

North Carolina General Contractors Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What material are lintels for a concrete masonry unit typically made from?**
 - A. Wood beams**
 - B. Steel supports**
 - C. Precast concrete beams**
 - D. Reinforced concrete slabs**
- 2. 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**
- 3. What types of project schedules are commonly used in construction management?**
 - A. Only Gantt charts**
 - B. Critical path method and linear relationships**
 - C. Gantt charts, critical path method (CPM) schedules, and waterfall schedules**
 - D. Just verbal schedules**
- 4. What is the designation for severe weather brick grade?**
 - A. MW**
 - B. NW**
 - C. SW**
 - D. FBX**
- 5. Which process is crucial for managing modifications in a construction project?**
 - A. Quality assurance**
 - B. Change management**
 - C. Team coordination**
 - D. Cost estimation**

- 6. Which brick bond is created by alternating single rows of headers and stretchers?**
- A. Flemish Bond**
 - B. Running Bond**
 - C. Common Bond**
 - D. Stack Bond**
- 7. What is an example of a strategy a general contractor might implement to mitigate risks?**
- A. Ignoring potential financial issues**
 - B. Conducting regular site inspections**
 - C. Avoiding communication with suppliers**
 - D. Reducing material quality standards**
- 8. Change management in construction primarily focuses on which aspect?**
- A. Budget management**
 - B. Employee training**
 - C. Adjustments to project scope**
 - D. Community relations**
- 9. Which factor would most likely influence the choice of traffic control methods on a construction site?**
- A. Cost-effectiveness**
 - B. Duration of the project**
 - C. Visibility of control measures**
 - D. Type and volume of traffic**
- 10. What is one of the exceptions to the design professional seal requirement?**
- A. Any private residential building**
 - B. An institutional building over \$90,000**
 - C. A building used by a farmer for public health**
 - D. A single-family residence up to 8 attached units**

Answers

SAMPLE

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

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Explanations

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1. What material are lintels for a concrete masonry unit typically made from?

- A. Wood beams**
- B. Steel supports**
- C. Precast concrete beams**
- D. Reinforced concrete slabs**

Lintels for concrete masonry units are typically made from precast concrete beams. This choice is correct because precast concrete beams provide the necessary load-bearing capacity and durability required in construction. They are manufactured off-site under controlled conditions, ensuring consistent quality and strength. Using precast concrete beams as lintels allows for quick installation and minimizes the potential for on-site errors since they are precision-engineered components. They can also span larger openings compared to other materials, making them ideal for supporting loads above doors and windows in masonry construction. While wood beams can be used in certain applications, they do not offer the same level of durability or resistance to fire and pests as concrete options. Steel supports can also function as lintels but may not be the primary choice for concrete masonry units. Reinforced concrete slabs, while related to concrete construction, are not typically shaped or sized for lintel applications, which specifically require a spanning beam profile. Therefore, precast concrete beams are the most suitable and widely used material for lintels in this context.

2. 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.

- 3. What types of project schedules are commonly used in construction management?**
- A. Only Gantt charts**
 - B. Critical path method and linear relationships**
 - C. Gantt charts, critical path method (CPM) schedules, and waterfall schedules**
 - D. Just verbal schedules**

In construction management, project schedules are crucial for planning, tracking progress, and ensuring that projects are completed on time. Gantt charts, critical path method (CPM) schedules, and waterfall schedules are all widely recognized tools used for scheduling in the industry. Gantt charts provide a visual representation of the project timeline, displaying tasks along a horizontal bar chart against time. This format allows project managers to see the duration of each task, start and end dates, and how tasks overlap or are dependent on one another. The critical path method (CPM) is a project management technique that identifies the longest sequence of dependent tasks and measures the minimum project duration. This helps in determining which tasks are critical to project completion and which have some flexibility in their scheduling. CPM is vital for effectively managing project timelines and resources. Waterfall schedules refer to a linear project management approach where tasks are completed in a sequential manner, often aligning with phases of the project. This method emphasizes completing each phase before moving on to the next, which is suitable for projects that require a clear and structured progression. The inclusion of all these methods in a comprehensive project management strategy enhances the ability to adapt to various project requirements and complexities, making option C a well-rounded choice that represents common practices

- 4. What is the designation for severe weather brick grade?**
- A. MW**
 - B. NW**
 - C. SW**
 - D. FBX**

The designation for severe weather brick grade is SW, which stands for "Severe Weather." This classification is used to indicate that the bricks can withstand harsher environmental conditions and have been tested for durability in such climates. Bricks marked with the SW designation are specifically formulated and manufactured to resist moisture absorption and other damage caused by frost or severe weather conditions, making them a suitable choice for exterior surfaces in regions that experience extreme weather. This ensures longevity and integrity of the brickwork in the face of challenging environmental factors. In contrast, other designations like MW (Moderate Weather) and NW (Not Weather Resistant) indicate bricks that are suited for less severe conditions or have lower resistance to weather-related stress. FBX refers to a type of brick that has specific aesthetic and structural characteristics but is not directly related to severe weather performance.

