BNSF Conductor Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide

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Questions

1. In what position should the selector lever be placed to operate a dual control switch by hand?

A. POWER position

B. LOCK position

C. HAND position

D. MANUAL position

2. What denotes signal to stop when waved violently on or near the track?

A. A warning from a crew member

B. A signal from a whistle

C. An official signal from dispatch

D. A signal to proceed with caution

3. What must crew members do before going between or working on the end of rail equipment?

A. Signal the engineer to stop the train

B. Ensure all crew members understand the work

C. Give a stop signal to passersby

D. Wear protective gear

4. In the case of a Class 1 air brake test, what must be observed?

A. Brake system only from one side of the train

B. Functioning of all moving parts under supervision

C. Visual checks without hands-on inspection

D. Only the exterior of the train should be checked

5. What must a train on an adjacent track do when it receives notification of a train stopped ahead?

A. Pass at full speed

B. Stop short of the stopped train's fouling area

C. Proceed as normal without stopping

D. Move at maximum speed until cleared

6. When is the whistle allowed to be sounded as a warning?

- **A. Only at designated whistle points**
- **B. Whenever necessary, regardless of any prohibitions**
- **C. Only when directed by a dispatcher**
- **D. Only during specific times of the day**

7. What is the primary function of a track warrant in railroad operations?

- **A. To authorize a train to occupy designated limits on the main track**
- **B. To regulate speed limits for all trains on a route**
- **C. To notify trains of crossing signals ahead**
- **D. To identify maintenance schedules for tracks**

8. What is the role of the train dispatcher before a train crosses over to another main track?

- **A. To authorize the move**
- **B. To ensure the switch is clear and locked**
- **C. To provide real-time updates on other train movements**
- **D. To signal the train when to proceed**

9. What must occur before permission is granted for a back-up movement?

- **A. A job safety briefing between a crew member and the train dispatcher**
- **B. An assessment of track conditions and weather forecasts**
- **C. A review of crew qualifications and certifications**
- **D. A written report on previous back-up movements**

10. What is a key responsibility of employees during switching operations?

- **A. To maintain a slow speed regardless of circumstances**
- **B. To avoid damage to contents of cars and adjacent property**
- **C. To increase the pace of operations**
- **D. To leave equipment anywhere along the tracks**

Answers

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

Explanations

1. In what position should the selector lever be placed to operate a dual control switch by hand?

A. POWER position

B. LOCK position

C. HAND position

D. MANUAL position

To operate a dual control switch by hand, the selector lever must be placed in the HAND position. This setting allows the physical operation of the switch without interference from the power control system. In this position, the mechanical components engaged in the switching process can be manipulated manually, ensuring that the operator has full control over the switch's function. Additionally, the HAND position is specifically designed for situations where the switch needs to be operated manually, such as in cases of equipment failure or maintenance tasks. This is crucial for safety and effective operation on the railroad, as it allows conductors and other personnel to perform necessary actions without relying on electrical power systems that may not be operational or safe to use at that moment.

2. What denotes signal to stop when waved violently on or near the track?

A. A warning from a crew member

B. A signal from a whistle

C. An official signal from dispatch

D. A signal to proceed with caution

The correct response indicates that a warning from a crew member, particularly when signaled violently, conveys an urgent message to stop. This action is crucial for ensuring the safety of both the crew and any equipment on or near the tracks. When a crew member waves their arms or a flag in a vigorous manner, it is an immediate indication of an existing danger, requiring all personnel and trains in the vicinity to halt operations. This type of visual signal is a practical tool for communication in scenarios where verbal commands may not suffice due to distance or noise. It reflects the crew's awareness of the situation and their responsibility in preventing accidents. A clear understanding of this signaling method is essential for all personnel to maintain safety and ensure proper protocol is followed on the tracks.

3. What must crew members do before going between or working on the end of rail equipment?

A. Signal the engineer to stop the train

B. Ensure all crew members understand the work

C. Give a stop signal to passersby

D. Wear protective gear

The correct choice emphasizes the importance of crew communication and understanding before engaging in work on or near rail equipment. Ensuring that all crew members are aware of the tasks ahead helps to promote safety and coordination. When crew members have a clear understanding of their roles and the work to be performed, it minimizes the risk of accidents and miscommunication, fostering a safer working environment. A collaborative approach is essential in rail operations due to the inherent hazards involved. By confirming that everyone is on the same page, crew members can coordinate effectively, which is critical in a potentially dangerous setting like rail operations. This preparation also allows for any questions or concerns to be addressed, further enhancing safety protocols. While other options, such as signaling the engineer, giving stop signals, and wearing protective gear, may be important safety practices in various scenarios, the primary focus of the question is about ensuring collective understanding among crew members before commencing work. This foundational step of communication significantly contributes to the overall safety and efficiency of rail operations.

4. In the case of a Class 1 air brake test, what must be observed?

A. Brake system only from one side of the train

B. Functioning of all moving parts under supervision

C. Visual checks without hands-on inspection

D. Only the exterior of the train should be checked

In a Class 1 air brake test, it is essential to observe the functioning of all moving parts under supervision. This comprehensive check ensures that the entire air brake system operates effectively and safely. The test is designed to assess not only the overall functionality of the brakes but also the condition of various components such as valves, hoses, and connections. To ensure safety and compliance with regulations, conductors and technicians must inspect these moving parts closely and observe their operation. This level of scrutiny helps identify any potential issues that could affect the train's braking performance. It is vital to confirm that all components are in proper working order, thus minimizing the risk of brake failure on the tracks. The emphasis on supervision during this inspection process highlights the importance of safety in the transportation industry, where proper brake function is critical for the safe operation of trains.

