NORAC Dispatcher Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide

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Questions

1. **Before giving 241 permission for a track car moving into ABS, what must the Dispatcher ensure?**

   A. No trains have been authorized to move in the same direction

   B. All signals are green

   C. There must be a maintenance crew present

   D. The weather conditions are clear

2. **In 261 territory, what must be ensured before allowing a non-shunting train into a block?**

   A. A single block must be available

   B. Blocks must protect against opposing movements

   C. All train movements must be canceled

   D. Signals must be set to Proceed

3. **What must be issued if the route to be used is diverting with Form D line 7?**

   A. Form D line 2 indicating the diversion

   B. Form D line 1 or Bulletin Order item indicating speed

   C. A notification to all operators

   D. No additional documentation is needed

4. **What conditions must be met for certain work crews to operate without Form D line 4?**

   A. The dispatcher provides permission without restrictions

   B. The work is conducted on interlocking limits without disturbance to the track

   C. No conditions are necessary if the crew is experienced

   D. All other workers must be on break

5. **When Speed Control and/or Automatic Train Stop fails en route but cab signals work, what must the Engineer do?**

   A. Notify the Dispatcher and maintain maximum speed

   B. Notify the Dispatcher and do not exceed 40 MPH unless otherwise instructed

   C. Stop immediately and check the system

   D. Proceed as normal since cab signals are functioning

6. What speed must be maintained if cab signals are inoperative while approaching the next home signal?

A. Maximum speed allowable

B. Normal operating speed

C. Restricted speed, prepared to stop

D. Increased caution speed

7. If blocks are applied to a switch that cannot be locked, what additional action is required?

A. Remove the switch from the system

B. Ensure it is lined and spiked or wedged

C. Notify only the Engineer

D. Conduct a full system check

8. What must a Dispatcher ensure before relieving crew members from the 5-minute waiting period at a hand-thrown switch?

A. Permission from the conductor

B. No trains have been authorized to move

C. A signal must be cleared

D. Communication with all surrounding Dispatchers

9. How does a train fulfill a Form D line 2 in one direction?

A. It enters the next station

B. It clears the limits of the line 2 authority

C. It changes direction completely

D. It receives approval from the Dispatcher

10. Which interlockings cannot be removed from service?

A. Those including a movable bridge or railroad crossing at grade

B. All interlockings can be removed

C. Interlockings with automatic signals

D. None; all interlockings can be removed from service

Answers

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

Explanations

1. Before giving 241 permission for a track car moving into ABS, what must the Dispatcher ensure?

A. No trains have been authorized to move in the same direction

B. All signals are green

C. There must be a maintenance crew present

D. The weather conditions are clear

Before granting 241 permission for a track car to enter an Automatic Block Signal (ABS) territory, the Dispatcher must ensure that no trains have been authorized to move in the same direction. This is crucial because 241 permission allows a track car or similar equipment to occupy a track section that may typically be used by trains operating under a signal indication. If trains are authorized to move in the same direction, the safety of the track car could be compromised, leading to potential collisions or hazardous situations. Ensuring that there are no trains moving in the same direction allows for safe operations within the ABS territory, maintaining the necessary separation required for safe rail traffic. This also enables the Dispatcher to effectively manage the flow of trains and track vehicles, prioritizing safety above all else in rail operations.

2. In 261 territory, what must be ensured before allowing a non-shunting train into a block?

A. A single block must be available

B. Blocks must protect against opposing movements

C. All train movements must be canceled

D. Signals must be set to Proceed

In 261 territory, allowing a non-shunting train into a block requires ensuring that blocks must protect against opposing movements. This is crucial for maintaining safety and preventing accidents on the railway. In 261 territory, signals are used to control train movements, and blocks are established to ensure that a train can occupy a specific section of track safely. The requirement for block protection against opposing movements means that before a train can enter a block, you need to guarantee that there aren't any trains approaching from the opposite direction that could result in a collision. This protection is typically achieved through the signaling system, which will prevent signals from displaying proceed aspects for opposing movements when a block is occupied or if a train is preparing to enter that block. This safety measure is pivotal in maintaining safe operations in areas with potential for conflicting train movements. The other options do not address the critical need for ensuring that opposing movements are adequately controlled before allowing a train into a block, which is a fundamental principle of safe dispatching in railway operations.

