BNSF Dispatcher Trainee Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide

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Questions

1. What action should be taken if a train is traversing a restriction?

A. Notify the train immediately

B. Continue monitoring without intervention

C. Send a written notification later

D. Record the observation in a log

2. What is essential to do when starting a trip with new equipment?

A. Inspect the equipment thoroughly

B. Review protocol regarding the equipment

C. Advise the engineer of any concerns

D. Ensure proper loading procedures are followed

3. How should track bulletin restrictions be recorded when issuing Form A or Form B verbally?

A. In alphabetical order of mile posts

B. In chronological order

C. In mile post sequence or tenths of a mile from a mile post

D. In the order of train arrival

4. What should happen if a train passes an overlap circuit without permission?

A. It should stop and wait for further instructions

B. It can proceed if no other trains are nearby

C. Notify other trains immediately

D. Re-establish communication channels

5. When is permission not required for a train to make a reverse move?

A. In the same yard

B. In the same signaled block

C. In non-signaled areas

D. During maintenance hours

6. How long before a new timetable goes into effect is notification made by general order?

A. 12 hours

B. 24 hours

C. 36 hours

D. 48 hours

7. A train dispatcher must block what within the limits of the Form B?

A. All main tracks

B. All dual control switches

C. All signals

D. All freight cars

8. What should be promptly notified during an emergency affecting signals?

A. The Signal Call Desk and Chief Dispatcher

B. Local dispatchers only

C. Only the affected train crews

D. Signal maintenance engineers

9. What must control operators avoid doing unless a signal is used for protection?

A. Moving beyond a Stop indication

B. Authorizing movements verbally

C. Using hand signals

D. All of the above

10. What must a train do after stopping at a signal displaying a stop indication with supervisory control in CTC territory?

A. Proceed without restrictions

B. Comply with instructions in the release box

C. Continue at a reduced speed

D. Wait for further instructions from dispatch

Answers

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

Explanations

1. What action should be taken if a train is traversing a restriction?

A. Notify the train immediately

B. Continue monitoring without intervention

C. Send a written notification later

D. Record the observation in a log

When a train is traversing a restriction, the most appropriate action is to notify the train immediately. This is important as it ensures that the crew is aware of the restriction they are approaching and can take the necessary precautions to operate the train safely. Immediate communication can help prevent accidents, ensure compliance with safety protocols, and facilitate proper handling of the situation by the train crew. In railway operations, safety is paramount, and timely information is crucial in allowing crews to adjust their speed or be prepared for any potential challenges. Notifying the train enables rapid responsiveness to the specific conditions within the restricted area, ultimately reducing the risk of incidents and promoting safe train operations. Other actions, such as continuing to monitor without intervention, sending a written notification later, or merely recording the observation in a log, do not provide the immediate response required in this situation. Each of those alternatives lacks the immediacy necessary to ensure the train's safe handling during the restriction.

2. What is essential to do when starting a trip with new equipment?

A. Inspect the equipment thoroughly

B. Review protocol regarding the equipment

C. Advise the engineer of any concerns

D. Ensure proper loading procedures are followed

When starting a trip with new equipment, reviewing protocol regarding the equipment is vital for a number of reasons. Familiarizing oneself with the operational guidelines, safety measures, and any specific handling requirements associated with the new equipment ensures that the dispatcher and crew are prepared for any challenges they may face. Understanding the protocols allows for safe and efficient operations, minimizes the risk of accidents, and fosters compliance with regulations and company policies. In the context of new equipment, protocols may provide insights into its unique features and operational limits, which can differ significantly from previous equipment. This knowledge can help in making informed decisions and responding appropriately in various scenarios, enhancing overall efficiency and safety during the trip.

3. How should track bulletin restrictions be recorded when issuing Form A or Form B verbally?

A. In alphabetical order of mile posts

B. In chronological order

C. In mile post sequence or tenths of a mile from a mile post

D. In the order of train arrival

When issuing Form A or Form B verbally, track bulletin restrictions should be recorded in mile post sequence or in tenths of a mile from a mile post. This approach ensures that the information is conveyed in a clear and systematic manner that aligns with how track and track conditions are typically referenced by dispatchers and train crews. By using mile post sequences, it provides an organized and precise way to communicate location-based information, which is essential for maintaining safety and awareness on the rail network. Organizing information by mile posts allows for quicker reference and understanding when multiple restrictions are involved, ensuring that all personnel can accurately and efficiently visualize the affected areas on the railway. This method greatly reduces the chances of errors and miscommunication, which is crucial for operational safety in rail dispatching.

4. What should happen if a train passes an overlap circuit without permission?

A. It should stop and wait for further instructions

B. It can proceed if no other trains are nearby

C. Notify other trains immediately

D. Re-establish communication channels

If a train passes an overlap circuit without permission, it is critical for the safety of operations that the train should stop and wait for further instructions. The overlap circuit acts as a safety measure designed to prevent collisions and ensure the orderly movement of trains on the tracks. By stopping, the crew can assess the situation, communicate with dispatch, and receive guidance on how to proceed safely. Allowing the train to continue moving, as suggested in one of the other choices, could lead to unsafe conditions if another train is near or if the track ahead is occupied. Immediate notification of other trains or re-establishing communication channels, while important aspects of train operations, do not directly address the immediate need to stop and ensure safety when a train has exceeded its authority by passing an overlap circuit. Stopping allows for a controlled response to the situation, prioritizing safety above all else.

