

# North Carolina General Contractors Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



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**SAMPLE**

## **Questions**

- 1. What are the primary responsibilities of a general contractor?**
  - A. Only managing finances**
  - B. Overseeing construction and ensuring compliance**
  - C. Providing design solutions**
  - D. Handling office paperwork**
- 2. What is considered the best method for traffic control on a construction site?**
  - A. Traffic lights**
  - B. Reflective barrels**
  - C. Flagmen**
  - D. Safety cones**
- 3. Why is it important for contractors to familiarize themselves with local zoning laws?**
  - A. To ensure projects are completed faster**
  - B. To ensure compliance with regulations regarding land use and building specifications**
  - C. To avoid paying fines only**
  - D. To increase property value**
- 4. Which substance is commonly used as a retarder in concrete mixing?**
  - A. Sucrose**
  - B. Calcium chloride**
  - C. Gypsum**
  - D. Sand**
- 5. What does optimum moisture content refer to?**
  - A. The ideal amount of water for soil stability**
  - B. The right amount of moisture for compaction to maximum density**
  - C. The moisture level for seed germination**
  - D. The moisture required for plant growth**

- 6. What is the minimum concrete cover required for a bar cast against exposed earth?**
- A. 2 inches**
  - B. 3 inches**
  - C. 4 inches**
  - D. 6 inches**
- 7. What does a construction punch list consist of?**
- A. A report of project delays**
  - B. A list of items needing completion or correction**
  - C. A budgetary update for the client**
  - D. A progress report for stakeholders**
- 8. When assessing the quality of mortar, which factor is generally crucial?**
- A. Color stability**
  - B. Workability**
  - C. Adhesion to brick**
  - D. Resistance to freeze-thaw cycles**
- 9. What is the significance of project estimates?**
- A. They determine the contractor's fees**
  - B. They provide an approximation of total costs and assist with budgeting**
  - C. They dictate the materials used in construction**
  - D. They assess the property value after completion**
- 10. How deep must a silt fence be buried below grade?**
- A. 6 inches**
  - B. 8 inches**
  - C. 10 inches**
  - D. 12 inches**

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What are the primary responsibilities of a general contractor?**

**A. Only managing finances**

**B. Overseeing construction and ensuring compliance**

**C. Providing design solutions**

**D. Handling office paperwork**

The primary responsibilities of a general contractor encompass overseeing construction projects and ensuring compliance with local building codes, safety regulations, and contract specifications. This role involves coordinating various aspects of a construction project, such as managing subcontractors, scheduling inspections, and ensuring that the work is completed on time and within budget. A general contractor is also tasked with monitoring the quality of work to ensure it meets the required standards, creating a comprehensive plan that aligns with the client's vision while adhering to legal and safety considerations. While managing finances is an important part of construction project management, it is just one aspect of the broader responsibilities that a general contractor holds. Providing design solutions can be a function of some contractors, particularly those with design-build capabilities; however, it is not universally applicable to all general contractors. Handling office paperwork is certainly part of their duties, but it is not the primary focus of their role, which is more centered around the operational and compliance aspects of construction management.

**2. What is considered the best method for traffic control on a construction site?**

**A. Traffic lights**

**B. Reflective barrels**

**C. Flagmen**

**D. Safety cones**

The use of reflective barrels is considered one of the best methods for traffic control on a construction site due to their visibility and ability to effectively guide and redirect traffic away from hazardous areas. Reflective materials enhance their visibility both during the day and at night, making them a reliable option for alerting drivers to potential dangers. They serve a crucial role in delineating the work zone, thereby minimizing the risk of accidents among both workers and motorists. While other options like traffic lights, flagmen, and safety cones can be effective in certain situations, reflective barrels provide a distinct advantage. Traffic lights can be less effective in a dynamic construction environment where conditions change frequently. Flagmen require constant attention and can be affected by human factors, such as fatigue or distraction. Safety cones, while useful for creating barriers, may not provide the level of visibility or mobility that barrels do, particularly in high-traffic areas. In summary, reflective barrels offer a comprehensive, visible, and effective solution for managing traffic around construction sites, improving safety for both workers and drivers.

