

North Carolina General Contractors Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of 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. Don't worry about getting everything right, 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, and take breaks to retain information better.

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.

7. Use Other Tools

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!

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Questions

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- 1. What need does the design of control joints in CMU address?**
 - A. Expansion and contraction**
 - B. Aesthetic considerations**
 - C. Weight reduction**
 - D. Utility conduits**

- 2. Which of the following methods checks the squareness of a concrete slab?**
 - A. Using a level**
 - B. Measuring the diagonals for equal length**
 - C. Counting the number of tiles**
 - D. Checking the corners for straights**

- 3. What are the three methods of determining soil density?**
 - A. Proctor test, Capillary test, Sand cone test**
 - B. Proctor test, Gravel test, Nuclear Density test**
 - C. Proctor test, Sand cone test, Nuclear Density test**
 - D. Sand testing, Cone index, Nuclear Density test**

- 4. What is the purpose of using hydrated lime in mortar?**
 - A. To increase the color**
 - B. To enhance water retention**
 - C. To improve workability and bond**
 - D. To reduce the weight**

- 5. Which organization inspects job sites for erosion and sedimentation control?**
 - A. Department of Natural Resources**
 - B. Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources**
 - C. Environmental Protection Agency**
 - D. Local zoning board**

6. In what scenario would you most likely use an accelerator in concrete mixing?

- A. During warm weather**
- B. During rainy conditions**
- C. During cold weather**
- D. During dry weather**

7. What is the required tensile strength for silt fence fabric?

- A. 20 PSI**
- B. 25 PSI**
- C. 30 PSI**
- D. 35 PSI**

8. Why is a two core CMU preferred for wall construction?

- A. It is lighter.**
- B. It has better thermal insulation.**
- C. It provides more space for utilities and thicker shells.**
- D. It is less expensive.**

9. In construction terms, what does the term "offset" refer to in a reference stake?

- A. The vertical distance to the foundation**
- B. The horizontal measurement from the hub**
- C. The angle of the slope**
- D. The total area of the stake location**

10. What does a scope of work document typically outline?

- A. The financial costs of the project only**
- B. The project timeline and completion criteria**
- C. The exact tasks and responsibilities of all parties involved in the project**
- D. The design specifications approved by the client**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What need does the design of control joints in CMU address?

A. Expansion and contraction

B. Aesthetic considerations

C. Weight reduction

D. Utility conduits

The design of control joints in Concrete Masonry Units (CMU) primarily addresses the need for managing expansion and contraction that occurs in masonry walls. As temperature changes and moisture levels fluctuate, materials can expand and contract, potentially leading to cracking if these movements are not properly accommodated. Control joints provide the necessary space for this movement and help to minimize structural stress, allowing for natural expansion and contraction without compromising the integrity or aesthetics of the wall. While aesthetics, weight reduction, and utility conduits are important factors in building design and construction, they do not directly relate to the critical function of control joints in handling thermal and moisture-induced movement in masonry structures. The main purpose of control joints is to ensure that any potential stress resulting from these forces is managed effectively, preserving the overall longevity and durability of the masonry system.

2. Which of the following methods checks the squareness of a concrete slab?

A. Using a level

B. Measuring the diagonals for equal length

C. Counting the number of tiles

D. Checking the corners for straights

Measuring the diagonals for equal length is a widely accepted method for checking the squareness of a concrete slab because it relies on the properties of a right triangle. In a perfectly square corner, the two diagonals of a rectangle (or square) will be of equal length. By measuring the diagonal distances from one corner of the slab to the opposite corner, if the lengths are identical, it indicates that the corners are at right angles, confirming the squareness of the slab. This method is particularly effective as it provides a straightforward measurement that directly relates to the geometric definition of a square. If the diagonals are not equal, this suggests that the angles are not all exactly 90 degrees, indicating a potential issue with squareness.

