

American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	5
Answers	8
Explanations	10
Next Steps	16

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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. In surface anatomy, what does "frontal" indicate?**
 - A. The back surface of the head**
 - B. The area pertaining to the abdomen**
 - C. The front surface of the head**
 - D. The area of the ear**

- 2. When is authorization for organ or tissue procurement considered valid?**
 - A. When a physician gives verbal consent**
 - B. When the legal next of kin provides consent**
 - C. When a donor card is discovered in a wallet**
 - D. When the decedent's physician confirms consent**

- 3. At what percentage of carbon monoxide in the blood is it considered fatal for children?**
 - A. 10-15%**
 - B. 20-30%**
 - C. 30-40%**
 - D. 50-60%**

- 4. What is a videotaped scene recreation shown to a jury called?**
 - A. Physical evidence**
 - B. Demonstrative evidence**
 - C. Reproductive evidence**
 - D. Trace evidence**

- 5. What is the main focus of a narrative report in a death investigation?**
 - A. The main reason for the death**
 - B. Your involvement in the case**
 - C. Background information regarding the condition of the body**
 - D. An overall view of what happened**

6. What is indicated by identifiable soot in the airway of a fire victim?

- A. Presence of a pre-existing condition**
- B. Breathing during the fire**
- C. Charring of the tissue due to heat**
- D. The victim was smoking at the time**

7. Which of the following is NOT part of the hierarchy of next of kin (NOK)?

- A. Surviving grandparents**
- B. Surviving children or their legal guardian**
- C. Deceased siblings**
- D. Surviving spouse**

8. Which area corresponds to the term "auricular" in surface anatomy?

- A. The back of the head**
- B. The area of the ear**
- C. The area of the mouth**
- D. The area over the eye**

9. Which cardinal sign of death refers to the stiffness of the body?

- A. Livor mortis**
- B. Rigor mortis**
- C. Absence of heartbeat**
- D. Body coolness**

10. Maintaining the "chain of evidence" primarily refers to which of the following?

- A. The list of materials used to process the evidence**
- B. Accountability for the evidence**
- C. The strength of the evidence**
- D. The relationship of the evidence to the type of crime**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. In surface anatomy, what does "frontal" indicate?

- A. The back surface of the head**
- B. The area pertaining to the abdomen**
- C. The front surface of the head**
- D. The area of the ear**

The term "frontal" in surface anatomy specifically refers to the front surface of the head. It is derived from the word "frons," which means forehead in Latin. This area encompasses the forehead and extends to the area around the eyes and nose. Understanding anatomical terminology is crucial, as these terms provide clear descriptions of locations on the body. The use of "frontal" distinguishes this region from other areas, such as the back surface of the head, the abdomen, or the area around the ears, which are defined by their own specific terms in anatomy.

2. When is authorization for organ or tissue procurement considered valid?

- A. When a physician gives verbal consent**
- B. When the legal next of kin provides consent**
- C. When a donor card is discovered in a wallet**
- D. When the decedent's physician confirms consent**

Authorization for organ or tissue procurement is considered valid when the legal next of kin provides consent. This is because, in many jurisdictions, the legal next of kin is recognized as having the authority to make decisions regarding the deceased's body after death, including the potential donation of organs and tissues. The consent must be documented and provided in accordance with legal and ethical standards, ensuring that all parties involved are clear about their rights and responsibilities regarding organ procurement. In contrast, verbal consent from a physician, discovering a donor card, or confirmation from the decedent's physician may not meet the necessary legal requirements or may lack the formal documentation needed for valid consent. It is essential to follow legal protocols to ensure that the process of organ donation is respectful of the deceased's wishes and those of their family.

3. At what percentage of carbon monoxide in the blood is it considered fatal for children?

- A. 10-15%**
- B. 20-30%**
- C. 30-40%**
- D. 50-60%**

In children, a carbon monoxide (CO) level in the blood of 20-30% is critical and often considered potentially fatal. Carbon monoxide interferes with the blood's ability to carry oxygen, leading to hypoxia. Children are generally more vulnerable to the effects of CO poisoning due to their smaller body size and higher metabolism compared to adults, which means they may exhibit severe symptoms at lower concentrations. At the 20-30% range, symptoms can escalate quickly, leading to neurological impairments, loss of consciousness, or even death if not treated promptly. The risk increases with higher levels of CO, but the 20-30% range is a significant threshold that can lead to life-threatening situations, particularly in young children. In contrast, levels below this range may not be immediately fatal, although they can still lead to symptoms like headache, dizziness, or nausea. The higher ranges of 30-40% and beyond are increasingly serious and likely to be fatal without immediate intervention, but the critical threshold for children is specifically noted around the 20-30% mark.

4. What is a videotaped scene recreation shown to a jury called?

- A. Physical evidence**
- B. Demonstrative evidence**
- C. Reproductive evidence**
- D. Trace evidence**

A videotaped scene recreation shown to a jury is classified as demonstrative evidence. This type of evidence is used to help illustrate or clarify points presented during a trial. It aids in understanding the context of the case by providing a visual representation of the crime scene, which can be critical for juries as they assess the evidence and arguments presented by both sides. Demonstrative evidence includes various materials, such as models, charts, and, in this case, videotapes, which serve to illustrate facts or concepts that might be complex or abstract. The purpose of using such evidence is to enhance the jury's comprehension of the situation being deliberated, making it a powerful tool in legal proceedings. In contrast, physical evidence refers to tangible objects tied to a crime (like weapons or clothing), reproductive evidence relates to evidence that shows a sequence of events through reproduction of actions, and trace evidence typically involves small, often microscopic materials that accumulate during the commission of a crime. Each of these categories serves different functions in legal contexts, but in this instance, the correct categorization of a videotaped scene recreation as demonstrative evidence is pivotal for its role in aiding jury understanding.

