

# North Carolina General Contractors Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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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

- 1. What are the nominal dimensions of a standard CMU?**
  - A. 8 x 8 x 12**
  - B. 8 x 8 x 16**
  - C. 8 x 10 x 16**
  - D. 8 x 8 x 24**
- 2. What is retainage in construction?**
  - A. A fee charged for late payments**
  - B. A percentage of the total contract amount withheld until project completion**
  - C. An advance payment to ensure worker safety**
  - D. A financing option for contractors**
- 3. What typically results when water flows fast enough to allow suspended soil particles to settle?**
  - A. Evaporation**
  - B. Erosion**
  - C. Sedimentation**
  - D. Condensation**
- 4. What is a key requirement for getting a general contractor license?**
  - A. Offering services at a lower price**
  - B. Completing a recognized apprenticeship**
  - C. Passing a licensing examination**
  - D. Having a business plan approved**
- 5. What is the nominal size of a modular brick?**
  - A. 4" x 8" x 2 2/3"**
  - B. 4" x 10" x 3"**
  - C. 3" x 8" x 2"**
  - D. 5" x 7" x 3"**

- 6. Why are retarders utilized when making concrete?**
- A. To enhance curing temperatures**
  - B. To slow the setting rate**
  - C. To increase the compressive strength**
  - D. To improve color consistency**
- 7. Which factor is crucial in determining the success of slope when calculating land design?**
- A. The weight of the materials used**
  - B. The rise and run measurements**
  - C. The type of vegetation present**
  - D. The weather conditions during construction**
- 8. Why is it important for a general contractor to manage project changes?**
- A. To avoid client complaints**
  - B. To increase construction speed**
  - C. To ensure stakeholder satisfaction and project alignment**
  - D. To reduce project visibility**
- 9. Why might the water table drop?**
- A. Due to heavy rainfall**
  - B. Due to excessive groundwater extraction**
  - C. Because of seasonal changes in temperature**
  - D. Due to increased plant growth**
- 10. What is builder's risk insurance designed to protect against?**
- A. Legal claims from workers**
  - B. Cost overruns due to mismanagement**
  - C. Damages related to fire, theft, and other risks**
  - D. Delays outside the contractor's control**



## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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## 1. What are the nominal dimensions of a standard CMU?

- A. 8 x 8 x 12
- B. 8 x 8 x 16**
- C. 8 x 10 x 16
- D. 8 x 8 x 24

The nominal dimensions of a standard Concrete Masonry Unit (CMU) are 8 inches high, 8 inches wide, and typically 16 inches long. This standard size is prevalent in construction due to its ease of handling and compatibility with various building codes and structural applications. Understanding that the nominal size of the CMU refers to the dimensions before accounting for the mortar joint is crucial. When the mortar is included, the actual dimensions of a standard CMU will be less than the nominal sizes provided. This standardization allows for consistency in construction practices, making it easier for builders and contractors to plan and execute their projects. The other options listed present either incorrect dimensions or dimensions that do not reflect the widely accepted standard size for standard CMUs. Therefore, the recognition of 8 x 8 x 16 as the typical dimensions helps ensure proper communication and understanding in the construction field.

## 2. What is retainage in construction?

- A. A fee charged for late payments
- B. A percentage of the total contract amount withheld until project completion**
- C. An advance payment to ensure worker safety
- D. A financing option for contractors

Retainage in construction refers to a specific practice where a percentage of the total contract amount is withheld until the project is completed satisfactorily. This retention serves multiple purposes in the construction process. It acts as a financial incentive for the contractor to complete the job according to the standards and timelines specified in the contract. By withholding a portion of the payment, owners can ensure that all aspects of the work meet their expectations before the final payment is released. This practice helps to protect the interests of the project owner by ensuring that the contractor has a strong motivation to finish the work properly and address any issues that arise during the project. It also serves to create a safeguard against potential deficiencies in workmanship or delays. Once the project is complete, and all contractual obligations are met, the retained amount is then paid to the contractor. Understanding retainage is critical for both contractors and project owners. It impacts cash flow and financial planning for the project, making it a key component of contract management in the construction industry.

**3. What typically results when water flows fast enough to allow suspended soil particles to settle?**

- A. Evaporation**
- B. Erosion**
- C. Sedimentation**
- D. Condensation**

When water flows with sufficient velocity that allows suspended soil particles to settle, the process that occurs is sedimentation. Sedimentation refers to the process where solid particles, carried by water or air, settle out of the fluid as it slows down. This typically happens in environments like rivers, lakes, and oceans, where the flow of water decreases, allowing heavier particles to drop to the bottom. This process can significantly impact land formation and the distribution of materials in aquatic environments. As the water slows, it loses the energy needed to keep these particles suspended, leading to the accumulation of sediments. Over time, the settled material can form layers that contribute to the geological features of the landscape. Understanding sedimentation is crucial for general contractors, as it can affect site planning, soil stability, and the management of water runoff in construction projects.

**4. What is a key requirement for getting a general contractor license?**

- A. Offering services at a lower price**
- B. Completing a recognized apprenticeship**
- C. Passing a licensing examination**
- D. Having a business plan approved**

A key requirement for obtaining a general contractor license is passing a licensing examination. This examination is designed to assess the knowledge and skills necessary to perform construction work in a safe, responsible, and efficient manner. It covers various topics, including building codes, safety regulations, and contract management, ensuring that individuals are well-prepared to handle the complexities of construction projects. The requirement to pass a licensing examination serves to protect the public by ensuring that only qualified individuals are permitted to operate as general contractors. This step validates a contractor's understanding of the legal and technical aspects of building, which is essential for maintaining quality standards in construction. While elements such as business plans, apprenticeships, and pricing strategies can be important for overall business success, they do not specifically fulfill the licensing requirement as established by regulatory authorities. Thus, even if a contractor has a solid business plan or offers competitive pricing, these factors do not satisfy the foundational legal requirement of passing a licensing examination.

