

NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION ENVIROTHON PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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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. Which pollutant process is most directly associated with dead zones due to nutrient overload?**
 - A. Nutrient pollution
 - B. Major NPS pollutants
 - C. Pathogens
 - D. Eutrophication

- 2. Which basin holds water permanently or long-term?**
 - A. Retention basin
 - B. Detention basin
 - C. Holding pond
 - D. Infiltration basin

- 3. Which bacteria indicator is commonly used to assess potential fecal contamination in water?**
 - A. E. coli Indicator
 - B. Salmonella
 - C. Vibrio
 - D. Listeria

- 4. What best describes an infiltration basin and when is it preferred over detention ponds?**
 - A. An infiltration basin stores water and releases it slowly.
 - B. Infiltration basins remove pollutants primarily by chemical treatment.
 - C. An infiltration basin allows water to percolate into the ground, recharging groundwater and removing pollutants; preferred when soil is permeable and groundwater protection is needed.
 - D. An infiltration basin is the same as a detention pond.

- 5. Which statement correctly identifies the carbon cycle?**
 - A. It describes the movement of carbon between the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and geosphere
 - B. It describes nutrient movement
 - C. It describes water purification
 - D. It describes sediment transport

- 6. An Agricultural BMP example is which of the following?**
- A. Detention basin
 - B. Rain garden
 - C. Cover crop
 - D. Riparian buffer
- 7. Which process describes water moving across the land surface toward streams after rainfall?**
- A. Runoff
 - B. Infiltration
 - C. Evaporation
 - D. Condensation
- 8. How does Section 319 of the Clean Water Act relate to non-point source pollution?**
- A. It prohibits non-point source pollution.
 - B. It funds only point-source treatment plants.
 - C. It provides funding and guidance to states to develop and implement programs to control NPS pollution.
 - D. It sets water quality standards for drinking water.
- 9. Public participation in scientific monitoring is commonly known as what?**
- A. Citizen science
 - B. Volunteerism benefit
 - C. Storm drain marking campaign
 - D. NPS reduction plan
- 10. Runoff carrying oil, tire particles, metals, and lawn chemicals is best described as which type of runoff?**
- A. Urban runoff
 - B. Agricultural runoff
 - C. Stormwater runoff
 - D. Designated water uses

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which pollutant process is most directly associated with dead zones due to nutrient overload?

- A. Nutrient pollution
- B. Major NPS pollutants
- C. Pathogens
- D. Eutrophication**

Nutrient overload in water bodies triggers eutrophication, a process where excess nutrients—especially nitrogen and phosphorus—fuel rapid growth of algae and aquatic plants. This bloom can block sunlight and, more importantly, when the extra biomass dies, bacteria decompose it and use up dissolved oxygen in the water. In stratified systems, this oxygen depletion concentrates in deeper layers, creating hypoxic or anoxic conditions that form dead zones where most aquatic life cannot survive. So, the pollutant process most directly linked to dead zones from nutrient overload is eutrophication. Nutrient pollution describes the input of nutrients that starts the chain, but the actual driver of oxygen loss is the eutrophication process. Pathogens aren't tied to oxygen depletion, and "major NPS pollutants" is a broad category rather than the process itself.

2. Which basin holds water permanently or long-term?

- A. Retention basin**
- B. Detention basin
- C. Holding pond
- D. Infiltration basin

The key idea is how long water stays in a basin between events. A retention basin is built to keep water in place for extended periods, creating a standing pool that remains in the basin long-term. In contrast, a detention basin is designed to capture runoff during rainstorms and then drain it out, so it's typically dry between events. A holding pond may store water for a period but isn't defined by a permanent, year-round pool. An infiltration basin is meant for water to seep into the ground rather than stay in the basin. Therefore, the basin that holds water permanently or long-term is the retention basin.

3. Which bacteria indicator is commonly used to assess potential fecal contamination in water?

- A. E. coli Indicator**
- B. Salmonella
- C. Vibrio
- D. Listeria

The main idea is that water quality testing uses indicator organisms to signal whether fecal pollution has entered the water. E. coli is the go-to indicator because it is abundant in the intestines of warm-blooded animals, appears in fecal contamination events, and is easy to detect and quantify with routine lab methods. Its presence suggests that other fecal-derived pathogens could be present, so it serves as a reliable warning of potential health risk. Salmonella, Vibrio, and Listeria are specific pathogens or groups associated with certain conditions, and they're harder to detect reliably in routine monitoring. Their presence would indicate contamination, but they aren't used as general indicators of fecal pollution because they're less consistently tied to recent fecal input and require more specialized testing. Thus, E. coli is the best-fit indicator for assessing potential fecal contamination in water.

4. What best describes an infiltration basin and when is it preferred over detention ponds?

- A. An infiltration basin stores water and releases it slowly.
- B. Infiltration basins remove pollutants primarily by chemical treatment.
- C. An infiltration basin allows water to percolate into the ground, recharging groundwater and removing pollutants; preferred when soil is permeable and groundwater protection is needed.**
- D. An infiltration basin is the same as a detention pond.

