

# National Home Inspector Examination (NHIE) 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 minimum electrical service drop clearance required from a residential driveway?**
  - A. 12 feet**
  - B. 13 feet**
  - C. 15 feet**
  - D. 18 feet**
  
- 2. What is the main purpose of using a dielectric union in plumbing?**
  - A. Ensure a secure grounding connection**
  - B. Prevent corrosion between dissimilar metals**
  - C. Isolate electrical wires from supply pipes**
  - D. Bond hot and cold water pipes**
  
- 3. What common issue may lead to ice damming at the eaves?**
  - A. Inadequate attic insulation**
  - B. Undersized gutters**
  - C. Shallow roof slope**
  - D. Improper flashing**
  
- 4. What is a common issue associated with older plumbing systems?**
  - A. High-pressure water output**
  - B. Corrosion and build-up in pipes, leading to reduced water flow**
  - C. Excessive water waste**
  - D. Modern fixture compatibility**
  
- 5. What is a common indicator of potential mold growth in a home?**
  - A. Unusually high water bills**
  - B. Visible cracking in the walls**
  - C. Musty odors in certain areas**
  - D. Fluctuating indoor temperatures**

- 6. In an older home with a subpanel wired with non-metallic sheathed cable, how should the ground wire be configured?**
- A. Connected to a separate grounded buss bar**
  - B. Connected to a separate ground rod**
  - C. Bonded using the panel cover screws**
  - D. Connected to the neutral buss bar**
- 7. What triggers a ground fault condition?**
- A. Too many devices are used on a circuit**
  - B. A hot conductor touches another hot conductor**
  - C. A hot conductor touches a grounded surface or grounding conductor**
  - D. A grounded conductor comes in contact with a grounding conductor**
- 8. What is the likely cause of a horizontal crack in the mortar of a 60-year-old brick masonry house?**
- A. Excessive sand in the mortar mix**
  - B. Defective brick bonding**
  - C. Improper ceiling joist installation**
  - D. Differential settlement**
- 9. Which tool is best for verifying dampness when water infiltration is suspected behind a finished surface?**
- A. A. An infrared thermometer**
  - B. B. A pin-type moisture meter**
  - C. C. A non-contact moisture meter**
  - D. D. A digital camera**
- 10. In the context of dryer exhaust and gas-fired water heater vent termination, what should a home inspector recommend?**
- A. the dryer exhaust should be at least 5 feet from the gas vent termination.**
  - B. the dryer exhaust backdraft damper should be repaired or replaced.**
  - C. the gas vent is improperly terminated and should be relocated.**
  - D. the client monitor the gas vent for indications of deterioration.**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What is the minimum electrical service drop clearance required from a residential driveway?**

- A. 12 feet**
- B. 13 feet**
- C. 15 feet**
- D. 18 feet**

The minimum electrical service drop clearance required from a residential driveway is 12 feet. This standard is established to ensure safety and accessibility for vehicles passing under the service drop. The clearance helps prevent accidental contact with the overhead service lines, which are electrically live and can pose a serious risk if struck by a vehicle. In practical terms, maintaining a 12-foot clearance enables larger vehicles, such as trucks and recreational vehicles, to safely navigate without fear of damaging service lines or risking electrocution. Knowing this clearance is essential for home inspectors to identify potential hazards during an inspection and to ensure that residential installations comply with local electrical codes and safety standards. Other clearances, like 13, 15, or 18 feet, may apply to specific situations or different types of structures, but for standard residential driveways, the established requirement is 12 feet.

**2. What is the main purpose of using a dielectric union in plumbing?**

- A. Ensure a secure grounding connection**
- B. Prevent corrosion between dissimilar metals**
- C. Isolate electrical wires from supply pipes**
- D. Bond hot and cold water pipes**

The primary purpose of using a dielectric union in plumbing is to prevent corrosion between dissimilar metals. When two different types of metals are joined together in plumbing systems, such as copper and galvanized steel, an electrochemical reaction can occur, leading to galvanic corrosion. This corrosion can deteriorate the materials over time and result in leaks or failures in the plumbing system. Dielectric unions are specifically designed to prevent this issue by providing a non-conductive barrier between the two metals. This barrier reduces the electrical connection that promotes corrosion, thereby extending the lifespan of the plumbing components involved. By ensuring that dissimilar metals do not directly interact, dielectric unions play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of plumbing systems and preventing costly repairs. The other options do not accurately reflect the main function of a dielectric union. For instance, while grounding connections and electrical isolation are important in electrical systems, dielectric unions are not primarily used for these purposes. Similarly, bonding hot and cold water pipes is not relevant to the function of dielectric unions, as this bonding typically involves ensuring equal electrical potential between pipes rather than preventing corrosion.