3. What must be issued if the route to be used is diverting with Form D line 7?

A. Form D line 2 indicating the diversion

B. Form D line 1 or Bulletin Order item indicating speed

C. A notification to all operators

D. No additional documentation is needed

When dealing with a diversion indicated by Form D line 7, it is essential to ensure that all operators are aware of any speed restrictions or other relevant operational details associated with the diversion. Form D line 1 or a Bulletin Order item provides the necessary framework to communicate specific instructions related to speed limits on the diverted route. This documentation serves to ensure the safety and efficiency of train operations during a diversion, as it helps maintain control over speeds while the train navigates through the altered path. In this scenario, while a notification to all operators and other options may seem pertinent, they do not specifically address the critical need for clear speed-related instructions that accompany a route diversion. Therefore, issuing Form D line 1 or a Bulletin order item indicating speed is the most appropriate and correct action to take in this context. It directly supports safe operations, ensuring that all parties understand and adhere to any speed changes resulting from the diversion.

4. What conditions must be met for certain work crews to operate without Form D line 4?

A. The dispatcher provides permission without restrictions

B. The work is conducted on interlocking limits without disturbance to the track

C. No conditions are necessary if the crew is experienced

D. All other workers must be on break

For work crews to operate without Form D line 4, the requirement that the work is conducted on interlocking limits without disturbance to the track is key. In this context, interlocking limits represent an area where signals and track switches are controlled to ensure safe train operations. When work is performed within these limits and does not interfere with the normal usage of the track or the passage of trains, it demonstrates that safety protocols are in place and that risks are minimized. This condition allows crews to perform necessary tasks without the additional administrative step of filing a Form D line 4, which is typically required to ensure that all relevant parties are aware of the work being done and the potential implications for train movements. Adhering to this requirement helps maintain operational efficiency while upholding safety standards, as it prevents any miscommunication that could lead to dangerous situations. Other situations proposed, such as needing permission from the dispatcher, stipulating crew experience or mandating breaks for other workers, do not inherently address the operational safety context of working within interlocking limits while ensuring no disruptions to train activity occur. Thus, the correct answer aligns directly with the need to ensure that the work being done is appropriate for operating without the additional requirement of the Form D line 4.

5. When Speed Control and/or Automatic Train Stop fails en route but cab signals work, what must the Engineer do?

A. Notify the Dispatcher and maintain maximum speed

B. Notify the Dispatcher and do not exceed 40 MPH unless otherwise instructed

C. Stop immediately and check the system

D. Proceed as normal since cab signals are functioning

When Speed Control and/or Automatic Train Stop failures occur while cab signals remain operational, the appropriate response is to notify the Dispatcher and limit the train speed to 40 MPH unless directed otherwise. This response ensures safety by enforcing a speed restriction that mitigates the risk associated with the failure of critical safety systems like Speed Control and Automatic Train Stop. The cab signals still provide information to the Engineer about the track ahead and any restrictions in place, which means operations can continue but with caution. By restricting the speed to 40 MPH, it allows the train to be operated safely while ensuring that the Engineer has enough time to react to any signals or conditions encountered on the track. The other options suggest different actions, such as maintaining maximum speed, stopping immediately, or proceeding without any speed constraints, which would not prioritize safety under these circumstances. Adhering to the set speed limit reflects both a fundamental understanding of operating protocols in the event of such equipment failures and aids in maintaining overall safety on the railroad.

6. What speed must be maintained if cab signals are inoperative while approaching the next home signal?

A. Maximum speed allowable

B. Normal operating speed

C. Restricted speed, prepared to stop

D. Increased caution speed

When cab signals are inoperative, it is critical for the safety of the train and its passengers to reduce speed. The requirement to maintain restricted speed ensures that the train can stop within half the distance of the sighting area, allowing the engineer to respond to any signal indications or obstacles in a safe and timely manner. Restricted speed is a precautionary measure that accounts for the inability to receive continuous signal information, which is crucial for safe train operation. By adhering to this speed limitation, the train crew is prepared to navigate the situation effectively, ensuring they can halt the train safely in case of unexpected signals or conditions ahead, such as signals showing stop or an obstruction on the track. This approach minimizes the risks associated with potential signal failures and contributes to overall rail safety. Other speed options do not appropriately address the safety needs in the absence of functioning cab signals. For instance, operating at maximum speed or normal operating speed does not provide the necessary precautions for dealing with emergencies or signal indications when the technology guiding the train is compromised. In contrast, maintaining restricted speed while prepared to stop is a standard response in such scenarios.

