

Commercial Septic System Installer Practice Exam Sample Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What is a requirement for a pump to be satisfactory in a septic system?**
 - A. It must be silent during operation**
 - B. It must overcome the head and provide an acceptable discharge rate**
 - C. It must operate at a low energy cost**
 - D. It must be easy to install and maintain**
- 2. Which of the following is vital for the proper functioning of a septic system?**
 - A. Regular pumping and inspection**
 - B. Only installing high-quality materials**
 - C. Less water usage is always better**
 - D. A constant supply of chemicals**
- 3. What is an approved method for disposing of household hazardous waste related to septic systems?**
 - A. Pouring it down the drain**
 - B. Burying it in the yard**
 - C. Taking it to a licensed hazardous waste facility**
 - D. Mixing it with regular household trash**
- 4. Which solid pipe schedule is ideal for on-site sewage disposal installations?**
 - A. Schedule 50**
 - B. Schedule 40**
 - C. Schedule 25**
 - D. C900 PVC**
- 5. What is the role of the local health department in septic system installation?**
 - A. Provides funding for installations**
 - B. Reviews plans, conducts inspections, and ensures compliance with health standards**
 - C. Acts solely as a regulatory authority**
 - D. Handles customer complaints**

- 6. Which of the following is a sign of potential septic system failure?**
- A. Healthy green grass in the drain field area**
 - B. Slow draining sinks and toilets**
 - C. Odd odors near the septic tank**
 - D. All of the above**
- 7. Which components are essential in a commercial septic system?**
- A. Septic tank, drain field, and soil absorption area**
 - B. Septic tank, cleanout access, and flow diverter**
 - C. Drainage ditch, sump pump, and grease trap**
 - D. Septic tank, filtration system, and aeration chamber**
- 8. Concrete pouring should not be conducted during which conditions to maintain the integrity of the finished product?**
- A. Warm weather**
 - B. Freezing or inclement weather**
 - C. High humidity**
 - D. Nighttime**
- 9. How can a septic tank be reinforced?**
- A. Using fiberglass only**
 - B. With wooden beams**
 - C. Using No.10 gage welded steel reinforcing wire**
 - D. With no reinforcement required**
- 10. What type of power source is typically used for pumps in dosing tanks?**
- A. Solar power**
 - B. Gravity-fed water**
 - C. Electricity**
 - D. Wind energy**

Answers

SAMPLE

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

SAMPLE

Explanations

1. What is a requirement for a pump to be satisfactory in a septic system?

A. It must be silent during operation

B. It must overcome the head and provide an acceptable discharge rate

C. It must operate at a low energy cost

D. It must be easy to install and maintain

A pump in a septic system is essential for moving wastewater from the tank to the drain field, especially in situations where gravity alone cannot facilitate this movement. For a pump to be satisfactory, it must effectively overcome the head, which is the vertical distance that the wastewater must be lifted, and it must also provide an acceptable discharge rate. This means that the pump should be capable of delivering the wastewater at a sufficient flow rate to ensure proper distribution into the drain field, preventing backups and ensuring the system functions properly. Assessing the performance of the pump through these criteria is crucial because inadequate pump performance can lead to system failure, creating health hazards and environmental issues. The ability to overcome head is particularly important in maintaining the integrity of the effluent's pathway, while an acceptable discharge rate ensures that the system can handle the volume of wastewater generated. Therefore, meeting these operational requirements is fundamental to the successful functioning of a septic system.

2. Which of the following is vital for the proper functioning of a septic system?

A. Regular pumping and inspection

B. Only installing high-quality materials

C. Less water usage is always better

D. A constant supply of chemicals

For a septic system to function effectively, regular pumping and inspection are essential. This practice helps to prevent the buildup of solid waste and scum in the septic tank, ensuring that these materials do not overflow into the drain field. Over time, waste materials accumulate, and if not properly managed, they can obstruct the system's operation, leading to system failure or environmental contamination. Regular inspections also allow for early detection of potential issues, such as leaks or structural problems within the tank or drain field. By identifying and addressing these issues promptly, homeowners can avoid costly repairs and prolong the life of their septic system. In contrast, while using high-quality materials in installation can contribute to the long-term durability of the system, it does not replace the need for routine maintenance like pumping and inspection. Similarly, while minimizing water usage can be beneficial in certain contexts, excessively reducing water flow can also lead to issues like insufficient effluent movement within the system. Lastly, a constant supply of chemicals is not recommended, as chemicals can disrupt the natural bacterial processes essential for breaking down waste in the septic system. Maintaining a balance through regular maintenance is the most effective way to ensure proper functioning.

