

California Painting and Decorating Contractor (C-33) 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

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- 1. What is the recommended method to prepare wood that has weep and pitch?**
 - A. Sealing**
 - B. Sanding**
 - C. Painting**
 - D. Cleaning**

- 2. Most likely to bleed resin into paint?**
 - A. Pine**
 - B. Cedar**
 - C. Oak**
 - D. Maple**

- 3. Which statement about extension ladder height limits on job sites is correct?**
 - A. 72 feet**
 - B. 60 feet**
 - C. 74 feet**
 - D. 100 feet**

- 4. Which brush is known for the highest paint-holding capacity?**
 - A. China Bristle Brush**
 - B. Foam Brush**
 - C. Nylon Brush**
 - D. Synthetic Bristle Brush**

- 5. A problem you would encounter if you spray lacquer on a polished silicone surface?**
 - A. Fisheye**
 - B. Caulk**
 - C. New plaster walls**
 - D. Disposable brush**

- 6. Which tool is the most economical method to sand flat walls?**
- A. Poke Sander**
 - B. Garden Sprayer**
 - C. Resin**
 - D. Green Tape**
- 7. What is the distance from the wall to the foot of a ladder, expressed as a fraction of the ladder's length?**
- A. One quarter of the ladder length**
 - B. One half of the ladder length**
 - C. One quarter of the wall height**
 - D. One foot**
- 8. Which tool holds the most paint?**
- A. China Bristle Brush**
 - B. Foam Brush**
 - C. Nylon Brush**
 - D. Synthetic Bristle Brush**
- 9. According to ladder placement guidelines, how far should the base be from the wall for every four rungs?**
- A. One foot**
 - B. Two feet**
 - C. Three feet**
 - D. Four feet**
- 10. What binds pigment in paint?**
- A. Resin**
 - B. Water**
 - C. Oil**
 - D. Wax**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the recommended method to prepare wood that has weep and pitch?

- A. Sealing**
- B. Sanding**
- C. Painting**
- D. Cleaning**

Pitch and weep cause oils from the wood to bleed into the finish, leaving stains and blotches. Sealing the surface with a barrier primer or sealer blocks those oils and provides a stable base for the topcoat. A shellac- or oil-based sealer is particularly effective at stopping resin from migrating, so after cleaning and a light sanding, apply the sealer, let it dry, then proceed with the finish. Sanding alone doesn't stop the bleed and painting directly on untreated wood can let the pitch show through, while cleaning helps prepare the surface but doesn't prevent bleed. Sealing is the right prep step to keep the finish clean and consistent.

2. Most likely to bleed resin into paint?

- A. Pine**
- B. Cedar**
- C. Oak**
- D. Maple**

Resin bleed into paint happens when a wood species has enough resin that it migrates to the surface and into the finish. Pine is a softwood with relatively high resin content and many resin canals, so under heat, moisture, or with certain finishes, the resin tends to migrate and appear in the paint film. That makes pine the most likely to bleed resin among common cabinetry and framing woods. Cedar also contains resin, but bleeds less predictably than pine. Oak and maple have much lower resin content, so they are far less prone to this issue. To prevent resin bleed from pine, use a stain-blocking primer such as a shellac-based primer and ensure the wood is properly dried and sealed before topcoating.

3. Which statement about extension ladder height limits on job sites is correct?

- A. 72 feet**
- B. 60 feet**
- C. 74 feet**
- D. 100 feet**

A safety rule sets a maximum height for extension ladders on job sites because taller ladders become increasingly unstable and harder to secure. The limit is chosen so you can maintain the correct angle, keep three points of contact, and have a stable footing while climbing and working. When you need to reach higher than that limit, you must use safer alternatives such as scaffolding or a powered aerial lift. That's why this option aligns with standard practice: it reflects the established height limit designed to keep work safe and practical. The other higher numbers would require equipment beyond the typical ladder setup, which is not considered safe for standard use.

4. Which brush is known for the highest paint-holding capacity?

A. China Bristle Brush

B. Foam Brush

C. Nylon Brush

D. Synthetic Bristle Brush

Natural hog bristle brushes, like a China bristle brush, have the highest paint-holding capacity because their bristles are porous and have rough, split ends that trap and hold more paint. This structure lets the brush carry a larger load into each stroke, which is especially advantageous when using oil-based paints or varnishes where you want substantial paint transfer in one pass. Foam brushes hold very little paint and are used for small areas or quick jobs; nylon and other synthetic bristles are smoother and don't hold as much paint as natural hog bristle, though they perform well with water-based finishes.