7. If blocks are applied to a switch that cannot be locked, what additional action is required?

A. Remove the switch from the system

B. Ensure it is lined and spiked or wedged

C. Notify only the Engineer

D. Conduct a full system check

When blocks are applied to a switch that cannot be locked, it is critical to ensure its safety and proper functioning. By ensuring the switch is lined and spiked or wedged, you are taking the necessary steps to secure the switch in a fixed position, which minimizes the risk of unintended movement. This action provides physical security to the switch, maintaining its alignment and ensuring that it does not accidentally change position, which could lead to dangerous situations on the track. This precaution is essential in situations where locking is not possible, as it compensates for the lack of a locking mechanism by physically restraining the switch in its desired position. When a switch is effectively lined and spiked or wedged, it mitigates any potential hazards that could arise from a misaligned switch or unexpected train movements. In contrast, removing the switch or notifying only the engineer fails to address the immediate safety needs of the scenario. Conducting a full system check, while important in broader contexts, does not provide the immediate corrective action required for securing a non-lockable switch.

8. What must a Dispatcher ensure before relieving crew members from the 5-minute waiting period at a hand-thrown switch?

A. Permission from the conductor

B. No trains have been authorized to move

C. A signal must be cleared

D. Communication with all surrounding Dispatchers

A Dispatcher must ensure that no trains have been authorized to move before relieving crew members from the 5-minute waiting period at a hand-thrown switch. This is crucial for safety; the waiting period serves as a precaution for potential train movements in the area. By confirming that no trains have been authorized to move, the Dispatcher ensures that it is safe for the crew to proceed, thereby mitigating the risk of accidents due to unexpected train movements. The other aspects, while they might play a role in broader operational procedures, do not specifically address the immediate safety requirement related to the waiting period at a hand-thrown switch. Ensuring clearance of surrounding signals, communication with other Dispatchers, or obtaining permission from the conductor are important, but they do not directly pertain to the specific requirement of confirming that no movement of trains has been authorized, which is paramount in this situation.

9. How does a train fulfill a Form D line 2 in one direction?

A. It enters the next station

B. It clears the limits of the line 2 authority

C. It changes direction completely

D. It receives approval from the Dispatcher

To fulfill a Form D line 2 in one direction, a train must clear the limits of the line 2 authority. Form D authorities are used to manage train movements within specific limits, and line 2 specifically indicates that the train is allowed to operate in a designated section of the track under certain conditions. When a train fulfills these requirements, it means that it has successfully traveled beyond the boundaries of the authority it was granted, thereby effectively concluding its permission to operate within that specific area. By clearing the limits of line 2 authority, the train is essentially confirming that it has complied with the conditions set forth in the Form D, ensuring safety and operational integrity. This clarity is crucial in railroad operations, as it helps maintain the proper flow of train movements and keeps track sections clear for other trains that may be waiting to enter or operate within those limits.

10. Which interlockings cannot be removed from service?

A. Those including a movable bridge or railroad crossing at grade

B. All interlockings can be removed

C. Interlockings with automatic signals

D. None; all interlockings can be removed from service

Interlockings are critical components of railway signaling systems, designed to prevent conflicting movements through junctions or crossings. The presence of certain features, such as movable bridges or railroad crossings at grade, creates unique safety concerns and operational requirements. When interlockings include a movable bridge, their removal from service would compromise the ability to control train movements safely when trains are traveling over or approaching the bridge. These interlockings ensure that a train does not enter an area where it could potentially collide with another train or be misdirected onto an unsafe track. Similarly, railroad crossings at grade involve intersection points where vehicles and trains share the same level, necessitating careful control to avoid accidents. Thus, interlockings that incorporate these features are essential for maintaining safety protocols and operational effectiveness in rail traffic. Removing them would undermine these critical safeguards, highlighting why this choice is the correct answer.