

# On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF) - Installer I 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

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- 1. What is the term for a solid that can be filtered from wastewater?**
  - A. Total dissolved solids**
  - B. Total suspended solids**
  - C. Residual solids**
  - D. Filtrable residues**
  
- 2. Where does most of the wastewater treatment occur in an on-site sewage facility?**
  - A. In the tank**
  - B. In the soil**
  - C. In the distribution field**
  - D. In the drainage system**
  
- 3. What is the purpose of geotextile fabric in drainfield systems?**
  - A. To provide structural support**
  - B. To prevent clogging and soil erosion**
  - C. To enhance aesthetic appearance**
  - D. To reduce the cost of materials**
  
- 4. What is an important consideration when designing gravity flow septic systems?**
  - A. Increased complexity enhances performance**
  - B. Underground piping layout**
  - C. Required depth of tank**
  - D. Excessive water use minimization**
  
- 5. What is the minimum distance required between an on-site sewage facility and a public water well?**
  - A. 25 feet**
  - B. 50 feet**
  - C. 75 feet**
  - D. 150 feet**

- 6. What does physical straining refer to in soil treatment?**
- A. The process of eliminating larger bacteria**
  - B. Bacteria being smaller than soil pore openings**
  - C. Bacteria being larger than soil pore openings**
  - D. The removal of pathogens from water**
- 7. Which of the following pipe types is allowed in drainfields?**
- A. 2 inch PVC**
  - B. 3 inch PVC**
  - C. 5 inch PVC**
  - D. 3 inch copper**
- 8. What is the minimum lot size required for OSSF if a private water supply is used?**
- A. 1/2 acre**
  - B. 1 acre**
  - C. 2 acres**
  - D. 3 acres**
- 9. What is considered the most critical soil characteristic for an on-site sewage facility?**
- A. Soil texture**
  - B. Ability to absorb wastewater**
  - C. Soil color**
  - D. Soil depth**
- 10. What is the formula for calculating slope?**
- A. Difference in elevation over distance**
  - B. Difference in elevation times 100**
  - C. Difference in elevation over distance multiplied by 100**
  - D. Distance over difference in elevation multiplied by 100**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What is the term for a solid that can be filtered from wastewater?**

- A. Total dissolved solids**
- B. Total suspended solids**
- C. Residual solids**
- D. Filtrable residues**

The correct term for a solid that can be filtered from wastewater is "Total suspended solids." This refers to solid particles that are suspended in the liquid phase of the wastewater, making them filterable. These solids can include a variety of materials such as organic matter, sediment, and pollutants that are not dissolved in the water but exist in a particulate form. Understanding this is essential for wastewater treatment processes, as total suspended solids are a critical parameter in evaluating the quality of wastewater. Effective treatment involves removing these solids to reduce pollution and improve the overall quality of the discharge. In contrast, total dissolved solids refer to the minerals, salts, and other compounds that are dissolved in water, which cannot be filtered out in the same way as suspended solids. Residual solids typically refer to the mass that remains after treatment processes, while filtrable residues may generally apply to those materials that can pass through a filter, but are not specifically the defined measure used in wastewater treatment contexts. Thus, the focus on "total suspended solids" aligns best with the definition of solids that can be filtered from wastewater.

**2. Where does most of the wastewater treatment occur in an on-site sewage facility?**

- A. In the tank**
- B. In the soil**
- C. In the distribution field**
- D. In the drainage system**

Most of the wastewater treatment in an on-site sewage facility occurs in the soil due to the natural processes of filtration and microbial action that take place there. After wastewater is initially settled and partially treated in the tank, it is discharged into the soil, where the remaining contaminants are further broken down by soil microorganisms. This biological treatment process is critical for reducing pathogens and nutrients before the water percolates into the ground, thereby protecting groundwater quality. While the treatment tank does play a role in initial settling and primary treatment of the wastewater, it is fundamentally the soil that completes the treatment process through complex interactions involving biological, physical, and chemical processes. The distribution field and drainage system are essential for dispersing the treated effluent; however, they closely interface with the soil, which is the primary site of effective treatment. Thus, recognizing the soil's vital role in the overall efficacy of wastewater treatment is key to understanding the functioning of on-site sewage facilities.