**3. Why is it important for contractors to familiarize themselves with local zoning laws?**

- A. To ensure projects are completed faster**
- B. To ensure compliance with regulations regarding land use and building specifications**
- C. To avoid paying fines only**
- D. To increase property value**

Familiarizing oneself with local zoning laws is crucial for contractors because it ensures compliance with regulations that dictate how land can be used and what specifications buildings must meet. Zoning laws cover a variety of topics, including permitted uses of property, building heights, setback requirements, density restrictions, and the types of structures that can be built in specific areas. By adhering to these regulations, contractors can avoid potential legal issues that could arise from non-compliance, such as project delays, fines, or even the need to demolish work that doesn't meet zoning requirements. Moreover, understanding these laws allows contractors to design and execute projects that align with the community's planning goals and regulations, ultimately leading to smoother project approvals and fostering positive relationships with local authorities and residents. Being aware of zoning laws goes beyond just avoiding fines; it's about ensuring that projects are feasible and in line with local expectations and standards, which in turn contributes to the sustainable development of the area.

**4. Which substance is commonly used as a retarder in concrete mixing?**

- A. Sucrose**
- B. Calcium chloride**
- C. Gypsum**
- D. Sand**

Sucrose is commonly used as a retarder in concrete mixing because it helps to delay the setting time of the concrete. Retarders are particularly useful in hot weather or when delays are anticipated between mixing and pouring, allowing for greater workability and preventing the mix from hardening too quickly. By slowing down the hydration process, sucrose allows for more time to place and finish the concrete, which can lead to improved quality and performance of the cured concrete. Calcium chloride, while it can be used to accelerate the setting time of concrete, serves a different function than retarders do. Gypsum is primarily used in cement to control the setting time but is not typically added directly to concrete as a retarder. Sand, being an aggregate component, does not have a role in altering the setting characteristics of concrete itself, hence it is not related to the retarding properties necessary for mixing.

**5. What does optimum moisture content refer to?**

- A. The ideal amount of water for soil stability
- B. The right amount of moisture for compaction to maximum density**
- C. The moisture level for seed germination
- D. The moisture required for plant growth

Optimum moisture content refers specifically to the right amount of moisture necessary for achieving maximum compaction density in soil. This concept is crucial in the context of construction and civil engineering, particularly when preparing subgrades or fill material for structures. When soil is compacted, it is important that the moisture content is neither too high nor too low; if it's too wet, the soil can become saturated and lose stability, while if it's too dry, it won't achieve the necessary compaction. The optimum moisture content allows for the soil particles to be closely packed together, leading to increased stability and strength, which is critical for the integrity of foundations, roads, and other structures. The other choices, while related to moisture conditions, do not accurately define the focus of optimum moisture content in soil mechanics. The amount of water for soil stability, seed germination, and plant growth may be important in different contexts, but they do not specifically address the criteria for achieving maximum density during soil compaction.

**6. What is the minimum concrete cover required for a bar cast against exposed earth?**

- A. 2 inches
- B. 3 inches**
- C. 4 inches
- D. 6 inches

The minimum concrete cover required for a bar cast against exposed earth is 3 inches. This requirement is guided by the need to protect the reinforcing steel from environmental factors such as moisture and chemical exposure, which can lead to corrosion. In the case of bars that are in contact with the earth, a greater cover is necessary because the earth can provide a more aggressive environment compared to other types of surfaces. Having 3 inches of concrete cover ensures that there is adequate protection for the rebar, helping to maintain the integrity and longevity of the concrete structure. This standard is established to ensure that the reinforcing steel is sufficiently embedded to reduce its risk of exposure, thereby enhancing the durability of the concrete over time.

