

# Canadian National Railroad 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 a train passes a signal indication that is less than clear, what must be communicated between crew members in the cab of the controlling locomotive?**
  - A. The track designation ahead.**
  - B. The next signal status.**
  - C. The speed of the train as it passes the signal indication that is less than clear.**
  - D. The train length behind the signal.**
  
- 2. If you are the utility person and you have properly attached yourself to a crew, you can protect a shoving movement for that crew from inside a company vehicle.**
  - A. True**
  - B. False**
  - C. Only with supervisory approval**
  - D. Only on designated tracks**
  
- 3. The rule for whistle failure when the lead whistle unit is unavailable is found under which USOR section?**
  - A. USOR 413**
  - B. USOR 416**
  - C. USOR 410**
  - D. USOR 408**
  
- 4. Within Yard Limits, all trains and engines move at which speed?**
  - A. Restricted Speed**
  - B. 25 mph**
  - C. 60 mph**
  - D. 5 mph**
  
- 5. What may be used to designate the limits of a Track Authority outside CTC Territory?**
  - A. Locations such as station names, mile posts or other clearly identifiable point**
  - B. Distances measured from the entrance point**
  - C. Time-based route segments**
  - D. Color-coded track sections**

- 6. Under identification procedures, which statement accurately describes the required identification?**
- A. Initials alone**
  - B. Engine number alone**
  - C. Train name and destination**
  - D. Initial and number of the engine**
- 7. How long is a Track Authority in effect?**
- A. Until a crew member reports that the train has cleared the limits and the authority is made void**
  - B. Until the RTC issues a new authority**
  - C. For a fixed duration of 2 hours**
  - D. Until the next scheduled stop**
- 8. In standard identification, which two elements are recorded for a train's engine?**
- A. Vehicle type and owner name**
  - B. Engine number only**
  - C. Initial and number of the engine**
  - D. Crew initials only**
- 9. Which is a valid method to determine that a train has arrived or left before occupying the main track?**
- A. Direct communication with a crew member or RTC**
  - B. Visual estimation**
  - C. Radio to dispatcher only**
  - D. Timetable check only**
- 10. Headlight dimming restrictions are found in which USOR section?**
- A. USOR 408**
  - B. USOR 412**
  - C. USOR 410**
  - D. USOR 502**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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1. When a train passes a signal indication that is less than clear, what must be communicated between crew members in the cab of the controlling locomotive?
  - A. The track designation ahead.
  - B. The next signal status.
  - C. The speed of the train as it passes the signal indication that is less than clear.**
  - D. The train length behind the signal.

When a signal indication is less than clear, the essential piece of information to share is the speed of the train as it passes that signal. Knowing the actual speed at that moment lets the crew judge whether the train is moving within the limits required for a restrictive or caution indication and prepares them to adjust to ensure a safe stop or slow down as the signal clarifies. The other details—track designation ahead, the status of the next signal, or train length behind—don't provide the immediate, actionable safety context needed at that moment; the speed at passing is the critical factor for coordinating safe operation.

2. If you are the utility person and you have properly attached yourself to a crew, you can protect a shoving movement for that crew from inside a company vehicle.
  - A. True
  - B. False**
  - C. Only with supervisory approval
  - D. Only on designated tracks

Protecting a shoving movement relies on a lookout positioned on the ground with a clear view of the track ends and the ability to signal the engineer or stop the movement as needed. Being inside a company vehicle does not provide the required visibility, escape path, or direct, timely communication. Even if you are attached to the crew, the protection must be performed from a ground position, not from within a vehicle. That's why the statement is false. Options about supervisory approval or designation of tracks don't change this requirement.

**3. The rule for whistle failure when the lead whistle unit is unavailable is found under which USOR section?**

- A. USOR 413**
- B. USOR 416**
- C. USOR 410**
- D. USOR 408**

The situation tests knowing where whistle-failure procedures are located when the lead unit's horn can't be used. USOR 410 is the section that specifically covers whistle signals and whistle-failure scenarios, including what to do when the lead whistle unit is unavailable. It lays out the required actions to maintain proper audible warning by using the remaining units or following the prescribed alternative signaling method, so that crossing protection and crew safety are preserved. That direct focus on whistle failures with the lead unit out of service is why this is the best answer. The other sections deal with different whistle-related requirements and do not address the lead-unit-unavailable situation.

**4. Within Yard Limits, all trains and engines move at which speed?**

- A. Restricted Speed**
- B. 25 mph**
- C. 60 mph**
- D. 5 mph**

Within Yard Limits, trains and engines operate at restricted speed. This means you move at a pace that lets you stop within the distance you can see ahead, so you can safely react to any signals, switching moves, or workers that may appear in the yard. Yard operations involve many switches, hand signals, and sometimes obstructed or changing track conditions, so a slow, controlled speed is essential for safety. The other speeds are standard line speeds or a fixed very slow pace used in some yards, but the rule taught here emphasizes the ability to stop within visible distance, which is the defining idea of restricted speed in yard operations.