### 3. What common issue may lead to ice damming at the eaves?

**A. Inadequate attic insulation**

**B. Undersized gutters**

**C. Shallow roof slope**

**D. Improper flashing**

Inadequate attic insulation is a key factor that can lead to ice damming at the eaves. When an attic lacks proper insulation, heat from the living spaces below escapes into the attic. This causes the roof surface to warm up, leading to snow on the roof melting, then running down to the eaves where it encounters the colder exterior temperatures. At the eaves, this meltwater can refreeze, forming ice dams as the water accumulates and freezes in layers. The formation of ice dams can create serious problems, including water backflow under shingles and into the home, potentially leading to water damage and structural issues. Adequate attic insulation helps maintain a uniform temperature on the roof surface, allowing snow to melt and drain away without refreezing at the eaves. Other options, while they can contribute to other roofing problems, do not directly relate to the heat dynamics that cause ice dams the way inadequate insulation does.

### 4. What is a common issue associated with older plumbing systems?

**A. High-pressure water output**

**B. Corrosion and build-up in pipes, leading to reduced water flow**

**C. Excessive water waste**

**D. Modern fixture compatibility**

Corrosion and build-up in pipes is a prevalent issue in older plumbing systems. Over time, the materials used in older pipes, such as galvanized steel or iron, can deteriorate due to chemical reactions with water, leading to rust formation and mineral deposits. This corrosion not only weakens the structural integrity of the pipes but also results in reduced water flow rates. The accumulation of build-up can create blockages, which may further exacerbate the issue and lead to increased pressure on the plumbing system. As a result, homeowners with older plumbing systems often experience variable water pressure and diminished performance in fixtures. In contrast, high-pressure water output is typically a characteristic of newer plumbing systems that are designed to handle the demands of modern households. Excessive water waste may arise due to leaks, but this is not inherently a problem tied to the age of the plumbing system alone. Lastly, modern fixture compatibility may be an issue with older systems that don't meet current standards, but it is not a common physical issue affecting the plumbing's performance like corrosion and build-up.

**5. What is a common indicator of potential mold growth in a home?**

- A. Unusually high water bills**
- B. Visible cracking in the walls**
- C. Musty odors in certain areas**
- D. Fluctuating indoor temperatures**

Musty odors in certain areas are a strong indicator of potential mold growth in a home. Mold thrives in environments that are damp and may not always be visible to the naked eye. The organic material that mold consumes will often produce a distinct, musty smell, which can be quite noticeable, especially in areas that are prone to moisture, such as basements, bathrooms, or around leaks. Recognizing and addressing the source of these odors is crucial for preventing mold from spreading, which can lead to health issues and structural damage. It's essential for home inspectors to be attentive to odors as they can be a key clue in identifying hidden mold issues or inadequate ventilation, which contributes to mold proliferation. Other indicators, such as unusually high water bills, might suggest leaks or plumbing issues but do not directly signify mold presence. Visible cracking in walls can suggest structural problems but does not necessarily point to mold growth. Fluctuating indoor temperatures can indicate issues with insulation or HVAC systems but are not directly related to mold. Therefore, musty odors are the most relevant and telling sign of potential mold infestation in a home environment.

**6. In an older home with a subpanel wired with non-metallic sheathed cable, how should the ground wire be configured?**

- A. Connected to a separate grounded buss bar**
- B. Connected to a separate ground rod**
- C. Bonded using the panel cover screws**
- D. Connected to the neutral buss bar**

In an older home where a subpanel is wired with non-metallic sheathed cable, the ground wire should indeed be configured by being connected to a separate grounded bus bar. This configuration helps ensure that the grounding system is effective and compliant with current electrical codes. A separate ground bus bar allows for proper grounding that is isolated from the neutral, which is critical for preventing potential hazards such as electrical shock or fire. Keeping the ground and neutral separated in subpanels is essential because it minimizes the risk of return current flowing through the ground system, which can occur if the neutral and ground are bonded together in a subpanel. This separation ensures that the proper path for fault current remains intact, which promotes safety and the effectiveness of the circuit breakers in the event of a fault. The other configurations would compromise safety standards; for instance, connecting the ground to a separate ground rod might not provide an adequate ground reference for the subpanel, while bonding the ground to the panel cover screws does not establish a reliable ground path. Connecting to the neutral bus bar is also against modern codes, as it increases the likelihood of neutral return current on the ground wire, leading to dangerous situations.