## 7. What does a construction punch list consist of?

- A. A report of project delays
- B. A list of items needing completion or correction**
- C. A budgetary update for the client
- D. A progress report for stakeholders

A construction punch list is an essential document in the project completion process and consists of a list of items that require completion or correction before the project can be officially considered finished. This list is typically generated near the end of a construction project, during a final walkthrough, or inspection, where the contractor and owner identify outstanding work or issues that need to be addressed. Items on a punch list may include tasks such as fixing minor defects, completing landscaping, or ensuring that all fixtures are properly installed. It serves as a tool for both the contractor and the client to ensure that all aspects of the project meet contractual obligations and quality standards before final payment is issued. This process ensures that both parties are in agreement about the state of the project and what remains to be completed, enhancing accountability and communication. The other options do not fit the definition of a punch list. A report of project delays focuses on scheduling issues rather than completion requirements. A budgetary update concerns financial aspects of the project rather than specific tasks to complete. A progress report provides insights into the advancement of the project but does not specifically outline items that need rectification or finishing touches.

## 8. When assessing the quality of mortar, which factor is generally crucial?

- A. Color stability
- B. Workability
- C. Adhesion to brick**
- D. Resistance to freeze-thaw cycles

When assessing the quality of mortar, adhesion to brick is crucial due to its fundamental role in the structural integrity and durability of masonry constructions. Mortar serves not only as a bonding agent that holds bricks together but also as a material that accommodates movements and stresses within the structure. Strong adhesion ensures that the mortar effectively transfers loads between bricks, reduces the likelihood of moisture infiltration, and helps prevent the degradation of both the mortar and the bricks over time. While factors like color stability, workability, and resistance to freeze-thaw cycles are important considerations for different aspects of mortar performance, they do not directly impact the core function of binding materials together as effectively as adhesion does. For instance, workability may influence how easily the mortar can be applied, but if the mortar does not adhere well to the brick, it will not perform its primary purpose effectively. Similarly, although resistance to freeze-thaw cycles is important for durability in certain climates, it becomes irrelevant if the adhesion is insufficient, leading to potential failure in the bond between the mortar and the bricks. Thus, adhesion to brick stands out as the most critical factor in assessing mortar quality.

## 9. What is the significance of project estimates?

- A. They determine the contractor's fees
- B. They provide an approximation of total costs and assist with budgeting**
- C. They dictate the materials used in construction
- D. They assess the property value after completion

The significance of project estimates primarily lies in their role in providing an approximation of total costs and assisting with budgeting. An accurate estimate is crucial for the financial planning of a construction project, as it outlines the various costs associated with labor, materials, permits, and other expenses. This helps all stakeholders, including contractors, clients, and investors, understand the financial scope of the project from the beginning. Furthermore, accurate estimates are foundational in ensuring that the project remains within budget throughout its duration. They help identify potential financial challenges early on and allow for adjustments to be made if unexpected costs arise. This aspect of budgeting is vital for successful project management, as it can significantly influence the project's overall viability and profitability. While determining the contractor's fees is also an important aspect of project estimates, it is more of a consequence of a well-prepared estimate rather than its primary significance. The determination of materials is influenced by the project's scope and design rather than the estimate itself, and assessing property value post-completion falls outside the purpose of project estimates as they focus on projecting costs rather than valuing completed structures.

## 10. How deep must a silt fence be buried below grade?

- A. 6 inches
- B. 8 inches
- C. 10 inches
- D. 12 inches**

A silt fence is an essential erosion control measure utilized during construction activities to minimize sediment runoff into surrounding areas. The effectiveness of a silt fence largely depends on its installation, which includes how well it is secured to the ground. Burying the bottom of the silt fence to a depth of 12 inches below grade helps ensure that water does not flow underneath the barrier. This depth effectively creates a more secure attachment to the soil, reducing the risk of sediment bypassing the fence due to undercutting. In addition, a depth of 12 inches allows for better stability of the sediment control system, especially in areas prone to heavy rainfall or where the ground is unstable. This depth is also consistent with best practices and regulatory guidelines, which aim to provide reliable sediment control in various environmental conditions. Consequently, this depth ensures that the silt fence serves its purpose effectively and can withstand the pressures of sediment-laden water, presenting a reliable solution to erosion control on construction sites.