

# American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators (ABMDI) Practice Exam (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. Which term refers to the authority a court has over individuals or cases?**
  - A. Jurisdiction**
  - B. Liability**
  - C. Subpoena**
  - D. Verdict**
  
- 2. In the case of a victim from a "Russian roulette" incident with a contact range wound, how is the manner of death categorized?**
  - A. Determined by the personal philosophy of the certifier**
  - B. Homicide**
  - C. Natural**
  - D. Suicide**
  
- 3. Which term describes a surface that points toward the midline of the body?**
  - A. Medial**
  - B. Lateral**
  - C. Anterior**
  - D. Posterior**
  
- 4. What type of injury is commonly associated with motor vehicle collisions due to fractured glass?**
  - A. Blunt force injury**
  - B. Dicing injury**
  - C. Penetrating injury**
  - D. Stab wound**
  
- 5. What should an investigator do if a body is not identified within a reasonable time?**
  - A. Have the body cremated immediately**
  - B. Contact the family every week until identified**
  - C. Put an ad in the newspaper to seek public help**
  - D. B and C**

- 6. When a decedent is discovered in a public place, what is the recommended action for the investigator?**
- A. Immediately move the body to the morgue**
  - B. Have the body shielded from view and conduct a death scene investigation**
  - C. Conduct an investigation without covering the body**
  - D. Order the police to disperse the crowd**
- 7. What phase of decomposition occurs following the initial purging of bodily fluids?**
- A. Rigor mortis**
  - B. Late decomposition**
  - C. Bloating**
  - D. Adipocere formation**
- 8. Why is a pulmonary embolus referred to by this name?**
- A. It narrows the outlet of the right ventricle**
  - B. It originates in the pulmonary artery**
  - C. It occludes the pulmonary artery**
  - D. It causes cherry pink livor mortis**
- 9. What is the term for pinpoint hemorrhage within the conjunctiva of the eyes?**
- A. Petechial hemorrhage**
  - B. Contusion**
  - C. Ecchymosis**
  - D. Hemorrhagically**
- 10. What is considered the best way to transfer evidence?**
- A. Mail it in a sealed container**
  - B. Ship it via Federal Express**
  - C. Deliver it in person**
  - D. Have the lab pick it up**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which term refers to the authority a court has over individuals or cases?**

- A. Jurisdiction**
- B. Liability**
- C. Subpoena**
- D. Verdict**

The term that refers to the authority a court has over individuals or cases is jurisdiction. Jurisdiction determines the scope within which a court can make legal decisions and enforce laws. It encompasses the power to hear cases, including the geographic area of authority and the types of cases that a court can oversee, whether civil, criminal, or administrative. In the legal context, jurisdiction is crucial because it ensures that cases are handled by the appropriate court, which has the legal authority to adjudicate matters based on relevant law and jurisdictional facts. For instance, a court must have both subject matter jurisdiction and personal jurisdiction over the parties involved in a case to render a binding decision. Other options do not relate to the specific authority of a court. Liability pertains to the legal responsibility or obligation one has, which is not directly tied to the court's authority. A subpoena is a legal document ordering someone to appear in court or produce evidence, but it does not define the scope of a court's authority. A verdict is the decision reached by a jury or judge at the conclusion of a trial, representing the final outcome of a case rather than the court's authority to hear it.

**2. In the case of a victim from a "Russian roulette" incident with a contact range wound, how is the manner of death categorized?**

- A. Determined by the personal philosophy of the certifier**
- B. Homicide**
- C. Natural**
- D. Suicide**

In the scenario of a victim from a "Russian roulette" incident with a contact range wound, categorizing the manner of death as suicide is appropriate based on the circumstances surrounding the act. "Russian roulette" involves a person knowingly participating in an activity that has a high probability of causing fatal harm, as it typically entails using a firearm with the understanding that it may discharge when the trigger is pulled. This intentional choice to expose oneself to a risk of death aligns with the definition of suicide, as the individual is willingly engaging in an act that can lead to their own demise. In determining manner of death, one considers intent, circumstances, and the actions leading to the death. The individual participating in "Russian roulette" demonstrates a clear intention to engage in a life-threatening gamble, which underscores the classification of the manner of death as suicide. This differentiates it from homicide, which involves the intent of one person to kill another. In this case, no external actor is responsible for the death, as the act is self-inflicted. Additionally, classifying the death as natural would be inaccurate, since it does not arise from natural causes but rather from voluntary risky behavior. The personal philosophy of the certifier, while it may play a role in some cases,

