California Lathing and Plastering Contractor (C-35 License) 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

1. **Special runner track may be installed if which condition is met?**
   - A. Architect approves
   - B. Building permit issued
   - C. Contractor approves
   - D. Owner approves

2. **How is substrate moisture content considered in plastering?**
   - A. It has no effect
   - B. It only affects color
   - C. It affects bonding and curing; must be within recommended range
   - D. It only affects drying time

3. **What is the purpose of flashing behind stucco at windows and doors?**
   - A. To hold stucco in place
   - B. To divert water away and prevent infiltration
   - C. To improve insulation
   - D. To provide fasteners

4. **Under the Building Code, an apartment house is defined as a building or portion that contains how many dwelling units or more?**
   - A. 1
   - B. 2
   - C. 3
   - D. 4

5. **Type F3/8R metal plaster base must weigh how many pounds per square yard in the listed options?**
   - A. 3.4
   - B. 2.0
   - C. 5.0
   - D. 6.0

6. Which type designation corresponds to Flat metal plaster base?

A. F

B. SF

C. A

D. B

7. In insulating gypsum lath, the foil side should be installed facing toward:

A. framing members

B. room interior

C. exterior sheathing

D. finished surface

8. Type SFB metal plaster base is which of the following

A. self-furring with backing

B. flat rib with backing

C. self-furring without backing

D. non-furring

9. Gypsum lath orientation across supports?

A. Perpendicular to supports

B. Parallel to supports

C. Diagonal to supports

D. Rotated relative to supports

10. What binder does lime plaster use and how does it affect its properties?

A. Portland cement binder

B. Lime binder; more flexible and breathable

C. Gypsum binder

D. Epoxy binder

Answers

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

Explanations

1. Special runner track may be installed if which condition is met?

A. Architect approves

B. Building permit issued

C. Contractor approves

D. Owner approves

The key idea is that any modification or nonstandard installation that alters how a system fits into the building design must be approved by the design professional responsible for the drawings and specifications. An architect's approval ensures the special runner track aligns with the intended layout, dimensions, and finish schedule, and that it integrates properly with structural framing, fire-rated assemblies, and other trades. This sign-off helps prevent clashes with ceilings, walls, or adjacent systems and ensures the change complies with the contract documents and applicable codes. A building permit is important and typically follows once the plans (including any approved deviations) are reviewed, but it doesn't substitute for design approval. Contractor or owner approval alone doesn't address the engineering, coordination, or code aspects that come with altering the approved plan.

2. How is substrate moisture content considered in plastering?

A. It has no effect

B. It only affects color

C. It affects bonding and curing; must be within recommended range

D. It only affects drying time

Substrate moisture content is a deciding factor for how well plaster bonds and cures. The moisture level at the surface controls suction—the tendency of the substrate to draw water from the plaster. If the substrate is too dry, it will suck water out of the plaster quickly, causing rapid stiffening, poor adhesion, and a fragile bond with the surface. If the substrate is too wet, suction is reduced, so the plaster may not grip properly, can slump, and curing can be uneven, leading to weak sections or surface defects. That's why you must keep the substrate moisture within the range recommended by the plaster product and project specs. Testing the surface and adjusting with controlled dampening or priming helps ensure consistent suction, proper bonding, and a sound cure.

3. What is the purpose of flashing behind stucco at windows and doors?

A. To hold stucco in place

B. To divert water away and prevent infiltration

C. To improve insulation

D. To provide fasteners

Flashing behind stucco at windows and doors is all about directing moisture out of the wall. When water gets behind the outer stucco, this flashing provides a channel that guides that water downward and away from the opening, helping it drain to the exterior rather than seeping into the framing. It protects the rough opening and the building interior from rot and mold by creating a continuous drainage path with the weather-resistive barrier and window/door flashing. This function is why flashing is placed behind the stucco at openings and tied into the surrounding moisture-control system. It's not primarily meant to hold the stucco in place—that's the job of the lath and base coat—nor is its main purpose insulation or providing fasteners.

4. Under the Building Code, an apartment house is defined as a building or portion that contains how many dwelling units or more?

A. 1

B. 2

C. 3

D. 4

The Building Code defines an apartment house as a building or portion that contains three or more dwelling units. That three-unit threshold matters because once a structure reaches three or more dwelling units, it is classified as an apartment house and triggers the corresponding requirements for fire-resistance ratings, egress, and separation between units. Buildings with fewer than three units are typically treated as duplexes or two-family dwellings, which have different, usually less stringent, rules. So recognizing that three or more units makes it an apartment house explains why this definition uses the number three.

