

BNSF Conductor 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. When must a crew member verify that a drawbridge is in the proper position?**
 - A. When the signal indicates Go**
 - B. When the signal displays a Stop indication**
 - C. Before any crew member boards the train**
 - D. Only if the train is delayed**

- 2. What should a crew do if they receive new instructions that change their original route?**
 - A. Assume the original instructions are correct**
 - B. Contact the employee in charge to confirm validity of instructions**
 - C. Proceed with caution without informing anyone**
 - D. Follow the original instructions regardless**

- 3. When going between cars or locomotives, what is required before starting work?**
 - A. Wait for the lights to change**
 - B. Ensure all crew members understand the work**
 - C. Notify the supervisor only**
 - D. Disconnect the locomotive from the cars**

- 4. What is the first action a control operator must take before granting track and time?**
 - A. Notify all crew members**
 - B. Apply blocking or marking devices to the control machine**
 - C. Ensure all trains have passed**
 - D. Document the request in the log**

- 5. Before a control operator can authorize a train to proceed past a Stop signal, what must they confirm?**
 - A. The route is properly lined and no conflicts exist**
 - B. The train has enough fuel to continue**
 - C. There are no passengers on board**
 - D. The weather conditions are favorable**

- 6. What should be done if sticking brakes occur on a train?**
- A. Ignore them and continue the journey**
 - B. Stop the train and determine the cause**
 - C. Switch to manual controls**
 - D. Double the brake pressure to release them**
- 7. Under what condition can cars with defective air brakes be tagged?**
- A. Only when moving to repair facilities**
 - B. When they are cut out during a journey**
 - C. When they are being inspected at terminals**
 - D. They cannot be tagged at any time**
- 8. What speed must a train moving past a Stop signal authorized to proceed maintain?**
- A. Full speed**
 - B. Restricted speed**
 - C. Slow speed**
 - D. No specific speed**
- 9. What is the term for the movement of trains in one direction on a main track?**
- A. Double track**
 - B. Current of traffic**
 - C. Interlocking**
 - D. Block system**
- 10. Which signal must be given during the day to indicate that crew members are going between cars?**
- A. One long whistle**
 - B. Stop signal with extended arm**
 - C. Raise both arms straight up**
 - D. Hand waving above the head**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. When must a crew member verify that a drawbridge is in the proper position?

- A. When the signal indicates Go**
- B. When the signal displays a Stop indication**
- C. Before any crew member boards the train**
- D. Only if the train is delayed**

A crew member must verify that a drawbridge is in the proper position when the signal displays a Stop indication because this signals a potential hazard or unsafe condition. The Stop signal alerts crew members that the drawbridge may not be properly aligned or secured for train passage. Verification is essential to ensure the safety of the train and its crew, since proceeding over a drawbridge that is not in the correct position could lead to a catastrophic accident. While other factors like a Go signal or crew member boarding the train are important in the context of operations, they do not take precedence over the need to guarantee safety in situations involving potential hazards, such as a drawbridge. The requirement for verification primarily arises from the danger associated with operating heavy equipment over unsafe structures.

2. What should a crew do if they receive new instructions that change their original route?

- A. Assume the original instructions are correct**
- B. Contact the employee in charge to confirm validity of instructions**
- C. Proceed with caution without informing anyone**
- D. Follow the original instructions regardless**

When a crew receives new instructions that alter their original route, the appropriate action is to contact the employee in charge to confirm the validity of the new instructions. This step is crucial for several reasons. First, it ensures that the crew is operating with the most current and accurate information, which is vital for safety and operational efficiency. Misunderstandings or assumptions can lead to risks that may endanger the crew or affect the operation of the train. Furthermore, confirming the new instructions with someone in authority helps to clarify any potential conflicts with existing plans or other operational details that the crew may not be aware of. This communication is a fundamental safety protocol in railroad operations, as it fosters accountability and proper decision-making. By verifying the changes instead of proceeding based solely on assumptions or previous guidance, the crew can effectively mitigate risks and ensure compliance with the latest operational directives. This approach emphasizes the importance of communication and adherence to protocols in the railroad industry.

3. When going between cars or locomotives, what is required before starting work?

A. Wait for the lights to change

B. Ensure all crew members understand the work

C. Notify the supervisor only

D. Disconnect the locomotive from the cars

Before starting work between cars or locomotives, it is essential that all crew members understand the work being performed. This requirement is critical for ensuring safety and coordination among team members. When everyone is aware of the tasks at hand, they can anticipate each other's actions, follow safety protocols, and respond appropriately to any potential hazards or emergencies. Safety in rail operations relies on teamwork and communication, and a thorough understanding of the work helps to prevent accidents and misunderstandings that could lead to serious injuries or damage. Ensuring that all crew members are on the same page fosters an environment where safety is prioritized, and everyone can contribute to a smooth operation. In contrast, other options do not address the collaborative aspect of crew work essential for safe operations.

4. What is the first action a control operator must take before granting track and time?

A. Notify all crew members

B. Apply blocking or marking devices to the control machine

C. Ensure all trains have passed

D. Document the request in the log

Before a control operator can grant track and time, the initial action required is to apply blocking or marking devices to the control machine. This procedure is crucial as it ensures that the track is properly protected from unauthorized movement, thereby safeguarding both the maintenance crew and the trains. Blocking or marking devices serve as physical and visual indicators that the track is under a specific authority's control, alerting other operators and crews to this condition. By implementing these devices, the operator establishes a secure environment where work can safely proceed without interference from train movements, which are typically managed through central or local dispatching commands. This step is fundamental to maintaining safety protocols within railway operations, preventing accidents, and ensuring the integrity of both the work being performed and the passage of trains.