**3. Which term describes a surface that points toward the midline of the body?**

- A. Medial**
- B. Lateral**
- C. Anterior**
- D. Posterior**

The term that describes a surface pointing toward the midline of the body is "medial." In anatomical terminology, "medial" refers to a position that is closer to the midline of the body compared to another structure. For example, the nose is medial to the cheeks, meaning it is located nearer to the central line that divides the body into left and right halves. Understanding this term is essential in anatomy as it helps in accurately describing the locations of various structures relative to one another. This vocabulary is crucial for medical professionals, including death investigators, to communicate effectively about the positions of organs, injuries, or any pertinent findings during an investigation. In contrast, the other terms relate to different spatial relationships: "lateral" refers to structures that are further from the midline, while "anterior" and "posterior" describe positions toward the front and back of the body, respectively. Knowing these definitions is fundamental for mastering anatomical orientation and terminology.

**4. What type of injury is commonly associated with motor vehicle collisions due to fractured glass?**

- A. Blunt force injury**
- B. Dicing injury**
- C. Penetrating injury**
- D. Stab wound**

Dicing injuries are specifically associated with the presence of sharp glass fragments that can occur during motor vehicle collisions. When an accident happens and the glass shatters, it can produce small, shard-like fragments. These sharp pieces can then cause lacerations or cuts to the skin as the individual comes into contact with them, resulting in injuries that have a characteristic pattern resembling a 'dicing' effect. This term "dicing" refers to the pattern typically seen, where the skin appears to have been cut by multiple small, sharp objects, leading to a distinctive type of injury. It is particularly prevalent in situations where the passenger compartment is compromised by the impact, leading to a higher likelihood of glass-related injuries. Other types of injuries mentioned, such as blunt force or penetrating injuries, refer to different mechanisms of harm not typically associated with broken glass. Blunt force injuries generally result from impacts without sharp objects, while penetrating injuries involve objects that breach the skin but do not typically involve the effects of shattered glass. Stab wounds result from a sharp object being driven into the skin, which again does not match the mechanism of glass injury resulting from motor vehicle collisions.

**5. What should an investigator do if a body is not identified within a reasonable time?**

- A. Have the body cremated immediately**
- B. Contact the family every week until identified**
- C. Put an ad in the newspaper to seek public help**
- D. B and C**

When a body is not identified within a reasonable time, taking proactive steps to facilitate identification becomes crucial. Contacting the family on a regular basis, such as weekly, is a compassionate and responsible approach, as families may provide valuable information that can assist in identifying the deceased. This regular communication enables investigators to gather additional details about the missing persons that might fit the description of the unidentified body and helps keep the family informed. Putting an advertisement in the newspaper or utilizing other media can also be an effective strategy. By seeking public assistance, investigators can reach a wider audience, which may lead to tips or information from those who recognize the deceased or have relevant knowledge that could aid in identification. Combining these approaches—maintaining contact with the family and reaching out to the public through ads—demonstrates a thorough and community-oriented effort in the identification process. Therefore, integrating both actions represents a comprehensive strategy for addressing the challenge of identifying an unknown body.

**6. When a decedent is discovered in a public place, what is the recommended action for the investigator?**

- A. Immediately move the body to the morgue**
- B. Have the body shielded from view and conduct a death scene investigation**
- C. Conduct an investigation without covering the body**
- D. Order the police to disperse the crowd**

In the context of discovering a decedent in a public place, the recommended action for the investigator is to have the body shielded from view and conduct a thorough death scene investigation. This approach is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, shielding the body helps maintain the dignity of the deceased, which is essential in handling death investigations, especially in public settings where witnesses may be present. It also minimizes the emotional distress for bystanders who may have been affected by the scene. Secondly, conducting a death scene investigation is vital to gather evidence that could aid in determining the circumstances surrounding the death. This process includes documenting the scene, collecting physical evidence, and interviewing witnesses without any potential interference from the public. Shielding the body allows investigators to focus on these critical aspects without the distraction of onlookers. Prioritizing the investigation ensures that all appropriate protocols are followed and that the integrity of the investigation is upheld, leading to more accurate conclusions about the cause and manner of death.

