

APCO Police Communications 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. The code 10-20 indicates what request?**
 - A. Unit status**
 - B. Location information**
 - C. Weather update**
 - D. Scene safety**

- 2. Which statement best describes how UCR data are used by governments?**
 - A. It informs resource allocation and standard definitions and enables interdepartmental comparisons**
 - B. It is used to set national tax rates**
 - C. It tracks population migration**
 - D. It determines weather policy**

- 3. Who must endorse an arrest warrant to allow cross-provincial or cross-Canada arrest?**
 - A. Crown Prosecutor**
 - B. Justice of the Peace**
 - C. Judge**
 - D. Police Commissioner**

- 4. In a conflict view of crime, which group is described as holding power?**
 - A. The police**
 - B. The corporations**
 - C. The voters**
 - D. The rich**

- 5. Under a conflict theory of crime, power is concentrated among which group?**
 - A. The rich**
 - B. The police**
 - C. The courts**
 - D. The educators**

- 6. Tactical channels are often used for routine response calls where a single unit is attending a high priority call such as an armed robbery.**
- A. True**
 - B. False**
 - C. Not applicable**
 - D. Sometimes**
- 7. What is the standard guideline for answering incoming calls in a law enforcement PSAP?**
- A. 5 seconds**
 - B. 10 seconds**
 - C. 15 seconds**
 - D. 30 seconds**
- 8. In a Canadian police organization, which rank would be considered the highest among the following?**
- A. Superintendent**
 - B. Inspector**
 - C. Sergeant**
 - D. Constable**
- 9. What is the primary purpose of a Mobile Data Terminal in field operations?**
- A. To print incident reports in the field**
 - B. To receive dispatch information and communicate with the center, typically with limited processing**
 - C. To manage station security alarms**
 - D. To access the unit's record database**
- 10. Two stars represent which rank?**
- A. Inspector**
 - B. Chief of Police**
 - C. Deputy Chief of Police**
 - D. Superintendent**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. The code 10-20 indicates what request?

- A. Unit status
- B. Location information**
- C. Weather update
- D. Scene safety

The key idea here is that ten-codes are shorthand for common requests, and 10-20 is specifically used for location. When someone asks for a 10-20, they want to know where you are or where you are located, or they're reporting the unit's location. This is why it matches the option describing location information. In practice, a message might be, "What's your 10-20?" or "I have a 10-20 at the intersection of Main and 3rd." Other choices don't fit because they refer to different kinds of information that are handled by other codes or plain language. Weather updates aren't typically conveyed by a 10-20, and scene safety or general unit status are represented by other codes or signals. And remember, exact meanings can vary by agency, so procedures may differ, but location is the classic meaning of 10-20.

2. Which statement best describes how UCR data are used by governments?

- A. It informs resource allocation and standard definitions and enables interdepartmental comparisons**
- B. It is used to set national tax rates
- C. It tracks population migration
- D. It determines weather policy

UCR data provide standardized crime statistics that governments rely on to allocate resources, establish consistent definitions of offenses, and enable comparisons across departments and jurisdictions. Because agencies report crimes using uniform definitions, policymakers can compare crime levels and trends, identify where to direct patrols, staffing, and prevention programs, and coordinate efforts across different agencies. This differs from setting national tax rates, tracking population migration, or shaping weather policy, which rely on tax policy, census/migration data, and meteorological information respectively.

3. Who must endorse an arrest warrant to allow cross-provincial or cross-Canada arrest?

- A. Crown Prosecutor
- B. Justice of the Peace**
- C. Judge
- D. Police Commissioner

Cross-provincial arrest relies on a warrant being recognized as valid outside the province where it was issued, and that recognition comes from endorsement by a Justice of the Peace. A Justice of the Peace has the authority to endorse warrants, granting them the cross-jurisdiction validity police need to arrest someone in another province or across Canada. The Crown is responsible for presenting the case and a judge may issue the warrant, but the step that allows enforcement beyond the issuing jurisdiction is the endorsement by the Justice of the Peace. A Police Commissioner does not have the authority to endorse warrants for cross-provincial execution.

4. In a conflict view of crime, which group is described as holding power?

- A. The police**
- B. The corporations**
- C. The voters**
- D. The rich**

Power in the conflict view of crime is seen as concentrated in the hands of those who control wealth and resources. Those with wealth—the rich—shape laws, policing priorities, and social norms, exercising the most influence over who is labeled a criminal and how crime is addressed. In this view, structural advantage comes from economic dominance, not merely the actions of individual actors. The police operate within that system as enforcers, and voters and corporations may have influence, but the defining source of power is wealth held by the rich.