3. What are the three methods of determining soil density?

- A. Proctor test, Capillary test, Sand cone test
- B. Proctor test, Gravel test, Nuclear Density test
- C. Proctor test, Sand cone test, Nuclear Density test**
- D. Sand testing, Cone index, Nuclear Density test

The three methods of determining soil density include the Proctor test, the Sand cone test, and the Nuclear Density test, which is why this answer is correct. The Proctor test is commonly used to assess the optimum moisture content at which a given soil type will densify to its maximum density. This helps ensure that the soil has enough strength and stability for construction projects. The Sand cone test is another field method used to measure the in-place density of soil. It involves using a calibrated sand cone apparatus, where the volume of sand that fills a hole dug in the soil is measured. This allows for a direct calculation of the soil's density in its natural state. Lastly, the Nuclear Density test utilizes radioactive isotopes to measure the density of the soil. This method provides rapid and accurate results in the field, allowing for immediate assessment of soil density conditions. The other provided options include methods or tests that are either not commonly associated with measuring soil density or do not fit within the standard practices used in civil engineering and construction. For instance, the Gravel test and Cone index do not specifically determine soil density, and Sand testing typically refers to other properties of sand rather than soil density.

4. What is the purpose of using hydrated lime in mortar?

- A. To increase the color
- B. To enhance water retention
- C. To improve workability and bond**
- D. To reduce the weight

Using hydrated lime in mortar primarily serves to improve workability and bond. Hydrated lime acts as a plasticizer, which enhances the mortar's ability to be manipulated easily during application. This quality is crucial for ensuring that the mortar can be spread and shaped effectively, allowing for better adhesion between the bricks or stones being laid. The improved workability means that the mortar can fill gaps more efficiently, resulting in a stronger bond as it sets. Additionally, lime contributes to the durability and flexibility of the mortar mix. When mortar contains hydrated lime, it can absorb small amounts of movement or settling in the structure without cracking, thereby enhancing the overall longevity of the construction. This characteristic is particularly beneficial in climates where temperature fluctuations may cause expansion and contraction. While some of the other options touch on aspects related to mortar composition, they do not capture the primary purpose of hydrated lime. For example, increasing color is typically achieved through other means, and while water retention is important in many mixes, hydrated lime's main role is more aligned with workability and bonding rather than just retaining moisture.

5. Which organization inspects job sites for erosion and sedimentation control?

- A. Department of Natural Resources**
- B. Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources**
- C. Environmental Protection Agency**
- D. Local zoning board**

The agency that inspects job sites for erosion and sedimentation control in North Carolina is the Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources. This organization is responsible for a range of environmental governance, which includes ensuring that construction activities comply with regulations designed to prevent erosion and manage sediment. Inspection for erosion and sedimentation control is crucial, as it helps protect water quality and prevent the loss of soil, which can occur during construction activities. The Department oversees the implementation of state regulations aimed at controlling these environmental issues. While other organizations mentioned may have roles related to environmental preservation and quality, they may not specifically focus on sedimentation and erosion control during construction activities in the same comprehensive manner as the Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources. These include federal and local organizations that may have broader or different regulatory responsibilities but do not specifically conduct inspections for these particular concerns on job sites.

6. In what scenario would you most likely use an accelerator in concrete mixing?

- A. During warm weather**
- B. During rainy conditions**
- C. During cold weather**
- D. During dry weather**

Using an accelerator in concrete mixing is particularly beneficial during cold weather. In colder temperatures, the setting and curing process of concrete is significantly slowed down due to the lower ambient temperatures. This delay can lead to difficulties in achieving the desired strength and durability of the concrete, which is critical for construction projects. An accelerator works by promoting faster hydration of the cement in the concrete mix, allowing the concrete to set and gain strength more quickly, despite the chill. This can be especially important in ensuring that concrete achieves its necessary properties before exposure to potentially damaging cold conditions, such as freezing temperatures. In contrast, while other weather conditions like warm, rainy, or dry might influence the concrete mixing process, they typically do not necessitate the urgent need for accelerators like cold weather does. For instance, in warm weather, setting times could occur too quickly due to heat, while rain may require other considerations such as water retention and workability adjustments rather than an accelerator.