Infiltration basins are designed to let runoff soak into the soil rather than just sit on the surface. As water moves downward through permeable soil, sediments are filtered out and microbes and soil processes help break down some pollutants, so the water is naturally cleaned as it infiltrates. This treatment and the return of water to the groundwater supply is the hallmark of an infiltration basin. Because this approach relies on the soil's ability to absorb water, it's most effective when the soil is permeable enough to allow rapid infiltration and when protecting groundwater from pollutants is a goal. That best description emphasizes both the infiltration process and the resulting groundwater recharge and pollutant removal, and it notes the conditions under which this method works well. Describing it as simply storing water and releasing it slowly fits detention systems rather than basins designed to infiltrate. Attributing pollutant removal mainly to chemical treatment overlooks the soil-based filtration and biological processes at work. Saying it's the same as a detention pond ignores the key difference: infiltration basins purposefully move water into the ground rather than just holding it on the surface.

5. Which statement correctly identifies the carbon cycle?

- A. It describes the movement of carbon between the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and geosphere**
- B. It describes nutrient movement
- C. It describes water purification
- D. It describes sediment transport

The carbon cycle is about how carbon moves and is stored across Earth's major systems: the atmosphere, living things (biosphere), the oceans and freshwater (hydrosphere), and the rocks and soils (geosphere). Carbon shifts between these reservoirs through processes like photosynthesis, which pulls carbon from the air into plants; respiration and decomposition, which release CO₂ back into the air; gas exchange and dissolution in ocean water; weathering of rocks that adds carbon to soils and oceans; and the long-term burial of carbon in sediments and fossil fuels. This web of exchanges keeps carbon moving rather than staying in one place, and it helps regulate atmospheric CO₂ levels and climate. The other options describe different topics: nutrient movement refers to cycles of elements like nitrogen or phosphorus; water purification is about removing contaminants from water; sediment transport deals with the movement of soil and particles in water or wind. So the statement that carbon moves among the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and geosphere best describes the carbon cycle.

6. An Agricultural BMP example is which of the following?

- A. Detention basin
- B. Rain garden
- C. Cover crop**
- D. Riparian buffer

Agricultural best management practices are methods used to reduce pollution from farming by protecting soil and filtering runoff before it reaches water bodies. A cover crop fits this well because planting an extra crop to grow when the main crop isn't active keeps soil covered, reduces erosion, improves soil health, and captures leftover nutrients that might otherwise run off fields. Detention basins and rain gardens are mainly stormwater tools used in urban or developed settings to control runoff, not as direct field-level soil-protection practices. A riparian buffer along waterways is also a valid agricultural BMP, but a cover crop is the most universally applicable example for protecting cropland soil and reducing nutrient loss across many farming scenarios.

7. Which process describes water moving across the land surface toward streams after rainfall?

- A. Runoff**
- B. Infiltration
- C. Evaporation
- D. Condensation

Surface water movement across the land toward streams after rainfall is runoff. Runoff describes water that flows over the ground surface, usually downslope, and eventually enters streams or rivers. After a rain, some water infiltrates the soil, but when the rainfall is intense or the soil is already saturated, water cannot soak in quickly enough and instead moves across the surface, picking up speed and carrying along soil, nutrients, and pollutants. Infiltration is the process of water seeping into the soil, not moving across the surface toward streams. Evaporation is the loss of liquid water to the atmosphere from surfaces like soil or ponds, not a lateral movement toward streams. Condensation is water vapor turning into liquid in the air, such as cloud formation, and also does not describe surface flow toward waterways.

8. How does Section 319 of the Clean Water Act relate to non-point source pollution?

- A. It prohibits non-point source pollution.
- B. It funds only point-source treatment plants.
- C. It provides funding and guidance to states to develop and implement programs to control NPS pollution.**
- D. It sets water quality standards for drinking water.

The main idea here is how the law addresses nonpoint source pollution. Section 319 recognizes that nonpoint sources like agricultural and urban runoff are major contributors to water quality problems and provides funding and technical guidance to states to develop and carry out programs to reduce that pollution. States use these funds for watershed-based planning, implementing best management practices, offering technical assistance, and monitoring progress. This approach differs from how point-source pollution is controlled (through permits) and from setting drinking water standards; instead, 319 supports state-led, often voluntary, efforts to manage diffuse pollution. Therefore, the description that it provides funding and guidance to states to develop and implement programs to control NPS pollution is the best fit.

9. Public participation in scientific monitoring is commonly known as what?

- A. Citizen science**
- B. Volunteerism benefit
- C. Storm drain marking campaign
- D. NPS reduction plan

Public participation in scientific monitoring is called citizen science. This approach invites everyday people to help collect and sometimes analyze data alongside scientists, expanding the reach of monitoring projects—great for environmental topics like non-point source pollution where volunteers can track stream quality, temperature, turbidity, or pollutant indicators. Projects use training and standardized methods to keep data reliable, turning widespread contributions into valuable information for research, management, and policy. The other options describe specific programs or outcomes (general volunteering, a pollution-prevention campaign, or a policy plan) rather than the broad way the public collaborates in science.

10. Runoff carrying oil, tire particles, metals, and lawn chemicals is best described as which type of runoff?

- A. Urban runoff**
- B. Agricultural runoff
- C. Stormwater runoff
- D. Designated water uses

Pollution tied to city environments comes from everyday urban activities like cars on streets, parking lots, and lawn care. Oil and grease from vehicles, tire wear particles, metals from wear and corrosion, and lawn chemicals picked up from residential landscapes all get carried by rain or irrigation into the drainage system. That pattern points to urban runoff, a type of water flow that originates in urban areas. Stormwater runoff describes the movement of water itself, but the listed pollutants are characteristic of urban sources rather than farms or other settings, which would bring different pollutants. So the best fit is urban runoff.

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://nonpointsourcepollutionenvirothon.examzify.com>

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

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