## 7. What triggers a ground fault condition?

- A. Too many devices are used on a circuit
- B. A hot conductor touches another hot conductor
- C. A hot conductor touches a grounded surface or grounding conductor**
- D. A grounded conductor comes in contact with a grounding conductor

A ground fault condition occurs when a hot conductor—a wire that carries electrical current—makes contact with a grounded surface or a grounding conductor. This situation can create a pathway for electrical current to flow unintentionally, which can lead to electric shock or fire hazards. In a typical electrical system, grounded surfaces and grounding conductors are intended to safely direct stray currents away from users and equipment. When a hot wire contacts these grounded elements, it creates a significant safety risk because the current can flow through unexpected paths, potentially endangering anyone who comes into contact with the grounded surface or the equipment connected to it. The other situations described do not typically result in a ground fault. For instance, having too many devices on a circuit may overload the circuit, but it does not create a direct fault condition. Similarly, if a hot conductor contacts another hot conductor, it can cause a short circuit but does not involve grounding surfaces. Lastly, a grounded conductor touching a grounding conductor is a normal condition in electrical systems and does not indicate a fault. Understanding these distinctions is critical for identifying and addressing electrical hazards in home inspections and ensuring safety in electrical systems.

## 8. What is the likely cause of a horizontal crack in the mortar of a 60-year-old brick masonry house?

- A. Excessive sand in the mortar mix
- B. Defective brick bonding
- C. Improper ceiling joist installation**
- D. Differential settlement

A horizontal crack in the mortar of a 60-year-old brick masonry house is most commonly linked to differential settlement. This type of crack often results from variations in soil conditions or changes in moisture content, which can cause one part of the foundation to settle more than another. As the building shifts due to this settlement, stresses can develop in the masonry and mortar, leading to cracking. Differential settlement can occur for several reasons, including erosion, changes in water drainage, or the natural settling of soil over time. In older homes, it is not uncommon for the foundation to experience some settling as it ages, especially if the original soil was not properly compacted or if changes in landscaping have altered drainage patterns. While options related to mortar mix and brick bonding might seem viable, they typically lead to different types of structural issues. For instance, excessive sand in the mortar could ultimately affect its strength but is less likely to directly create horizontal cracks. Similarly, defective brick bonding generally causes vertical cracks rather than horizontal ones. Improper ceiling joist installation pertains more to issues with the roof structure than to ground-level foundation and wall integrity. Hence, the presence of a horizontal crack strongly suggests the involvement of differential settlement.

**9. Which tool is best for verifying dampness when water infiltration is suspected behind a finished surface?**

- A. A. An infrared thermometer**
- B. B. A pin-type moisture meter**
- C. C. A non-contact moisture meter**
- D. D. A digital camera**

When water infiltration is suspected behind a finished surface, the most effective tool for verifying dampness is a non-contact moisture meter. This device is designed to assess moisture levels quickly and without needing to penetrate the surface. It uses electromagnetic signals or infrared technology, allowing inspectors to gather information about moisture content behind walls, ceilings, and other materials without causing any damage. Utilizing a non-contact moisture meter can provide immediate results, helping inspectors to locate problem areas and assess the extent of water infiltration without any invasive methods. This is particularly advantageous in finished areas where maintaining the integrity of the surfaces is important. While other tools like infrared thermometers and pin-type moisture meters have their applications, they may not be as suitable in this context. Infrared thermometers can gauge temperature variations, which might indirectly indicate moisture when combined with other data but do not directly measure moisture content. A pin-type moisture meter, on the other hand, requires penetration into the material, which may not be feasible in finished surfaces without causing damage. Additionally, a digital camera is useful for documentation but does not provide any quantitative data about moisture levels. Thus, a non-contact moisture meter stands out as the best option for verifying dampness in situations with potential water infiltration behind finished surfaces.

**10. In the context of dryer exhaust and gas-fired water heater vent termination, what should a home inspector recommend?**

- A. the dryer exhaust should be at least 5 feet from the gas vent termination.**
- B. the dryer exhaust backdraft damper should be repaired or replaced.**
- C. the gas vent is improperly terminated and should be relocated.**
- D. the client monitor the gas vent for indications of deterioration.**

A gas-fired water heater vent termination must adhere to specific regulations and safety standards to ensure proper function and minimize risks such as backdrafting, which can lead to the infiltration of harmful gases into living spaces. If the gas vent is improperly terminated, it can create dangerous conditions, especially when located near dryer exhausts, which may not provide adequate separation. Relocating the gas vent is a critical recommendation because improper termination can lead to the vent system not functioning correctly, increasing the likelihood of carbon monoxide emission or other toxic fumes entering the home. Ensuring that the gas vent is correctly installed helps protect the residents from potential health hazards and ensures the appliance operates safely and effectively. While other options may involve maintenance or monitoring of existing systems, addressing improper vent termination directly resolves a safety concern that could pose an immediate risk, thereby prioritizing the health and safety of occupants.

## 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://natlhomeinspector.examzify.com>**

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

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