**5. What is the nominal size of a modular brick?**

**A. 4" x 8" x 2 2/3"**

**B. 4" x 10" x 3"**

**C. 3" x 8" x 2"**

**D. 5" x 7" x 3"**

The nominal size of a modular brick is recognized as 4" x 8" x 2 2/3". This standard reflects the typical dimensions used in construction for modular bricks, which are designed to fit together efficiently and effectively while accommodating mortar joints. The nominal sizing refers to the dimensions before accounting for the actual manufacturing tolerances and the thickness of mortar that will be used in construction, which will ultimately affect the final appearance and dimension of the wall. When considering the various choices provided, options that list sizes significantly different from 4" x 8" x 2 2/3" do not align with standard modular brick dimensions, thereby confirming that the answer is rooted in recognized industry standards. Understanding these dimensions is crucial for ensuring accurate calculations in construction projects that utilize brick, as they affect not only aesthetic considerations but also structural integrity and construction efficiency.

**6. Why are retarders utilized when making concrete?**

**A. To enhance curing temperatures**

**B. To slow the setting rate**

**C. To increase the compressive strength**

**D. To improve color consistency**

Retarders are utilized in the making of concrete primarily to slow the setting rate. This is particularly useful in various situations, such as when temperatures are high, or when there are longer transportation times from the mixing site to the job site. By extending the setting time, retarders allow for better workability, making it easier for workers to place and finish the concrete before it hardens. While other options might seem relevant, such as enhancing curing temperatures or increasing compressive strength, those functions are not the primary role of retarders. Additionally, improving color consistency might be an objective in specific formulations, but it is not the main reason for using retarders in concrete mixtures. Thus, the primary purpose of retarders is their ability to slow down the hydration process, granting more time for various construction activities before the concrete begins to set.

**7. Which factor is crucial in determining the success of slope when calculating land design?**

- A. The weight of the materials used**
- B. The rise and run measurements**
- C. The type of vegetation present**
- D. The weather conditions during construction**

The rise and run measurements are essential in determining the success of slope in land design because they provide the necessary dimensions to calculate the slope's steepness and overall angle. The rise refers to the vertical change, while the run refers to the horizontal distance over which that change occurs. By understanding these measurements, engineers and designers can create effective drainage systems, prevent erosion, and ensure stability in constructions. A properly calculated slope aids in directing water away from structures, which is critical in land design. Other factors such as the weight of materials, type of vegetation, and weather conditions can influence certain aspects of land design and construction but do not directly impact the geometric aspects of slope measurement and calculation. The rise and run are fundamental to designing an effective slope and understanding how it interacts with various elements of the landscape.

**8. Why is it important for a general contractor to manage project changes?**

- A. To avoid client complaints**
- B. To increase construction speed**
- C. To ensure stakeholder satisfaction and project alignment**
- D. To reduce project visibility**

Managing project changes is crucial for a general contractor to ensure stakeholder satisfaction and maintain project alignment. When changes occur, they can affect various aspects of a project, including timeframes, budgets, and scope. By actively managing these changes, a general contractor can effectively communicate with all stakeholders, including clients, subcontractors, and suppliers, fostering transparency and collaboration. This process helps in aligning the project's current state with the stakeholders' expectations and requirements. When stakeholders feel that their concerns are addressed and that the project remains aligned with their goals, their overall satisfaction increases. Furthermore, proper change management minimizes disruptions and helps in maintaining the quality and integrity of the project, leading to successful outcomes. Maintaining project alignment through effective change management can prevent issues further down the line, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and ensuring that all parties are on the same page regarding the project's direction. This approach leads to enhanced trust and stronger relationships between the general contractor and stakeholders, which is fundamental for successful project completion.

## 9. Why might the water table drop?

- A. Due to heavy rainfall
- B. Due to excessive groundwater extraction**
- C. Because of seasonal changes in temperature
- D. Due to increased plant growth

The water table might drop significantly due to excessive groundwater extraction. When water is extracted from underground aquifers at a rate faster than it can be replenished through natural processes like rainfall or infiltration, the water level in the aquifer decreases, leading to a drop in the water table. This situation often occurs in areas where irrigation, industrial uses, or municipal water supply demands exceed the natural replenishment rate. In contrast, heavy rainfall typically raises the water table as more water is added to the system. Seasonal changes in temperature can affect surface water availability and evaporation but do not directly cause the water table to drop. Increased plant growth could potentially deplete some water through transpiration, but this effect is minor compared to the substantial impact of excessive groundwater extraction. Understanding these dynamics is essential for managing water resources sustainably.

## 10. What is builder's risk insurance designed to protect against?

- A. Legal claims from workers
- B. Cost overruns due to mismanagement
- C. Damages related to fire, theft, and other risks**
- D. Delays outside the contractor's control

Builder's risk insurance is specifically tailored to protect against damages that may occur during the course of a construction project. This type of insurance typically covers risks associated with fire, theft, vandalism, and certain weather-related events that might cause damage to structures being built or renovated. By providing coverage for these unforeseen circumstances, builder's risk insurance helps to ensure that the financial investment in the construction project is safeguarded against potential losses. While other options address different aspects of a construction project, such as legal claims, mismanagement, and project delays, those scenarios fall outside the primary purpose of builder's risk insurance. The insurance is not designed to cover legal liabilities for worker injuries or claims, nor does it provide protection against cost overruns or project delays, which are generally considered business risks not covered by this specific kind of policy. The focus of builder's risk insurance is clearly on the material and structural damages during the construction phase.



## 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](mailto: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!**