5. When is permission not required for a train to make a reverse move?

A. In the same yard

B. In the same signaled block

C. In non-signaled areas

D. During maintenance hours

The scenario wherein permission is not required for a train to make a reverse move is specific to when the train is operating within the same signaled block. In a signaled block, there are established signal indications and procedures that govern train movements, ensuring safety and efficiency. The dispatcher maintains the ability to monitor and control train movements effectively within this controlled environment. Operating within the same signaled block means that the train is still under the supervision of signals, which can indicate the status of the track ahead. Therefore, allowing a reverse move in this context does not require additional permission since it is assumed that the area is clear and safe for such maneuvers. The signals themselves ensure that the train is not moving into an area where it could conflict with another movement. In contrast, situations in non-signaled areas or during maintenance hours typically require explicit permission due to the absence of supervision that signals provide. Operating in a yard may involve various movements, and while some actions might not require permission, this does not apply to all reverse moves. Understanding the specific guidelines for signaling is essential for maintaining safety and operational integrity.

6. How long before a new timetable goes into effect is notification made by general order?

A. 12 hours

B. 24 hours

C. 36 hours

D. 48 hours

Notification of a new timetable going into effect is set at 24 hours before the changes are implemented. This time frame allows enough opportunity for all affected personnel, including dispatchers, engineers, conductors, and other relevant train crew members, to adjust their plans and operations in accordance with the new schedule. It ensures that all parties have adequate time to understand any changes in train routes, schedules, or operational protocols, which is vital for maintaining safety and efficiency in railway operations. This standard 24-hour notice is critical for minimizing disruption and ensuring a smooth transition to the new timetable.

7. A train dispatcher must block what within the limits of the Form B?

A. All main tracks

B. All dual control switches

C. All signals

D. All freight cars

The correct answer pertains to the need for a dispatcher to ensure that all dual control switches are blocked within the limits of a Form B. Form B track warrants are used to protect work crews or maintenance activities on the railway, effectively creating a safe work zone by controlling train movements in that area. Dual control switches, which can be operated both manually and through a power source, require blocking to prevent unauthorized or unintended use while maintenance or work is being conducted in the area. This ensures that workers are protected from incoming trains and provides a clear understanding to the crews that the switches are not to be tampered with during this period. While other options may be important for different safety protocols, the specific focus of blocking within a Form B is particularly crucial for dual control switches because they play a vital role in managing safe and efficient train operations in work zones. Managing the setting and status of these switches directly contributes to the overall safety of the work crew and the operational integrity of the railways.

8. What should be promptly notified during an emergency affecting signals?

A. The Signal Call Desk and Chief Dispatcher

B. Local dispatchers only

C. Only the affected train crews

D. Signal maintenance engineers

Prompt notification during an emergency affecting signals is crucial for maintaining safety and operational integrity on the railway. The correct choice emphasizes the importance of contacting both the Signal Call Desk and the Chief Dispatcher. The Signal Call Desk is responsible for monitoring and managing signal status, and they play a key role in resolving signal issues quickly and effectively. Notifying the Chief Dispatcher is equally important, as this individual oversees the overall operation of train movements and can make necessary decisions or adjustments in response to the emergency. Their awareness ensures that immediate action can be taken to mitigate any risks and to communicate the situation to all relevant personnel and train crews. In contrast, simply notifying local dispatchers or only the affected train crews would not provide a comprehensive response to the emergency. Local dispatchers may need to be informed, but the central coordination of both the Signal Call Desk and Chief Dispatcher maximizes the efficiency and safety of response efforts. Signal maintenance engineers are also not the primary contacts for immediate emergency communication regarding active train operations, and while they play a critical role in addressing signal malfunctions, they are not involved in the immediate management of train movements during an emergency.

9. What must control operators avoid doing unless a signal is used for protection?

A. Moving beyond a Stop indication

B. Authorizing movements verbally

C. Using hand signals

D. All of the above

Control operators are tasked with maintaining safe operations and communication within the railroad system. It's crucial for them to adhere to rules and protocols that ensure the safety of both trains and personnel. Moving beyond a Stop indication is a critical safety violation unless explicitly authorized, usually indicated by a signal. Doing so without proper protection can lead to dangerous situations, such as collisions. Authorization of movements verbally can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication, particularly in a noisy or hectic environment. Without a visual aid, giving verbal instructions increases the potential for error, which is why operators should rely on signals whenever possible. Using hand signals, while sometimes necessary for immediate communication, should also be approached with caution and be used in conjunction with clear signals whenever possible to mitigate the risk of confusion. Thus, all of these actions need to be carefully controlled and should generally not occur unless a signal ensures proper safety and indication. Therefore, the comprehensive answer highlights that control operators must avoid all these actions unless a signal is used for protection, ensuring the highest level of safety in train operations.

10. What must a train do after stopping at a signal displaying a stop indication with supervisory control in CTC territory?

A. Proceed without restrictions

B. Comply with instructions in the release box

C. Continue at a reduced speed

D. Wait for further instructions from dispatch

After stopping at a signal displaying a stop indication in CTC (Centralized Traffic Control) territory, the train must comply with the instructions in the release box. This is because the release box contains critical information regarding the conditions and operating requirements that the train must follow before proceeding. The instructions may specify safe movement guidelines, restrictions, or other relevant operational directives that ensure safety and adherence to signaling protocols. In CTC territory, signals are used to direct train movements, and when a train encounters a stop signal, it is essential for the crew to refer to the release box to ensure that they are operating within the established parameters. The contents of the release box provide the necessary clearance or further directions that are specific to the situation at hand, which is crucial for maintaining safe and efficient rail operations.