7. What is the required tensile strength for silt fence fabric?

- A. 20 PSI
- B. 25 PSI
- C. 30 PSI**
- D. 35 PSI

The required tensile strength for silt fence fabric is specified to ensure that the material can withstand the environmental conditions while effectively controlling sediment and water flow. The tensile strength of 30 PSI provides a robust level of durability, allowing the silt fence to endure stress without tearing or failing, especially in areas subjected to runoff and soil erosion. In scenarios where silt fences are deployed, they face significant pressure from water and sediment that can lead to strain on the fabric. A tensile strength of 30 PSI is measured to provide a balance between flexibility and strength, enabling it to hold up against these conditions without losing its effectiveness in preventing sediment from leaving the construction site. This specification helps ensure compliance with construction and environmental regulations, ultimately supporting best practices in erosion and sediment control. Therefore, knowing that the correct tension strength for such applications is 30 PSI is essential for those involved in construction and soil management practices in North Carolina.

8. Why is a two core CMU preferred for wall construction?

- A. It is lighter.
- B. It has better thermal insulation.
- C. It provides more space for utilities and thicker shells.**
- D. It is less expensive.

A two-core concrete masonry unit (CMU) is preferred for wall construction primarily because it provides more space for utilities and thicker shells. The dual cores of the block allow for plumbing, electrical wiring, and other utilities to be integrated seamlessly within the wall. This is particularly beneficial in construction, as it minimizes the need for additional framing and helps to maintain clean wall surfaces. Additionally, the thicker shells of the two-core CMU contribute to overall structural integrity and stability. Thicker walls can support more weight and resist greater external forces, which is crucial in many construction applications. This design promotes better load distribution and can enhance the wall's ability to resist shear and lateral forces, making it a favored choice among builders and architects for robust construction. In contrast, while lighter weights or improved thermal insulation might be attractive features, they are secondary benefits compared to the functionality offered by the additional space for utilities and enhanced thickness. Cost-effectiveness is also an important aspect, but the primary advantage of a two-core CMU lies in its design flexibility and structural performance.

9. In construction terms, what does the term "offset" refer to in a reference stake?

- A. The vertical distance to the foundation**
- B. The horizontal measurement from the hub**
- C. The angle of the slope**
- D. The total area of the stake location**

In construction, the term "offset" pertains to a horizontal distance measured from a reference point, often related to the position of structures in relation to surveyed stakes or hubs. When referencing a stake, an offset indicates how far away from the hub or reference point the actual construction element will be positioned. This concept is particularly crucial during layout procedures, where accurate placements of footings, walls, or other elements depend on precise measurements from defined points. The horizontal measurement allows for the necessary adjustments to ensure that construction follows the planned design, enabling effective site management and alignment on-site. The other options describe different aspects that may be relevant in construction, but they do not align with the specific purpose of the term "offset" as used in relation to a reference stake. For instance, the vertical distance to the foundation or the angle of the slope pertains to different measurements that don't specifically refer to the horizontal alignment that "offset" indicates. The total area of the stake location is also unrelated to the concept of offset, which focuses purely on the spatial relationship in a horizontal context.

10. What does a scope of work document typically outline?

- A. The financial costs of the project only**
- B. The project timeline and completion criteria**
- C. The exact tasks and responsibilities of all parties involved in the project**
- D. The design specifications approved by the client**

The scope of work document is a critical component in project management, especially in construction. It provides a detailed description of the specific tasks, responsibilities, and deliverables expected from all parties involved in a project. This clarity helps ensure that everyone understands their roles and what is required to complete the project successfully. In this context, the scope of work serves to align the contractors, subcontractors, and clients by setting expectations and providing a framework for managing the project. It typically outlines the work to be performed, including details about the materials, equipment, and methods to be used. This comprehensive outline reduces the potential for misunderstandings and conflicts as the project progresses. While financial costs, timelines, and design specifications are essential aspects of a project, they are not the primary focus of the scope of work itself. Instead, each of these elements is often addressed in separate documents or sections within a project contract, whereas the scope of work concentrates specifically on outlining who will do what and how the overall project will be executed. This clarity is vital for maintaining accountability and ensuring that the project stays on track.

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://ncgeneralcontractor.examzify.com>

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

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