5. Which process is crucial for managing modifications in a construction project?

- A. Quality assurance**
- B. Change management**
- C. Team coordination**
- D. Cost estimation**

Change management is essential in construction project management because it provides a structured approach to managing all changes made to the project. Changes can occur for various reasons, such as design alterations, unforeseen site conditions, or client requests. Without an effective change management process, these modifications can lead to confusion, scope creep, budget overruns, and delays. This process typically involves identifying a change, assessing its impact on project objectives, obtaining necessary approvals, and implementing the change in a controlled manner. By following a clear change management protocol, project managers ensure that all stakeholders are informed and aligned, preserving the integrity of the project schedule and budget. Other processes, though important, serve different purposes within the construction management context. Quality assurance focuses on ensuring that the work meets specified standards and requirements. Team coordination is essential for fostering effective communication and collaboration among team members, but it does not specifically address changes. Cost estimation deals with forecasting project expenses rather than managing modifications that may affect those costs later.

6. Which brick bond is created by alternating single rows of headers and stretchers?

- A. Flemish Bond**
- B. Running Bond**
- C. Common Bond**
- D. Stack Bond**

Flemish Bond is distinguished by its unique pattern, which consists of alternating rows of headers (the end of the brick) and stretchers (the longer face of the brick). This method creates a visually appealing arrangement because each row of headers is positioned between two stretchers in the adjacent rows, giving the wall a rich texture and aesthetic appeal. This style not only enhances the visual quality of the brickwork but also offers good structural strength due to the interlocking nature of the bricks. In contrast, the other bonds mentioned do not follow this header-stretcher alternating pattern. Running Bond consists of rows of stretchers only, Common Bond incorporates alternating rows of stretchers with a row of headers at specified intervals but not in the same alternating manner as Flemish, and Stack Bond uses bricks stacked directly on top of each other in a uniform alignment. Understanding the specific characteristics of Flemish Bond is essential for anyone involved in masonry, as it impacts both the visual outcome of brickwork and the necessary techniques for installation.

7. What is an example of a strategy a general contractor might implement to mitigate risks?

- A. Ignoring potential financial issues**
- B. Conducting regular site inspections**
- C. Avoiding communication with suppliers**
- D. Reducing material quality standards**

Conducting regular site inspections is an effective strategy for a general contractor to mitigate risks. This proactive approach allows the contractor to identify potential safety hazards, code violations, and quality issues early in the construction process. By systematically evaluating the site, the contractor can ensure work is proceeding as planned and that compliance with specifications and regulations is maintained. Regular inspections foster accountability among subcontractors and workers, contributing to a safer work environment and reducing the likelihood of costly delays or accidents. Implementing this strategy ultimately enhances the project's overall success and helps in managing both time and budget effectively.

8. Change management in construction primarily focuses on which aspect?

- A. Budget management**
- B. Employee training**
- C. Adjustments to project scope**
- D. Community relations**

Change management in construction primarily focuses on adjustments to project scope because it involves assessing and managing changes that may impact the project's original objectives, deliverables, and timelines. When modifications to project scope occur—such as changes in design, materials, or tasks—it's crucial to systematically evaluate the implications of these adjustments. This ensures that all stakeholders are aligned and that the project can still meet its goals despite the changes. Effective change management also includes communication with stakeholders, reassessment of resources, and potential impacts on budget and schedule, but the core principle revolves around managing how these changes affect the overall project scope. By focusing on the project's scope, all other aspects, such as budget and timelines, can be appropriately adjusted in accordance with the new project parameters, thereby maintaining project integrity and success.

9. Which factor would most likely influence the choice of traffic control methods on a construction site?

- A. Cost-effectiveness**
- B. Duration of the project**
- C. Visibility of control measures**
- D. Type and volume of traffic**

The choice of traffic control methods on a construction site is significantly influenced by the type and volume of traffic. This factor encompasses the characteristics of the traffic flow in the area surrounding the construction site, including the kinds of vehicles (heavy trucks, passenger cars, etc.) and the amount of traffic typically experienced at various times of day. When the traffic is dense or consists of large vehicles, more robust and visible traffic control measures might be necessary to ensure safety and efficiency. These measures help direct traffic safely around the construction site, minimizing disruption and preventing accidents. Considering the other factors, while cost-effectiveness can play a role in decision-making, it primarily affects budget considerations rather than immediate practical needs. Duration of the project can also influence traffic control, but it's more about how long measures need to be in place rather than what those measures should be. Visibility of control measures relates to how easily they can be seen and understood by drivers, which is important but secondary to the actual traffic conditions that dictate the type of controls needed. Therefore, the characteristics of the traffic around the work site are paramount in determining the appropriate traffic control methods.

10. What is one of the exceptions to the design professional seal requirement?

- A. Any private residential building**
- B. An institutional building over \$90,000**
- C. A building used by a farmer for public health**
- D. A single-family residence up to 8 attached units**

The design professional seal requirement typically applies to a majority of construction projects to ensure that professional standards are met for public safety and compliance. However, there are exceptions to this requirement, particularly for smaller residential projects where the risk associated with design flaws is considered lower. The exception pertaining to a single-family residence, which allows for up to 8 attached units, reflects the understanding that these smaller-scale residential constructions tend to be less complex and pose fewer risks compared to larger and more intricate structures. Therefore, the inclusion of this type of construction in the exceptions is aimed at reducing barriers to residential development while still maintaining adequate oversight for public safety in a more manageable format. The other options represent larger-scale projects or specialized cases that carry greater implications for public safety, which is why they would typically require the oversight of a licensed design professional to ensure adherence to applicable regulations and safety standards.