5. A problem you would encounter if you spray lacquer on a polished silicone surface?

A. Fisheye

B. Caulk

C. New plaster walls

D. Disposable brush

When a coating can't wet the surface properly, you get fisheye—tiny crater-like pits that form where the paint pulls away around dust, oils, or residues. Polished silicone has extremely low surface energy and resists wetting by lacquer, so the coating beads up and can't level smoothly. You'll see circular imperfections around any contaminant or slick area, which is characteristic of fisheye. The other options don't describe this wetting/adhesion problem. Caulk, new plaster walls, or a disposable brush aren't the wetting issue you'd expect when spraying lacquer on a non-wettable surface like polished silicone; they don't explain why the lacquer fails to film and forms those round voids around contaminants.

6. Which tool is the most economical method to sand flat walls?

A. Poke Sander

B. Garden Sprayer

C. Resin

D. Green Tape

Smoothing flat walls most economically is best done with a simple hand tool that uses inexpensive abrasive sheets. A poke sander fits that role because it's cheap, requires no power, and uses standard sandpaper or pads that are easy to replace. With this tool, you can control pressure and move evenly across large flat surfaces, feathering patches and edges as needed without the extra cost or setup of electric sanders. The other items aren't sanding tools at all: a garden sprayer is for applying liquids, resin is a material, and green tape is masking. They don't help with finishing a wall's surface. So the poke sander provides the most economical, practical method for leveling and smoothing flat walls.

7. What is the distance from the wall to the foot of a ladder, expressed as a fraction of the ladder's length?

- A. One quarter of the ladder length**
- B. One half of the ladder length**
- C. One quarter of the wall height**
- D. One foot**

A stable ladder setup uses a base distance from the wall that's about one-quarter of the ladder's length. If the ladder length is L , the horizontal distance from the wall is $x = L/4$. The ladder, wall, and ground form a right triangle with the ladder as the hypotenuse. By the Pythagorean theorem, the vertical reach is $h = \sqrt{L^2 - x^2} = \sqrt{L^2 - L^2/16} = (L/4)\sqrt{15}$. The angle between the ladder and the ground then has tangent $h/x = \sqrt{15}$, which is about 3.873, giving an angle of roughly 75.96 degrees—this is the commonly recommended ladder angle. So the distance, as a fraction of the ladder length, is one quarter.

8. Which tool holds the most paint?

- A. China Bristle Brush**
- B. Foam Brush**
- C. Nylon Brush**
- D. Synthetic Bristle Brush**

The main idea is how much paint a tool's material can absorb and keep in place. China bristle brushes, made from hog hair, are highly porous and have a dense cluster of stiff bristles that trap and hold a large amount of paint within the bristles as you load the brush. This capillary action and porosity let them retain more paint than the other options. Foam brushes hold paint in their open-cell structure, but they saturate quickly and don't retain as much overall. Nylon and other synthetic bristles are less porous, so they don't hold as much paint either. So, for the greatest paint pickup, the china bristle brush is the best choice.

9. According to ladder placement guidelines, how far should the base be from the wall for every four rungs?

- A. One foot**
- B. Two feet**
- C. Three feet**
- D. Four feet**

Ladder angle safety is what's being tested here. The standard guideline is the 4:1 rule: for every four feet of ladder height, place the base about one foot from the wall. This keeps the ladder at a safe angle—roughly 75 degrees—so it's stable and less prone to slipping or tipping. When four rungs of a ladder correspond to the working height, about one foot of base distance is the right amount to maintain that safe angle. If you push the base closer to the wall, the ladder gets steeper and less stable; if you push it farther out, it becomes too shallow and can tip backward or slide. Always ensure the ladder is on a firm, level surface, fully opened and secured, and that you maintain three points of contact as you climb.

10. What binds pigment in paint?

- A. Resin**
- B. Water**
- C. Oil**
- D. Wax**

The main idea here is the binder in paint, which is responsible for holding pigment particles together and sticking them to the surface to form a durable film. The resin acts as that binder. When paint dries, the resin forms a continuous film that traps the pigment particles and adheres to the substrate, giving the coating its cohesion, adhesion, and durability. Water, by contrast, is just the vehicle that carries the pigments and resin during application; it evaporates away as the film forms. Oil can function as a binder in traditional oil-based paints, but the common term for the film-forming binder in most paints is resin. Wax isn't the primary binder in standard paints.

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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://californiac33.examzify.com>

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

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