out small texture but short enough to reveal meaningful waviness. The specified straightedge length is ten feet because it provides a standardized, practical span that yields representative measurements of the surface without hiding larger irregularities or overemphasizing tiny ones. A shorter tool would exaggerate local roughness, while a longer one could smooth over noticeable deviations, making the results less meaningful. Therefore, ten feet is the approved length for measuring the gap in this floor flatness evaluation.

7. The direction of the first machine floating pass should be _____ to the direction of the last finishing procedure.

- A. Perpendicular**
- B. Parallel**
- C. Diagonal**
- D. Irregular**

The key idea is that finishing texture and flatness improve when you cross the paths of your passes. The first machine floating pass should be perpendicular to the direction of the last finishing pass because finishing in a different direction helps blend and cross over any ridges or high spots created by the first pass. That cross-direction pattern creates a more uniform surface, reduces visible track marks from the final pass, and aids in pulling the cream and smoothing the surface evenly. If the passes were parallel, the last finishing stroke could ride along the grooves left by the first pass, making the surface look grooved and less uniform. A diagonal or irregular direction wouldn't provide the predictable cross-hatch effect that helps achieve consistent texture and planarity.

8. On a slab treated with both machine and hand finishes, what would a spec sheet most likely call out as an issue needing resolution?

A. Difference in colors

B. Higher density

C. Greater flatness

D. Improved surface hardness

The main idea here is achieving uniform appearance across a slab that has been finished with both machine and hand methods. When two finishing processes are used, they interact with the surface differently, which often leads to visible color differences between the areas. Machine finishing tends to compact and seal the surface more, sometimes darkening it or giving a smoother, less absorptive finish. Hand finishing can leave the surface slightly more porous or textured, which can reflect light differently and appear lighter or shaded in areas. Those color variations are what a spec sheet would flag as needing resolution, because appearance is a key acceptance criterion for decorative and architectural concrete. The other options involve properties that aren't typically driven by mixing machine and hand finishing in the sense of an appearance issue. Higher density is not usually a concern arising from finishing methods in this context; flatness differences, while important, would be addressed under leveling/finishing tolerances rather than called out as a color-related defect; and improved surface hardness is a desirable performance attribute, not a defect to resolve. Therefore, color difference is the issue most likely referenced by the spec sheet.

9. When planning a floor installation, why is it important to standardize finishing methods across the entire area?

A. Difference in colors

B. To ensure higher finishing speed

C. To reduce curing time

D. To increase air entrainment

Standardizing finishing methods across the whole floor helps you achieve a uniform color and overall appearance. The way the surface is finished—trowel passes, timing between steps, moisture control, and pressure—directly influences how the concrete dries and oxidizes. If different sections are finished with different techniques or at different times, you'll often see patches of lighter or darker color, making the floor look inconsistent. Using a consistent approach everywhere minimizes those color variations and gives a cohesive final look. As for the other options, finishing speed depends more on the operator and equipment, curing time is driven by the mix and curing practices, and air entrainment is a property of the concrete mix, not something created by changing finishing methods.

10. Truck-mounted conveyors are especially useful on jobs with which condition?

A. Height restrictions

B. Limited space

C. Poor weather

D. Low visibility

Focusing on how to place concrete when overhead clearance is limited is what this question is getting at. Truck-mounted conveyors are built to reach into tight vertical spaces and deliver concrete where a taller, heavier setup would struggle. Because they're mounted on a towable truck, you can position the unit close to the pour and extend the boom to the exact height needed without raising giant pumps or cranes. This makes them especially useful when there are height restrictions—low ceilings, openings, or other overhead obstacles—since you can still place concrete at the required elevation without violating those limits. Other conditions don't address vertical reach in the same way. Limited space is more about ground area, poor weather or low visibility don't inherently hinge on the equipment's ability to discharge at a restricted height. So the ability to work within height restrictions is the standout advantage of truck-mounted conveyors.

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Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://aciconcretfinisher.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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