**7. What phase of decomposition occurs following the initial purging of bodily fluids?**

- A. Rigor mortis**
- B. Late decomposition**
- C. Bloating**
- D. Adipocere formation**

The phase of decomposition that occurs following the initial purging of bodily fluids is late decomposition. This phase is marked by a significant breakdown of tissues and organs, accompanied by the activity of bacteria and other decomposers. During late decomposition, the body experiences extensive tissue liquefaction, which leads to the collapse of structural components. The presence of fluids in the body is greatly diminished because the body has already undergone the initial purging, where gases and fluids escape due to the accumulation of gases generated by microbial activity. Bloating, which is often confused with late decomposition, primarily involves the initial stages where the body begins to swell due to gas buildup but precedes the changes seen in late decomposition. Adipocere formation is a process that can occur later in the decomposition timeline, particularly in specific environmental conditions, but it does not immediately follow the purging phase. Rigor mortis indicates stiffness after death and happens before these later stages of decomposition. Thus, late decomposition is the correct identification following initial purging, as it represents a critical transition into more advanced stages of decay.

**8. Why is a pulmonary embolus referred to by this name?**

- A. It narrows the outlet of the right ventricle**
- B. It originates in the pulmonary artery**
- C. It occludes the pulmonary artery**
- D. It causes cherry pink livor mortis**

A pulmonary embolus is referred to by this name because it specifically occludes the pulmonary artery. This condition occurs when a blood clot, often originating from the deep veins of the legs (deep vein thrombosis), travels through the bloodstream and lodges itself in the pulmonary artery. The blockage prevents blood from flowing properly to the lungs, leading to impaired gas exchange and potentially serious consequences for the patient, such as hypoxia or even death if not treated promptly. The other options relate to aspects of heart function and mortuary changes but do not accurately define what a pulmonary embolus is or its primary effect. For instance, while a pulmonary embolus does indeed impact the right ventricle as it obstructs blood flow, this does not encompass the reason for its specific naming. Similarly, while it's true that the origin of the embolus is often related to venous thrombosis, the term "pulmonary embolus" is fundamentally defined by its blockage of the pulmonary artery rather than its origin or secondary effects like livor mortis.

**9. What is the term for pinpoint hemorrhage within the conjunctiva of the eyes?**

- A. Petechial hemorrhage**
- B. Contusion**
- C. Ecchymosis**
- D. Hemorrhagically**

The term for pinpoint hemorrhage within the conjunctiva of the eyes is petechial hemorrhage. This type of hemorrhage appears as small red or purple spots on the conjunctiva due to bleeding under the skin, often resulting from small blood vessels bursting. Petechiae can occur in various circumstances, including trauma, increased pressure from coughing or straining, and certain medical conditions. Contusion refers to a bruise resulting from forceful impact, leading to blood pooling under the skin, which is more extensive than the small spots seen in petechial hemorrhages. Ecchymosis also describes a larger bruise that can appear in various sizes and is typically the result of trauma as well, reflecting a more significant bleed than petechiae. The term hemorrhagically, while related to bleeding, does not specifically describe the pinpoint nature of the hemorrhage within the conjunctiva. Thus, the distinctive characteristics of pinpoint hemorrhages clearly define petechial hemorrhage as the correct answer.

**10. What is considered the best way to transfer evidence?**

- A. Mail it in a sealed container**
- B. Ship it via Federal Express**
- C. Deliver it in person**
- D. Have the lab pick it up**

Delivering evidence in person is considered the best way to transfer it because this method minimizes the chances of contamination, loss, or damage during transit. When evidence is physically handed over rather than shipped or mailed, the chain of custody is clearer and more secure, which is crucial in legal contexts. This direct personal transfer allows the investigator to ensure that the evidence remains intact and is handled properly during the handoff. Additionally, delivering in person confirms that the recipient is prepared to accept the evidence and can address any immediate questions or concerns regarding its condition or treatment. While other methods such as mailing or using shipping services may be convenient, they introduce risks such as delays, mishandling, or the possibility that the evidence could be lost. These options also depend heavily on third-party services, which can complicate custody records and accountability. Having a lab pick up evidence might work in certain scenarios but could also lead to similar issues concerning the chain of custody if not managed carefully.

## 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](mailto: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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