3. What is an approved method for disposing of household hazardous waste related to septic systems?

- A. Pouring it down the drain**
- B. Burying it in the yard**
- C. Taking it to a licensed hazardous waste facility**
- D. Mixing it with regular household trash**

Taking household hazardous waste to a licensed hazardous waste facility is the approved method for disposal in relation to septic systems. This approach ensures that toxic or harmful materials, such as paints, solvents, and chemicals, are handled safely and in accordance with environmental regulations. Licensed facilities are equipped to manage these substances properly, preventing contamination of soil and groundwater, which could occur if hazardous waste is disposed of improperly. In contrast, pouring hazardous waste down the drain can lead to blockages and damage to the septic system, while also introducing harmful chemicals into the wastewater treatment process. Burying waste in the yard poses significant risks of leaching harmful contaminants into the environment. Finally, mixing hazardous waste with regular household trash can result in dangerous chemical reactions or exposure to sanitation workers, as well as further environmental risks if the waste is not treated appropriately. Therefore, proper disposal at a licensed facility is crucial for protecting both public health and the environment.

4. Which solid pipe schedule is ideal for on-site sewage disposal installations?

- A. Schedule 50**
- B. Schedule 40**
- C. Schedule 25**
- D. C900 PVC**

Schedule 40 pipe is commonly chosen for on-site sewage disposal installations due to its appropriate pressure rating and wall thickness, which provides the necessary durability and strength for wastewater applications. This pipe schedule is designed to handle the demands of both gravity-flow systems and pressurized applications, making it versatile for various types of septic systems. Its dimensions and pressure rating ensure it can withstand potential external loads and stresses from soil and environmental factors. Schedule 40 is also compatible with standard fittings and components typically used in septic system installations, facilitating easier assembly and installation in the field. Other pipe schedules, such as Schedule 25, are designed for lower pressure applications and may not offer the same level of durability needed for sewage disposal. Schedule 50 is typically not a recognized standard for sewage applications, while C900 PVC is aimed more at water transmission and may not be suitable for the corrosive environment found in sewage systems. Therefore, Schedule 40 is the most suitable choice for ensuring the performance and longevity of on-site sewage disposal installations.

5. What is the role of the local health department in septic system installation?

- A. Provides funding for installations**
- B. Reviews plans, conducts inspections, and ensures compliance with health standards**
- C. Acts solely as a regulatory authority**
- D. Handles customer complaints**

The local health department plays a crucial role in the installation of septic systems by reviewing plans, conducting inspections, and ensuring compliance with established health standards. This involves assessing the proposed system design to ensure it meets local codes and regulations, which are in place to protect public health and the environment. During the inspection phase, the health department will verify that the installation is executed correctly and that the system will function effectively within the designated parameters. By overseeing these aspects, the local health department helps prevent issues such as contamination of groundwater or inadequate waste treatment, which can occur if installations do not meet regulatory specifications. Their involvement ensures that all septic systems are not only up to code but also capable of protecting the community's health and well-being. This makes their role an essential part of the septic system installation process.

6. Which of the following is a sign of potential septic system failure?

- A. Healthy green grass in the drain field area**
- B. Slow draining sinks and toilets**
- C. Odd odors near the septic tank**
- D. All of the above**

Each of the signs listed can indicate potential issues with a septic system, making the choice of all of the above appropriate. Healthy green grass in the drain field area can seem like a positive sign at first glance. However, it may indicate that the septic system is failing and that effluent is surfacing in the drain field, allowing excess nutrients to promote lush growth in that area. This can suggest that the system is overloaded or malfunctioning. Slow draining sinks and toilets are a clear sign of plumbing issues, which often relate to septic system problems. These slow drains can result from blockages in the pipes or a full septic tank that is unable to properly process waste, thereby leading to backups and stating that the system requires attention. Odd odors near the septic tank indicate that gases, liquids, or other contents may not be contained within the system as they should be, pointing toward a failure of the containment and treatment aspects of the septic system. Since each of these signs reflects potential septic system failure, the choice indicating that all of these signs together are relevant is indeed correct. Recognizing these warning signs is crucial for prompt maintenance and preventing more severe problems down the line.

