

# 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 a primary function of a drainage system in relation to a home?**
  - A. To improve the home's curb appeal**
  - B. To prevent moisture damage to the foundation**
  - C. To enhance landscaping aesthetics**
  - D. To regulate indoor temperature**
  
- 2. How can the bonding of appliances be confirmed?**
  - A. Using a volt meter**
  - B. Using a receptacle tester**
  - C. Using an ohm meter**
  - D. Using an ammeter**
  
- 3. Which situation suggests that a home may have a plumbing issue?**
  - A. Slow draining sinks and unusual odors**
  - B. Excessive noise from the refrigerator**
  - C. Cracks in the window frames**
  - D. Peeling paint on the exterior walls**
  
- 4. What is a key function of dielectric unions in plumbing?**
  - A. Accommodate pipe expansion**
  - B. Indicate plumbing issues**
  - C. Prevent galvanic action**
  - D. Help maintain pipe grounding**
  
- 5. What does condensation between glass layers of thermal pane windows suggest?**
  - A. Need to repair or replace the sealant**
  - B. Need to clean breather holes**
  - C. Need to replace glazing, sash, or window**
  - D. Need to replace the interior pane**

- 6. What indicates a problem with a malfunctioning heat pump in cooling operation?**
- A. A temperature differential that is too low**
  - B. Excessive noise from the unit**
  - C. Frost buildup on the outdoor coil**
  - D. Unusually high energy consumption**
- 7. What does a home inspector look for during a plumbing inspection?**
- A. Water quality tests and fixture aesthetics**
  - B. Leaks, water pressure, and drainage issues**
  - C. Pipe colors and material types**
  - D. Usage capacity and appliance interactions**
- 8. Overhead electrical service should be a MINIMUM of how many feet above a flat roof subject to foot traffic?**
- A. 4 feet**
  - B. 6 feet**
  - C. 8 feet**
  - D. 10 feet**
- 9. What types of heating systems might be found in a home?**
- A. Geothermal, solar panels, and air conditioning**
  - B. Forced air, radiators, electric baseboard, and heat pumps**
  - C. Wood stoves, fireplaces, and gas heaters**
  - D. Central air, electric ovens, and heat strips**
- 10. Oriented strand board (OSB) is most frequently used in which application?**
- A. Interior sheathing**
  - B. Roof, floor, and exterior wall sheathing**
  - C. Ceramic tile underlayment**
  - D. Vinyl tile underlayment**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What is a primary function of a drainage system in relation to a home?**

- A. To improve the home's curb appeal**
- B. To prevent moisture damage to the foundation**
- C. To enhance landscaping aesthetics**
- D. To regulate indoor temperature**

A primary function of a drainage system in relation to a home is to prevent moisture damage to the foundation. Proper drainage ensures that water is redirected away from the home, which minimizes the risk of water pooling around the foundation. Excess moisture can lead to a variety of problems including soil erosion, structural damage, and the growth of mold or mildew inside the home. When a drainage system efficiently channels water away, it helps maintain the integrity of the foundation and surrounding soil, which is critical for the overall stability of the house. This is essential not just for protecting the physical structure but also for safeguarding the investment in the property and ensuring a healthy living environment. On the other hand, improving curb appeal and enhancing landscaping aesthetics, while beneficial for the home's exterior appearance, are secondary to the functional role of protecting the foundation. Similarly, while drainage can indirectly contribute to regulating indoor temperature by preventing excess humidity and potential mold growth, it is not its primary function. Therefore, the most accurate selection regarding the function of a drainage system is its role in moisture management.

**2. How can the bonding of appliances be confirmed?**

- A. Using a volt meter**
- B. Using a receptacle tester**
- C. Using an ohm meter**
- D. Using an ammeter**

The bonding of appliances can be confirmed using an ohm meter because this tool measures electrical resistance in a circuit. When checking the bonding of appliances, one would be looking for a low resistance value, which indicates that the equipment is properly bonded to the grounding system. This is important for ensuring safety, as effective bonding helps prevent electric shock and ensures that any fault currents are safely directed to ground. Using an ohm meter allows for accurate readings of the continuity and effectiveness of the bonding connections. A low resistance reading confirms that there are no issues with the connection, indicating that the appliance is properly grounded. While other tools such as volt meters, receptacle testers, and ammeters have their uses in different contexts of electrical testing, they do not specifically provide the necessary information about resistance and continuity that is required to confirm proper bonding. Volt meters measure voltage, receptacle testers check for wiring issues and grounding in outlets, and ammeters measure electric current, none of which directly assess the resistance that would indicate proper bonding.