5. Before a control operator can authorize a train to proceed past a Stop signal, what must they confirm?

- A. The route is properly lined and no conflicts exist**
- B. The train has enough fuel to continue**
- C. There are no passengers on board**
- D. The weather conditions are favorable**

The primary responsibility of a control operator when authorizing a train to proceed past a Stop signal is to ensure that the route is properly lined and that no conflicts exist. This involves verifying that all switches along the train's intended path are set correctly to allow for safe passage and that there are no other trains or obstacles that could present a hazard. Properly lined routes help maintain the safety and efficiency of train operations. Ensuring there are no conflicts not only minimizes the risk of accidents but also helps coordinate the flow of train movements, especially on shared tracks. This confirmation is a critical step for maintaining the integrity of train operations and ensuring the safety of both crew and cargo. Other factors, like fuel levels, passenger presence, and weather conditions, while important in their own contexts, do not directly pertain to the immediate safety and routing confirmation required for a train to proceed past a Stop signal. They are managed separately as part of the broader operational checks but are not prerequisites for the control operator's authorization.

6. What should be done if sticking brakes occur on a train?

- A. Ignore them and continue the journey**
- B. Stop the train and determine the cause**
- C. Switch to manual controls**
- D. Double the brake pressure to release them**

In the event that sticking brakes are identified on a train, the appropriate action is to stop the train and determine the cause. This is critical for several reasons: first, sticking brakes can indicate a malfunction or potentially hazardous condition that, if unaddressed, may lead to further complications, including uneven braking which can jeopardize the safety of the train and its cargo. Stopping allows train personnel to inspect the braking system properly and identify the underlying issue, whether it's due to mechanical failure, a problem with the brake components, or environmental factors such as moisture or debris affecting brake performance. Resolving any problems at this stage ensures the safety of both the crew and any passengers or freight being transported. Continuing the journey with sticking brakes could lead to increased stopping distances, overheating of brake components, or even complete brake failure, all of which pose significant risks. Therefore, addressing the situation promptly and carefully is paramount for safe train operations.

7. Under what condition can cars with defective air brakes be tagged?

- A. Only when moving to repair facilities**
- B. When they are cut out during a journey**
- C. When they are being inspected at terminals**
- D. They cannot be tagged at any time**

Cars with defective air brakes can be tagged only when they are moving to repair facilities. This condition is important because it allows for the safe movement of defective cars to a location where they can be properly inspected and repaired. Tagging a car indicates that it is not fit for regular service, ensuring that crew members are aware of its condition while it is being transported. In operational scenarios, moving defective cars directly to repair facilities minimizes the risks associated with operational failures due to air brake issues. It keeps the trains safe and maintains system efficiency by ensuring defective cars are dealt with promptly and in designated areas equipped for repairs. Other conditions, such as cutting the brakes out during a journey or inspecting cars at terminals, do not provide a clear mechanism for ensuring safety while allowing for movement. Furthermore, stating they cannot be tagged at any time overlooks the critical procedure and protocol necessary to manage defective equipment effectively.

8. What speed must a train moving past a Stop signal authorized to proceed maintain?

- A. Full speed**
- B. Restricted speed**
- C. Slow speed**
- D. No specific speed**

A train movement past a Stop signal must maintain restricted speed to ensure safety and compliance with operational protocols. Restricted speed allows a train to react appropriately to any potential obstacles, track conditions, or signal changes that may be present in the area beyond the Stop signal. It typically means the train should be prepared to stop within half the range of vision, which is crucial in maintaining safety on the railway. Operating at restricted speed reduces the risk of accidents as it provides the engineer more control and time to assess the situation ahead. This standard is in place to ensure that the crew is vigilant and ready to respond to any unexpected hazards. In contrast, full speed would be inappropriate as it does not take into account the safety measures needed when proceeding past a Stop signal. Slow speed might suggest a greater level of caution than required, while stating no specific speed would not ensure adherence to safety protocols necessary in this scenario. Thus, maintaining restricted speed is the most appropriate and safe action when a train approaches a Stop signal authorized to proceed.

9. What is the term for the movement of trains in one direction on a main track?

A. Double track

B. Current of traffic

C. Interlocking

D. Block system

The term for the movement of trains in one direction on a main track is referred to as "current of traffic." This concept is crucial in railway operations as it helps in managing train schedules and maintaining safety on the tracks. By designating a specific direction for train movement, it ensures that trains do not encounter each other on the same track, significantly reducing the risk of collisions. In most rail systems, having a current of traffic allows for efficient flow of trains, optimizing how multiple trains can use the same track infrastructure while maintaining a reliable service. This practice plays a fundamental role in operational planning and signaling protocols, ensuring that train movements are coordinated according to predefined rules. The other options relate to different aspects of rail operations. Double track refers to having two tracks for trains to move in both directions, interlocking is a signal system designed to prevent conflicting movements, and the block system is a method used to divide the rail track into sections to manage safe distances between trains. These concepts support various aspects of train operations, but do not specifically define the directional movement of trains on a main track.

10. Which signal must be given during the day to indicate that crew members are going between cars?

A. One long whistle

B. Stop signal with extended arm

C. Raise both arms straight up

D. Hand waving above the head

The correct answer indicates a critical safety practice in rail operations. A stop signal with an extended arm is a clear and visible way for crew members to communicate their intention to halt all train movements while they are moving between cars. This signal is essential during the day when visual communication is paramount. It ensures that anyone operating the train or working near the railcar is aware that crew members are in a hazardous position and that all movement must stop to prevent accidents. The other signals may cause confusion or may not be universally recognized as an alert for crew members moving between cars. Therefore, using the stop signal with an extended arm provides the necessary clarity and authority to ensure safety in that situation.

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://bnsfconductor.examzify.com>

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

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