7. Which components are essential in a commercial septic system?

A. Septic tank, drain field, and soil absorption area

B. Septic tank, cleanout access, and flow diverter

C. Drainage ditch, sump pump, and grease trap

D. Septic tank, filtration system, and aeration chamber

The correct answer identifies the essential components of a commercial septic system, which are the septic tank, drain field, and soil absorption area. The septic tank serves as the primary holding and treatment area for wastewater. It allows for the separation of solids and liquids, where solids settle at the bottom and form sludge, while lighter materials float to the surface as scum. This initial treatment is crucial for reducing the organic load of the wastewater before it moves to the next stage. The drain field, also known as the leach field or soil absorption area, is essential for the final disposal of the treated wastewater. After leaving the septic tank, the effluent is distributed into the drain field, where it percolates through the soil. This process naturally filters and further treats the effluent, preventing contamination of surface and groundwater, and returning cleaned water to the environment. The soil absorption area is where the wastewater is treated through natural biological processes, utilizing microorganisms that break down the organic matter and help purify the water further. This system relies on the permeability of the soil to allow for adequate drainage and absorption, which is vital for the effective functioning of the overall septic system. While other options mention components relevant to wastewater management, they do not cover the core elements

8. Concrete pouring should not be conducted during which conditions to maintain the integrity of the finished product?

A. Warm weather

B. Freezing or inclement weather

C. High humidity

D. Nighttime

Concrete pouring should not be conducted during freezing or inclement weather because low temperatures can severely compromise the curing process and overall strength of the concrete. When temperatures drop below freezing, the water in the concrete mix can freeze before hydration occurs, leading to a situation known as frozen concrete. This can cause damage in the form of cracks, reduced durability, and various structural issues. Additionally, inclement weather can introduce excess moisture, which may lead to improper setting times and surface problems, such as efflorescence or scaling. Ensuring the right environmental conditions during the pouring and curing stage is critical for achieving the desired strength, durability, and longevity of the concrete structure. Using proper precautions, such as heating the mix or using additives to promote curing, can mitigate these risks, but ideally, pouring should occur when temperatures are more favorable.

9. How can a septic tank be reinforced?

- A. Using fiberglass only
- B. With wooden beams
- C. Using No.10 gage welded steel reinforcing wire**
- D. With no reinforcement required

Reinforcing a septic tank is essential to ensure its structural integrity, particularly under the weight of soil and any surface loads. The use of No.10 gauge welded steel reinforcing wire is a proven method for providing the necessary strength and durability to concrete septic tanks. This type of steel reinforcement enhances the tank's ability to withstand external pressures and prevents cracking or failure during operation. Fiberglass can be durable; however, relying solely on it may not provide the same level of strength as steel reinforcement, especially for the size and depth of standard septic tanks. Meanwhile, wooden beams are not an appropriate choice in this context, as they may rot over time and fail to provide consistent support. The option suggesting no reinforcement required overlooks the fact that soil and environmental factors impose significant stress on a septic tank, making reinforcement a critical design consideration for long-term functionality and safety. Reinforcing the tank with welded steel wire not only adheres to best practices but also contributes to the stability of the entire septic system.

10. What type of power source is typically used for pumps in dosing tanks?

- A. Solar power
- B. Gravity-fed water
- C. Electricity**
- D. Wind energy

Pumps in dosing tanks primarily rely on electricity as their power source. Electric pumps are favored for their efficiency in moving wastewater from the dosing tank to the drain field or other components of the septic system. They provide the necessary pressure and control to ensure that the effluent is distributed uniformly and effectively. Electricity allows for consistent and reliable operation compared to other power sources, which may not provide the same level of dependability required for the successful operation of pumps in septic systems. For instance, solar power can be variable depending on sunlight availability and may not be adequate for the continuous operation needed in waste management applications. Gravity-fed systems can only function where sufficient elevation change exists, limiting their use in many commercial settings. Wind energy, while renewable, is not a practical choice for powering septic system pumps, given the inconsistent nature of wind. The use of electricity therefore ensures that pumps operate as needed, providing a crucial part of the treatment process in commercial septic systems.