**3. Which situation suggests that a home may have a plumbing issue?**

- A. Slow draining sinks and unusual odors**
- B. Excessive noise from the refrigerator**
- C. Cracks in the window frames**
- D. Peeling paint on the exterior walls**

Slow draining sinks and unusual odors are key indicators of potential plumbing issues. When sinks drain slowly, it often suggests a blockage or buildup in the plumbing system, which can lead to water not flowing properly. This can be caused by various factors, such as the accumulation of debris, grease, or even roots intruding into sewer lines. The presence of unusual odors in conjunction with slow drains typically points to waste or sewage issues, which might indicate that there is a significant problem within the plumbing system. These odors can arise from stagnant water in the traps due to slow drainage or from a failing sewer line. Addressing these problems promptly is crucial to prevent more serious issues, such as water damage or health hazards. The other situations mentioned do not directly imply plumbing issues. Excessive noise from the refrigerator relates more to the appliance's mechanics rather than plumbing. Cracks in window frames are generally associated with settling, structural issues, or weather changes. Peeling paint on exterior walls can stem from moisture or weather-related factors but doesn't specifically indicate a plumbing problem. Thus, the combination of slow draining sinks and unusual odors distinctly points to plumbing concerns.

**4. What is a key function of dielectric unions in plumbing?**

- A. Accommodate pipe expansion**
- B. Indicate plumbing issues**
- C. Prevent galvanic action**
- D. Help maintain pipe grounding**

Dielectric unions serve a crucial role in plumbing systems by preventing galvanic action, which is a type of corrosion that occurs when two dissimilar metals are in contact with each other in the presence of an electrolyte, such as water. This corrosion can lead to significant damage over time to the pipes and fittings, resulting in leaks and other plumbing issues. The dielectric union acts as a barrier between these metals, typically using a non-conductive material to separate them. By doing so, it inhibits the electrical flow that causes galvanic corrosion, extending the lifespan of the plumbing system and maintaining its integrity. The other options do not accurately reflect the primary function of dielectric unions. While they may relate to plumbing systems in a broader sense, they do not capture the specific purpose that dielectric unions serve.

**5. What does condensation between glass layers of thermal pane windows suggest?**

- A. Need to repair or replace the sealant**
- B. Need to clean breather holes**
- C. Need to replace glazing, sash, or window**
- D. Need to replace the interior pane**

When condensation forms between the layers of glass in thermal pane windows, it typically indicates that the sealant that helps maintain the integrity of the insulated glass unit has failed. This failure allows moisture-laden air to enter the space between the glass layers, leading to condensation. While cleaning breather holes and checking sealant are important aspects of window maintenance, they are not the primary causes of internal condensation. The presence of condensation signifies that the insulating properties of the window have been compromised, which can significantly reduce energy efficiency and may lead to further issues if not addressed promptly. Replacing the glazing, sash, or entire window is a common recommendation in such cases because it not only resolves the issue of condensation but also restores the thermal performance of the window, ultimately enhancing the comfort and energy efficiency of the home.

**6. What indicates a problem with a malfunctioning heat pump in cooling operation?**

- A. A temperature differential that is too low**
- B. Excessive noise from the unit**
- C. Frost buildup on the outdoor coil**
- D. Unusually high energy consumption**

A temperature differential that is too low is indicative of a problem with a malfunctioning heat pump during its cooling operation because it suggests that the unit is unable to effectively transfer heat from indoors to the outdoors. In normal operation, there should be a significant temperature difference between the air entering and exiting the system, indicating that the heat pump is removing heat efficiently. A low temperature differential means that the system is not cooling the air sufficiently, which can be a sign of issues such as insufficient refrigerant levels, compressor problems, or restrictions in the airflow. While excessive noise, frost buildup, and unusually high energy consumption can also point to problems, these symptoms are more specific to different types of malfunctions. Excessive noise might suggest mechanical issues, while frost buildup often indicates problems with airflow or refrigerant levels that could lead to reduced efficiency. Unusually high energy consumption can indicate that the system is working harder than normal, but it does not specifically address a failure in the cooling function. In contrast, the temperature differential directly assesses the cooling performance of the heat pump, making it a clear indicator of operational issues.