5. Under a conflict theory of crime, power is concentrated among which group?

- A. The rich**
- B. The police**
- C. The courts**
- D. The educators**

Conflict theory sees power as concentrated in those who control the institutions that define and enforce laws. The police embody the state's enforcement arm, with the authority to arrest, detain, and use force to maintain social order. Because laws reflect the interests of the powerful, the police are the mechanism through which that power is exercised in daily life, making them the group that holds concentrated power in this framework. The other entities play roles within the system, but the police specifically represent the coercive authority that sustains the existing social order.

6. Tactical channels are often used for routine response calls where a single unit is attending a high priority call such as an armed robbery.

- A. True**
- B. False**
- C. Not applicable**
- D. Sometimes**

Tactical channels are reserved for coordinating operations that involve multiple units during a tactical or high-risk incident. They're used to keep frontline communication separate from routine dispatch traffic so responders can work more efficiently and maintain security on the scene. When a single unit is responding to a high-priority event like an armed robbery, there isn't the same need for a separate, dedicated tactical channel to manage multiple radios and coordination points. The primary or incident channel is typically sufficient for that scenario, and tactical channels would usually be held back for actual multi-unit operations, command instructions, and scene management as more units arrive. If the situation escalates and more units join, or a supervisor designates it, a tactical channel may then be opened to coordinate those efforts.

7. What is the standard guideline for answering incoming calls in a law enforcement PSAP?

- A. 5 seconds**
- B. 10 seconds**
- C. 15 seconds**
- D. 30 seconds**

Promptness in answering calls is a core performance target for a PSAP. The standard guideline is to answer incoming calls within ten seconds, and agencies often strive to connect the caller to a dispatcher within that window for the vast majority of calls. This quick turnaround is crucial because it minimizes the time a caller spends waiting to convey critical information, accelerates the start of triage and dispatch, and improves the overall effectiveness of emergency response. In practice, many departments measure service levels like “percentage of calls answered within ten seconds,” aiming to meet that benchmark consistently. While aiming for the fastest possible answer is desirable, five seconds is typically not realistic given system and human factors, fifteen seconds is longer than the standard expectation for emergency calls, and thirty seconds would be considered too slow and could harm outcomes. So, ten seconds stands out as the standard guideline for answering incoming calls in a law enforcement PSAP.

8. In a Canadian police organization, which rank would be considered the highest among the following?

- A. Superintendent**
- B. Inspector**
- C. Sergeant**
- D. Constable**

Understanding how police ranks are arranged helps explain why this choice is the highest among the options. Police rank structures place increasing authority and scope of responsibility with higher titles. Constable is entry-level, typically patrol or field duties. A Sergeant supervises front-line officers and daily operations. An Inspector generally oversees a major unit or function and has more administrative responsibilities. A Superintendent sits above Inspector, usually overseeing larger divisions or multiple units and taking on senior leadership duties. Because of the broader scope and higher leadership role, Superintendent is higher than both Inspector and Sergeant, and far above Constable. Note that some services may have ranks above Superintendent (like Chief or Deputy Chief), but among the options given, Superintendent is the top rank.

9. What is the primary purpose of a Mobile Data Terminal in field operations?

- A. To print incident reports in the field**
- B. To receive dispatch information and communicate with the center, typically with limited processing**
- C. To manage station security alarms**
- D. To access the unit's record database**

Mobile Data Terminals are designed to provide fast, two-way data communication between field units and the dispatch center, with enough local processing to handle messages but not function as a full workstation. In practice, their primary role is to receive dispatch information, incident details, and status updates from the center and to send quick acknowledgments or status changes back. This keeps officers informed in real time and helps reduce voice radio traffic, speeding up the flow of actionable information from the center to the field and back. Printing incident reports in the field isn't the main function; if printing is needed, it's typically a separate capability or done later. Managing station security alarms is handled by the station's security systems, not the MDT. Accessing the unit's entire record database may be available only in a limited, tightly controlled manner, but the core strength of the MDT is bidirectional messaging and lightweight data access to support field operations.

10. Two stars represent which rank?

- A. Inspector**
- B. Chief of Police**
- C. Deputy Chief of Police**
- D. Superintendent**

Reading rank insignia is about recognizing how symbols on shoulder or collar convey hierarchy. The number and type of devices—like stars—increase with rank. Two stars are a common marking for the rank of Inspector, placing it above lower ranks and below the higher executive ranks. The Chief of Police, Deputy Chief, and Superintendent typically use more elaborate insignia (such as additional stars, crowns, or other emblems) to indicate their senior position. So, within this standard scheme, two stars best match the Inspector rank.

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://apcopolicecomms.examzify.com>

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

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