**5. What may be used to designate the limits of a Track Authority outside CTC Territory?**

- A. Locations such as station names, mile posts or other clearly identifiable point**
- B. Distances measured from the entrance point**
- C. Time-based route segments**
- D. Color-coded track sections**

Limits of a Track Authority outside CTC Territory must be defined by fixed, easily identifiable points along the track. Using station names, mile posts, or other clearly identifiable points provides a precise, unambiguous boundary that both the dispatcher and the crew can reference in orders and on the ground. Distances from an entrance point can be confusing if there are multiple entrances or if the track layout changes. Time-based route segments depend on speed and schedules and can drift, creating uncertainty. Color-coded track sections aren't a formal boundary reference and may not be consistently visible or understood in all conditions. So, referencing fixed points like stations or mile posts gives the clearest, most reliable limits for Track Authority.

**6. Under identification procedures, which statement accurately describes the required identification?**

- A. Initials alone**
- B. Engine number alone**
- C. Train name and destination**
- D. Initial and number of the engine**

Identification procedures require tying a specific person to a specific piece of equipment so there is no ambiguity about who is operating what. Using only initials doesn't tell you which locomotive is involved, and a locomotive's engine number alone tells you which engine it is but not who is handling it. Listing the train name and destination describes the service, not the particular locomotive or operator, so it can't guarantee precise accountability. The combination of the operator's initials and the engine number clearly identifies both the person in charge and the exact engine, providing a unique reference for safety checks, handoffs, and records.

**7. How long is a Track Authority in effect?**

- A. Until a crew member reports that the train has cleared the limits and the authority is made void**
- B. Until the RTC issues a new authority**
- C. For a fixed duration of 2 hours**
- D. Until the next scheduled stop**

Track Authority is a temporary permission to occupy a defined section of track that remains in effect as long as the train is within the authorized limits. It is cancelled when the train has cleared those limits, which is typically confirmed by the crew reporting clearance and the authority being made void. This ensures that occupancy is clearly ended before another movement can be authorized, preventing conflicts with other trains or movements. That's why the best choice is that the authority lasts until the crew reports that the train has cleared the limits and the authority is void. It isn't a fixed time (like two hours), nor does it wait for a new authority to be issued by the RTC, and it isn't tied to the next scheduled stop.

**8. In standard identification, which two elements are recorded for a train's engine?**

- A. Vehicle type and owner name**
- B. Engine number only**
- C. Initial and number of the engine**
- D. Crew initials only**

Locomotive identification uses a two-part tag: the initial (which marks the engine's series or road code) together with the engine number (the unit's unique sequence within that series). This combination creates a unique identity for each engine, so records, logs, dispatching, and maintenance can unambiguously reference a specific locomotive even if numbers collide across different series or roads. The number alone can clash between different engine groups, and other data like vehicle type, owner, or crew initials don't provide a precise, consistent identifier for the engine itself.

**9. Which is a valid method to determine that a train has arrived or left before occupying the main track?**

- A. Direct communication with a crew member or RTC**
- B. Visual estimation**
- C. Radio to dispatcher only**
- D. Timetable check only**

Before occupying the main track, you need positive confirmation of the train's status from the person directly involved. Direct communication with a crew member or the Rail Traffic Controller provides a clear, real-time acknowledgment that the train has arrived or left the block, so you can protect the main track accordingly. This two-way check eliminates guesswork and ensures both sides understand the exact status and location, which is crucial for preventing collisions. Other methods fall short because visual estimation can be fooled by distance, weather, or obstructions; a radio message to the dispatcher alone may not yield a direct, mutual confirmation of the specific train's occupancy status; and a timetable check only reflects planned times, not actual, current occupancy.

**10. Headlight dimming restrictions are found in which USOR section?**

- A. USOR 408**
- B. USOR 412**
- C. USOR 410**
- D. USOR 502**

Headlight usage is governed by rules that tell crews when to dim the locomotive lights to avoid glare that could blind opposing trains, pedestrians, or other crews. The section that covers these headlight dimming restrictions is USOR 412. It lays out exactly when dimming is required or allowed, tying into safety practices for night and low-visibility operations. The other sections focus on different aspects of operations, such as signaling, train movements, or yard switching, so they don't specifically address headlight dimming. That's why USOR 412 is the correct reference.

## 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](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**<https://cnrailroad.examzify.com>**

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

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