**7. What does a home inspector look for during a plumbing inspection?**

- A. Water quality tests and fixture aesthetics
- B. Leaks, water pressure, and drainage issues**
- C. Pipe colors and material types
- D. Usage capacity and appliance interactions

During a plumbing inspection, a home inspector primarily focuses on functional aspects of the plumbing system. The correct answer highlights significant concerns such as leaks, water pressure, and drainage issues, which can directly affect the plumbing's reliability and effectiveness. Leaks can cause water damage, contribute to mold growth, and lead to higher utility bills, making it crucial for an inspector to identify any potential leaks in pipes, fixtures, or connections. Water pressure is another critical factor; if pressure is too low, it could indicate blockages or issues within the plumbing system, while excessively high pressure can stress pipes and fixtures, leading to further complications. Additionally, drainage issues, such as slow drains or backups, can indicate blockages, improper installations, or other problems that require attention. While other factors like water quality tests and fixture aesthetics are important in a comprehensive evaluation, they do not primarily reflect the operational integrity of the plumbing system itself. Pipe colors and material types can offer insights into the system's age and potential for issues but are not the central focus during a typical plumbing inspection. Similarly, understanding usage capacity and how appliances interact with the plumbing is relevant but less critical than assessing the immediate and practical functions of the plumbing system. Thus, focusing on leaks, water pressure, and drainage

**8. Overhead electrical service should be a MINIMUM of how many feet above a flat roof subject to foot traffic?**

- A. 4 feet
- B. 6 feet
- C. 8 feet
- D. 10 feet**

The minimum requirement for overhead electrical service above a flat roof that is subject to foot traffic is ten feet. This standard ensures that there is ample clearance to avoid accidental contact with the electrical lines. It is particularly important in areas where individuals may be walking or working on the roof, as the risk of injury or electrical hazards increases significantly if there is insufficient height. The ten-foot distance offers a safety buffer that helps to prevent electrical lines from being disturbed or compromised by routine roof maintenance or repairs. While other heights such as four, six, or eight feet may seem reasonable for less trafficked areas, they do not provide the necessary safety margin needed for roofs with pedestrian activity. Adhering to these code requirements not only enhances safety but also aligns with electrical codes that dictate safe practices in building design and maintenance.

**9. What types of heating systems might be found in a home?**

- A. Geothermal, solar panels, and air conditioning
- B. Forced air, radiators, electric baseboard, and heat pumps**
- C. Wood stoves, fireplaces, and gas heaters
- D. Central air, electric ovens, and heat strips

The correct answer identifies various types of heating systems typically found in homes, providing a comprehensive overview of conventional and effective heating methods. Forced air systems are among the most prevalent in residential heating; they use a network of ducts to distribute warmed air throughout the home. Radiators, which can be part of either a hot water or steam-heating system, effectively utilize heated water to warm spaces. Electric baseboard heaters offer localized heating through electric resistance, making them ideal for individual rooms. Heat pumps are versatile, functioning both as heating and cooling systems by transferring heat between the house and the outside environment, proving efficient year-round. The other responses include options that either do not primarily function as heating systems or are not typically classified as heating systems in a residential context. For instance, while geothermal and solar panels can contribute to a home's heating, they are generally part of broader energy systems rather than standalone heating systems. Wood stoves and fireplaces are indeed heat sources, but they lack the systematic and widespread application seen in central heating systems. Lastly, central air and electric ovens are not classified as heating systems; central air provides cooling, while electric ovens are intended solely for cooking. This distinction underscores the emphasis on the heating function of each system listed in the correct choice

**10. Oriented strand board (OSB) is most frequently used in which application?**

- A. Interior sheathing
- B. Roof, floor, and exterior wall sheathing**
- C. Ceramic tile underlayment
- D. Vinyl tile underlayment

Oriented strand board (OSB) is predominantly utilized as a structural material, particularly in applications such as roof, floor, and exterior wall sheathing. This engineered wood product is made from strands of wood that are oriented and bonded together using adhesives, which gives it significant strength and performance characteristics suitable for these structural applications. Using OSB for sheathing helps provide structural support and a stable foundation for roofing and flooring systems. Its strength and durability make it an ideal choice for exterior walls as well, where it often acts as a barrier against wind and water while providing a surface for siding attachment. While OSB can be used in a variety of applications, it is not typically used for underlayment of ceramic or vinyl tile, as these products require a more moisture-resistant surface. Therefore, the application of OSB as part of the structural integrity in roofing, flooring, and exterior wall systems stands out as its primary and most common use.

# 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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