5. What must a train on an adjacent track do when it receives notification of a train stopped ahead?

A. Pass at full speed

B. Stop short of the stopped train's fouling area

C. Proceed as normal without stopping

D. Move at maximum speed until cleared

When a train on an adjacent track receives notification of a train that has stopped ahead, it is imperative for safety reasons to stop short of the stopped train's fouling area. The fouling area is defined as the space that, if occupied by a train, would intrude upon the track of the stopped train, potentially causing a collision or other dangerous situation. Stopping in this manner helps to ensure that there is a safe distance maintained between the two trains, thereby reducing the risk of accidents. Stopping short of the fouling area allows for procedural checks and ensures that all safety protocols are being followed. This action is crucial not only for the safety of the crew and any passengers but also protects the integrity of the rail system and prevents further incidents from occurring. Operating at full speed, proceeding without stopping, or moving at maximum speed until cleared could result in dangerous scenarios where collisions could happen, thereby violating rail safety regulations.

6. When is the whistle allowed to be sounded as a warning?

A. Only at designated whistle points

B. Whenever necessary, regardless of any prohibitions

C. Only when directed by a dispatcher

D. Only during specific times of the day

The whistle can be sounded as a warning whenever necessary, regardless of any prohibitions, as long as it is done for safety reasons. This practice is important in rail operations because the whistle serves as an alert to pedestrians, motorists, and other rail traffic of an approaching train, especially in situations where safety may be compromised. Whistle bans may exist in specific locations, such as residential areas or near certain crossings, but in emergency or critical scenarios where there's a potential danger, sounding the whistle is permitted to ensure the safety of all involved. This reflects the overarching priority of safety in railway operations, as any confusion or risk to people nearby can warrant the use of the whistle. The other options suggest limitations or specific conditions under which the whistle can be used, which may not align with essential safety practices where immediate warnings are needed.

7. What is the primary function of a track warrant in railroad operations?

A. To authorize a train to occupy designated limits on the main track

B. To regulate speed limits for all trains on a route

C. To notify trains of crossing signals ahead

D. To identify maintenance schedules for tracks

The primary function of a track warrant in railroad operations is to authorize a train to occupy designated limits on the main track. A track warrant serves as a formal permission granted to a train crew, allowing them to operate within specific portions of the track under certain conditions. This is crucial for maintaining safety and coordination among multiple trains sharing the same track, as it helps prevent collisions and ensures that each train knows where it can operate safely. In this context, a track warrant outlines the exact limits for train movement, including where the train is allowed to proceed and any restrictions that might apply. This is particularly important in areas where trains may encounter each other or where track work is being conducted. By clearly defining these limits, the track warrant plays a vital role in the overall safety and efficiency of rail operations.

8. What is the role of the train dispatcher before a train crosses over to another main track?

A. To authorize the move

B. To ensure the switch is clear and locked

C. To provide real-time updates on other train movements

D. To signal the train when to proceed

The role of the train dispatcher before a train crosses over to another main track is primarily to authorize the move. The dispatcher has the responsibility of managing train movements and ensuring the safety and efficiency of the rail network. Authorizing the move involves confirming that it is safe for the train to proceed to the new track, considering factors such as current train locations, potential conflicts with other trains, and the overall control of the rail system. While it is indeed important for the dispatcher to be aware of other train movements and the status of switches, and to communicate effectively with train crews, the core function executed directly by the dispatcher before a crossover is granting permission for that specific movement. This authorization is critical to maintaining safe operations on the rail network.

9. What must occur before permission is granted for a back-up movement?

A. A job safety briefing between a crew member and the train dispatcher

B. An assessment of track conditions and weather forecasts

C. A review of crew qualifications and certifications

D. A written report on previous back-up movements

Before permission is granted for a back-up movement, it is essential to conduct a job safety briefing between a crew member and the train dispatcher. This briefing ensures that all safety protocols are discussed, risks are identified, and the understanding of the movement procedure is clear among the involved personnel. Communication between the train crew and dispatcher is critical at this stage to ensure that everyone is aware of the circumstances surrounding the back-up movement, including any specific hazards or operational considerations that may be present. This step is integral to promoting a safe working environment and ensuring that the movements can be conducted without incident. While factors such as assessment of track conditions and weather forecasts are important for overall safety and operational effectiveness, the direct prerequisite for granting permission for a back-up movement is the safety briefing. This briefing directly addresses the communication and alignment of all involved parties regarding the specific movement in question.

10. What is a key responsibility of employees during switching operations?

A. To maintain a slow speed regardless of circumstances

B. To avoid damage to contents of cars and adjacent property

C. To increase the pace of operations

D. To leave equipment anywhere along the tracks

During switching operations, a key responsibility of employees is to avoid damage to the contents of cars and adjacent property. This is critical to ensuring that all cargo is transported safely and securely, preventing potential loss or damage to goods and materials. Proper care during switching operations minimizes the risk of accidents that could lead to costly repairs or liability issues. Employees are trained to handle the equipment and cars with precision and caution, maintaining awareness of their surroundings to protect both the cargo and surrounding property. While maintaining a slow speed is important in certain situations, it must be balanced with the need to complete tasks efficiently and safely, which means simply adhering to a slow speed without considering other factors may not always be appropriate. Similarly, increasing the pace of operations without regard for safety and care can lead to accidents or damage, which contradicts the primary responsibility of protecting cargo. Lastly, leaving equipment anywhere along the tracks does not align with safe operational practices, as proper placement and securement of equipment are essential for overall safety and efficiency in rail operations.