5. What is the main focus of a narrative report in a death investigation?

- A. The main reason for the death**
- B. Your involvement in the case**
- C. Background information regarding the condition of the body**
- D. An overall view of what happened**

The main focus of a narrative report in a death investigation is to provide a comprehensive overview of the events leading to and surrounding the death. This narrative not only outlines the facts of the case but also synthesizes the collected evidence, witness statements, and investigative findings into a coherent story that captures the sequence of events. It is essential for establishing context, clarifying circumstances, and assisting in understanding the dynamics of the situation involved. Including an overall view of what happened allows investigators, other professionals, and stakeholders to grasp the essential details and implications of the investigation, facilitating further legal, medical, or procedural actions as necessary. The narrative serves as a vital document that can also guide future discussions, provide clarity in legal contexts, and help formulate conclusions about the death in a manner that integrates all the different facets of the investigation.

6. What is indicated by identifiable soot in the airway of a fire victim?

- A. Presence of a pre-existing condition**
- B. Breathing during the fire**
- C. Charring of the tissue due to heat**
- D. The victim was smoking at the time**

Identifiable soot in the airway of a fire victim is a significant indicator that the individual was breathing in the smoke and gases produced by the fire. When soot is present, it suggests that the victim inhaled combustion particles, which typically occurs when they were alive and attempting to breathe during the incident. This is a crucial piece of forensic evidence that helps to determine the circumstances surrounding the death, particularly regarding whether the victim was alive during the fire event and actively inhaling the smoke. The presence of soot does not directly indicate any pre-existing medical conditions, which would not typically contribute to soot accumulation in the airway. Additionally, it is distinct from charring of the tissue, which relates more to thermal injury rather than the inhalation of substances. While the possibility of smoking at the time could potentially introduce soot into the airway, evidence of soot from a fire context primarily indicates the inhalation of fire-related particles rather than general smoking. Thus, the conclusion that the victim was breathing during the fire aligns with the forensic implications of soot in the airway.

7. Which of the following is NOT part of the hierarchy of next of kin (NOK)?

- A. Surviving grandparents**
- B. Surviving children or their legal guardian**
- C. Deceased siblings**
- D. Surviving spouse**

The hierarchy of next of kin (NOK) is important in determining who has legal rights and responsibilities in matters related to an individual who has passed away. Understanding this hierarchy can clarify who is entitled to make decisions regarding the deceased's estate or funeral arrangements. In this context, surviving children or their legal guardians, surviving spouse, and surviving grandparents all represent living relatives who have a claim in the hierarchy of next of kin. They can participate actively in decision-making due to their status as living relatives. Deceased siblings, however, do not fit into the hierarchy since they are not living relatives. The term 'next of kin' inherently refers to those who are relatives in life, while deceased individuals cannot fulfill the criteria of being next of kin. Thus, deceased siblings are not considered part of the NOK framework, which is why their inclusion would not be appropriate in this context.

8. Which area corresponds to the term "auricular" in surface anatomy?

- A. The back of the head**
- B. The area of the ear**
- C. The area of the mouth**
- D. The area over the eye**

The term "auricular" refers specifically to the area of the ear in surface anatomy. This terminology is derived from the Latin word "auricula," which means "little ear." In anatomical discussions, "auricular" is used to describe structures or regions associated with the ear, including both the external ear and certain aspects of the inner workings related to hearing. Understanding this terminology helps in accurately identifying and communicating about various body regions in medical contexts. Therefore, the correct choice highlighting the area of the ear aligns with this definition. In contrast, the other options refer to different anatomical regions: the back of the head, the mouth, and the area over the eye, which do not pertain to the ears and, thus, do not fit the meaning of "auricular."

9. Which cardinal sign of death refers to the stiffness of the body?

- A. Livor mortis**
- B. Rigor mortis**
- C. Absence of heartbeat**
- D. Body coolness**

The stiffness of the body after death is referred to as rigor mortis. This phenomenon occurs due to biochemical changes in the muscle tissue, leading to a temporary stiffening of the muscles. Rigor mortis typically begins a few hours after death and can last for several days before the body begins to relax again. Understanding rigor mortis is crucial for forensic investigators as it can provide valuable information about the time of death and the circumstances surrounding the death. In contrast, livor mortis is the pooling of blood due to gravity, leading to a discoloration of the skin, while the absence of heartbeat indicates the immediate cessation of circulatory functions. Body coolness refers to the process of algor mortis, which is the cooling of the body after death. Each of these signs serves a different purpose in determining time of death and assessing the post-mortem state of the body, but rigor mortis specifically relates to the stiffness observed in the muscles.

10. Maintaining the "chain of evidence" primarily refers to which of the following?

- A. The list of materials used to process the evidence**
- B. Accountability for the evidence**
- C. The strength of the evidence**
- D. The relationship of the evidence to the type of crime**

Maintaining the "chain of evidence" is crucial in forensic science and legal proceedings, as it ensures that every piece of evidence collected during an investigation can be accounted for at all times. This accountability means documenting each transfer or handling of the evidence, detailing who collected it, how it was collected, and each person who had access to it thereafter. Establishing a clear and meticulous chain of evidence helps prevent tampering or loss of evidence, which could compromise the integrity of the investigation and the subsequent legal process. Therefore, it is essential for maintaining the validity of evidence in court, ensuring that it can be trusted and presented confidently as reliable. This focus on accountability safeguards against challenges to the authenticity and integrity of the evidence during legal proceedings.

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://abmdi.examzify.com>

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

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