5. Type F3/8R metal plaster base must weigh how many pounds per square yard in the listed options?

A. 3.4

B. 2.0

C. 5.0

D. 6.0

In plastering, the weight per square yard of the metal plaster base is a defined spec that affects how well the plaster will be supported and performed. For the Type F3/8R metal plaster base, the standard area density is 3.4 pounds per square yard. This weight provides enough rigidity and support for the plaster coat without adding unnecessary dead load to the wall. Lath that is too light won't adequately support the plaster, while heavier options aren't required for this base type and would just add extra weight. The other values don't match the established specification for this lath, which is why 3.4 pounds per square yard is the correct choice.

6. Which type designation corresponds to Flat metal plaster base?

A. F

B. SF

C. A

D. B

Flat metal plaster base is defined by its smooth, flat sheet form used as the base for plaster. This designation identifies the lath that provides a uniform, even surface for plaster to key to, without the openings or ridges found in other lath types. Expanded or ribbed lath create different patterns and mechanical keys, which are not the same as a flat base. So the designation that corresponds to a flat metal plaster base is the one that indicates a flat, smooth lath suitable for a level plaster finish.

7. In insulating gypsum lath, the foil side should be installed facing toward:

A. framing members

B. room interior

C. exterior sheathing

D. finished surface

The main idea here is how the foil layer in insulating gypsum lath functions within the wall assembly. The foil acts as a radiant barrier and vapor retarder, so its orientation matters for performance and for how the plaster bonds. Installing the foil side toward the framing members places the reflective surface in the wall cavity itself, between the lath and the studs. This keeps the barrier in the air space where it can effectively reduce heat transfer and limit moisture diffusion into the insulation, while also keeping the foil out of the plaster's bond area so finish work isn't compromised. If the foil faced the room interior or the exterior sheathing, the reflective layer wouldn't be positioned in the cavity where it would most effectively influence heat flow and moisture movement, and it could interfere with plaster bonding or become more easily damaged during finishing.

8. Type SFB metal plaster base is which of the following

A. self-furring with backing

B. flat rib with backing

C. self-furring without backing

D. non-furring

The main idea is what SFB describes in metal plaster base. SFB means self-furring with backing. Self-furring means the lath has built-in ribs that space the plaster away from the substrate, creating an automatic air gap and a mechanical key for the plaster to grab onto. The backing provides a solid plane or backing surface behind the lath, giving the plaster stability and improved adhesion. Together, these features offer both the key for bonding and the backing for support, which is why this option is the best description.

9. Gypsum lath orientation across supports?

A. Perpendicular to supports

B. Parallel to supports

C. Diagonal to supports

D. Rotated relative to supports

Gypsum lath should be installed perpendicular to the framing members (across the supports). This position lets fasteners bite into multiple supports, giving a solid, secure base for plaster and a good key for the plaster to grip. If the lath runs parallel to the supports, fasteners may land between supports, providing less secure attachment and increasing the risk of movement, sagging, and cracking. Diagonal or rotated placements aren't standard practice for gypsum lath in typical wall framing.

10. What binder does lime plaster use and how does it affect its properties?

A. Portland cement binder

B. Lime binder; more flexible and breathable

C. Gypsum binder

D. Epoxy binder

Lime plaster uses a lime binder, which sets by carbonation rather than rapid hydration. That carbonating reaction gradually turns lime into a solid matrix that remains porous, allowing moisture to move through the plaster and the wall. This breathing quality is a hallmark of lime plaster and is essential for historic masonry, helping to manage moisture and prevent trapped damp. Because lime binders are relatively elastic compared to cement, lime plaster stays more flexible. This flexibility helps accommodate minor movements in the wall without forming large cracks, especially in older structures where movement and moisture changes are common. The slow, bedded cure also means the plaster develops strength over a longer period, closely matching the behavior of the surrounding masonry. In contrast, binders like Portland cement produce a hard, rigid, and less breathable layer that can trap moisture and crack with movement. Gypsum binders set quickly and are brittle, typically used for interior applications with low moisture. Epoxy binders are synthetic and not breathable, making them unsuitable for traditional lime plaster.

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://lathingplasteringc35.examzify.com

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