**3. What is the purpose of geotextile fabric in drainfield systems?**

- A. To provide structural support**
- B. To prevent clogging and soil erosion**
- C. To enhance aesthetic appearance**
- D. To reduce the cost of materials**

The purpose of geotextile fabric in drainfield systems is primarily to prevent clogging and soil erosion. This type of fabric acts as a barrier that allows water to pass through while filtering out fine particles from the soil, which helps maintain the functionality of the drainfield by preventing sediment from entering the system. By minimizing the accumulation of sediment, the geotextile fabric aids in the longevity and efficiency of the drainage system, ensuring that it operates effectively over time. In addition, the fabric helps to stabilize the surrounding soil, thereby reducing the risk of erosion that could compromise the integrity of the drainfield. The proper use of geotextile fabric is crucial in ensuring that the treated effluent can be adequately absorbed into the soil and does not lead to surface issues or system failures.

**4. What is an important consideration when designing gravity flow septic systems?**

- A. Increased complexity enhances performance**
- B. Underground piping layout**
- C. Required depth of tank**
- D. Excessive water use minimization**

An essential consideration when designing gravity flow septic systems is the underground piping layout. This aspect is critical because the design and arrangement of the piping directly influence how efficiently wastewater is transported from the home to the septic tank and subsequently to the drain field. Proper layout ensures that gravity flow is utilized effectively, allowing wastewater to move without the need for additional pumping mechanisms. Moreover, the slope of the pipes, depth of installation, and the overall configuration can significantly affect both the performance of the system and its ability to function properly over time. Factors such as soil type, terrain, and proximity to water sources also need to be accounted for when establishing the underground piping layout, as these can impact system effectiveness and compliance with local regulations. Thus, focusing on the correct design of the piping ensures the septic system operates efficiently and minimizes the risk of failures or backups.

**5. What is the minimum distance required between an on-site sewage facility and a public water well?**

- A. 25 feet**
- B. 50 feet**
- C. 75 feet**
- D. 150 feet**

The minimum distance required between an on-site sewage facility and a public water well is 50 feet. This distance is established to protect the quality of drinking water from potential contamination that can arise from sewage systems. Maintaining a safe buffer zone helps to ensure that any pathogens, bacteria, or chemicals from the sewage system do not migrate into the groundwater that supplies the public water well. This standard reflects guidelines aimed at safeguarding public health and ensuring safe drinking water. The specified distance serves as a critical protective measure in the design and placement of on-site sewage facilities.

**6. What does physical straining refer to in soil treatment?**

- A. The process of eliminating larger bacteria**
- B. Bacteria being smaller than soil pore openings**
- C. Bacteria being larger than soil pore openings**
- D. The removal of pathogens from water**

Physical straining in the context of soil treatment refers to the ability of soil to filter out particles based on their size. This process is crucial for the effective treatment of wastewater in on-site sewage facilities. When discussing the size of bacteria relative to soil pore openings, the relevant aspect is that bacteria can be substantially smaller than these pore openings. For the correct answer, the key point is that bacteria are typically larger than the soil pore openings. This means that as wastewater passes through the soil, the bacteria are unable to move through the spaces in the soil effectively, resulting in their removal from the wastewater. This physical straining is significant because it helps to reduce the overall bacterial load in the effluent before it is further treated or reaches the groundwater. In this context, physical straining is a critical component of how soil functions to treat and filter wastewater, while other listed concepts may address different processes involved in water treatment and pathogen elimination.

**7. Which of the following pipe types is allowed in drainfields?**

- A. 2 inch PVC
- B. 3 inch PVC**
- C. 5 inch PVC
- D. 3 inch copper

In the context of drainfields, the use of pipe types is subject to specific guidelines that ensure proper function and maintenance of on-site sewage facilities. The correct option, which is 3 inch PVC pipe, is widely accepted for drainfields due to its adequate size for the flow of effluent and its resistance to corrosion, ensuring longevity and reliability in septic system applications. 3 inch PVC pipes provide a good balance of capacity and fitting compatibility with other components of the sewage system. They are large enough to handle typical sewage flow while still being manageable for installation processes. Additionally, their smooth interior surfaces minimize friction loss, which helps maintain adequate flow rates. Using pipes that are either too small, like 2 inch PVC, may lead to blockages or insufficient drainage capabilities, while larger sizes, such as 5 inch PVC, can be excessive and lead to unnecessary material costs or complications with installation. 3 inch copper piping is generally not suitable for drainfields due to its susceptibility to corrosion from soil conditions and the high cost of installation compared to PVC alternatives. Overall, the selection of 3 inch PVC aligns with best practices in the installation of drainfields, ensuring efficient wastewater management and minimal maintenance issues over time.

**8. What is the minimum lot size required for OSSF if a private water supply is used?**

- A. 1/2 acre
- B. 1 acre**
- C. 2 acres
- D. 3 acres

The minimum lot size required for an on-site sewage facility (OSSF) when a private water supply is used is typically set at 1 acre. This requirement ensures that there is sufficient space to properly install and maintain both the sewage system and the water supply system without risk of contamination. Having an acre gives adequate separation distance between the sewage disposal area and the water supply, which is necessary for protecting the quality of the water and preventing any health hazards associated with sewage contamination. This larger lot size requirement accounts for factors such as the absorption capacity of the soil, the potential for surface runoff, and the overall environment in which the sewage system operates. It is a precautionary measure to ensure public health and safety, promoting sustainable land use practices.

**9. What is considered the most critical soil characteristic for an on-site sewage facility?**

- A. Soil texture**
- B. Ability to absorb wastewater**
- C. Soil color**
- D. Soil depth**

The most critical soil characteristic for an on-site sewage facility is the ability to absorb wastewater. This property, often referred to as the soil's permeability, determines how well the soil can manage and treat the wastewater that is being introduced into it. Soils with high absorption capacity allow for effective filtration and breakdown of contaminants, which is essential to prevent pollution and protect groundwater. Understanding the ability of soil to absorb water helps in the design and installation of septic systems, ensuring that the facility can function properly without causing health hazards or environmental issues. This characteristic directly impacts the system's performance, effectiveness, and longevity, making it essential for properly functioning on-site sewage facilities. While other soil characteristics, such as texture, color, and depth, play roles in determining the feasibility and design of an OSSF, they do not directly relate to how well the soil can absorb and process wastewater. Therefore, the ability to absorb wastewater is the primary focus when evaluating soil for on-site sewage systems.

**10. What is the formula for calculating slope?**

- A. Difference in elevation over distance**
- B. Difference in elevation times 100**
- C. Difference in elevation over distance multiplied by 100**
- D. Distance over difference in elevation multiplied by 100**

The formula for calculating slope is correctly defined as the difference in elevation over distance, and when you multiply that result by 100, you express the slope as a percentage. This is an important concept, especially in contexts like on-site sewage facilities, where understanding the incline of land can affect drainage, installation, and overall system performance. Slope essentially represents the steepness or degree of incline of a surface. By dividing the difference in elevation (the vertical change) by the distance (the horizontal change), you get a ratio. When this ratio is then multiplied by 100, it provides a percentage that is easier to interpret and apply in practical scenarios. A slope of 5% indicates that for every 100 units of horizontal distance, the elevation changes by 5 units. This measurement is crucial when planning and implementing sewage facilities, as it helps ensure proper drainage and prevents issues related to insufficient fall or excessive slope, contributing to the efficiency and safety of the sewage system.

## 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://ossinstaller1.examzify.com>**

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

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