On Site Sewage Systems Practice Test (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 is the purpose of the timer on the pump in a pressurized system?**

   A. To switch the pump on and off at specified times so that the effluent discharged to the trench will not saturate the receiving soil.

   B. To regulate the flow rate of the pump to a fixed speed.

   C. To monitor the moisture content of the soil.

   D. To prevent freezing of the pump.

2. **Must the mantle be placed in all directions from the absorption trenches?**

   A. Yes

   B. No

   C. Only toward the flow

   D. Only away from the flow

3. **Which system does not require annual sampling of the effluent?**

   A. Aerobic trench

   B. Filter bed

   C. Mound system

   D. Holding tank

4. **Class 4 septic tanks and Class 5 holding tanks must conform to which standard?**

   A. NFPA 58

   B. CAN3-B66 CSA

   C. ISO 9001

   D. ASTM D471

5. **Which party is not specified as a signatory for the permit application?**

   A. The Owner

   B. The Owner’s Agent

   C. The Inspector

   D. The Public Health Official

6. How close to a lake can an earth pit privy be located?

A. 5 metres

B. 15 metres

C. 30 metres

D. 50 metres

7. In a shallow buried absorption trench system, what is the minimum length of a distribution pipe?

A. 20 metres

B. 30 metres

C. 40 metres

D. 60 metres

8. What material is placed above the distribution pipes?

A. Septic stone

B. Gravel

C. Sand

D. Topsoil

9. What T time should be used to design the trenches for a fully raised leaching bed?

A. The percolation time of the raised leaching bed fill

B. The percolation time of the native soil

C. The rainfall intensity

D. The groundwater seepage rate

10. From the holding tank example, how close is the tank to the house?

A. 7 m

B. 5 m

C. 10 m

D. 35 m

Answers

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

Explanations

1. What is the purpose of the timer on the pump in a pressurized system?

A. To switch the pump on and off at specified times so that the effluent discharged to the trench will not saturate the receiving soil.

B. To regulate the flow rate of the pump to a fixed speed.

C. To monitor the moisture content of the soil.

D. To prevent freezing of the pump.

The timer is used to dose the effluent in controlled pulses rather than in a continuous flow. In a pressurized system, turning the pump on and off at set intervals releases small amounts of wastewater to the trench, giving the soil time to absorb each pulse. This prevents the receiving soil from becoming saturated, avoids ponding at the surface, and keeps the leaching field operating within its absorption capacity. Flow rate regulation is not the timer's job—the pump speed or a flow-control device determines how fast the liquid is pumped. Monitoring soil moisture is done with sensors, not a timer. Preventing freezing relies on other measures like insulation or heat tracing, not the timer function.

2. Must the mantle be placed in all directions from the absorption trenches?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Only toward the flow

D. Only away from the flow

In absorption trenches, the soil cover you provide is meant to protect the trench and allow wastewater to infiltrate into the surrounding soil, not to completely encase the trench on every side. A mantle around the trench in all directions isn't required and can actually hinder proper infiltration if it overly seals or compacts the sides. What matters is meeting the required cover depth and avoiding damage from heavy equipment, while ensuring the trench remains in contact with the surrounding soil to distribute effluent laterally through the soil profile. So, there's no obligation to place a mantle in every direction from the trenches.

3. Which system does not require annual sampling of the effluent?

A. Aerobic trench

B. Filter bed

C. Mound system

D. Holding tank

Effluent sampling is mainly used to verify that wastewater is being treated adequately before it leaves the system. A filter bed is a soil-based, passive treatment stage—the bed and the surrounding soil do most of the polishing as the effluent percolates down. There isn't a distinct, accessible effluent stream from the bed to sample on a regular basis, so annual effluent sampling isn't typically required for that component. Instead, the monitoring focuses on how the soil absorbs and treats the wastewater and on general system performance. The other systems involve either active treatment components or storage where regulators commonly require ongoing checks of effluent quality or system integrity, which is why they generally carry annual sampling requirements.

4. Class 4 septic tanks and Class 5 holding tanks must conform to which standard?

A. NFPA 58

B. CAN3-B66 CSA

C. ISO 9001

D. ASTM D471

The main idea here is knowing which standard governs prefabricated tanks used in on-site wastewater systems in Canada. Class 4 septic tanks and Class 5 holding tanks are designed to meet CAN/CSA-B66, the Canadian standard for prefabricated septic tanks and holding tanks. This standard specifies the requirements for how these tanks are built and tested, covering essential aspects like watertightness, structural strength, materials compatibility, and secure connections. It also addresses practical features such as access openings, lids, venting, and how the tank interfaces with other system components, ensuring safe burial, durability, and compatibility with installation practices. Other options don't apply to these tanks in this context: NFPA 58 is about propane storage, ISO 9001 is a quality management system standard and not a product performance standard, and ASTM D471 is a general test method not specific to septic tank construction.

5. Which party is not specified as a signatory for the permit application?

A. The Owner

B. The Owner’s Agent

C. The Inspector

D. The Public Health Official

Signing a permit application centers on who is taking responsibility and authorizing the project. The owner signs to confirm ownership and intent to proceed, and the owner’s agent signs to show authorization to act and provide required design or contractor information. The public health official signs to indicate regulatory approval and health compliance, effectively issuing the permit. The inspector, while essential for verifying work and ensuring standards are met, does not sign the permit application itself because their role is to inspect and report rather than authorize the permit. So the party not specified as a signatory is the inspector.

6. How close to a lake can an earth pit privy be located?

A. 5 metres

B. 15 metres

C. 30 metres

D. 50 metres

Protecting lake water from contaminants is the key idea. An earth pit privy soils waste into the surrounding ground, and that leachate can travel through the soil to groundwater or surface runoff that reaches the lake. The distance from the lake acts as a buffer to reduce the chance that contaminated water moves into the lake. The commonly used minimum setback is fifteen metres, which provides a practical balance between protection and practicality. If the groundwater is shallow or the soil is highly permeable, the setback might need to be larger to prevent contamination. Distances like five metres are typically too close and increase risk, while much larger setbacks (such as thirty or fifty metres) offer more protection but are not usually required as a standard minimum for an earth pit privy.

7. In a shallow buried absorption trench system, what is the minimum length of a distribution pipe?

A. 20 metres

B. 30 metres

C. 40 metres

D. 60 metres

Distributing wastewater evenly along the trench is the key idea. A shallow buried absorption trench relies on a perforated distribution pipe that runs along the bed to let effluent enter the surrounding fill at multiple points. If the pipe is too short, most of the flow would leave near the inlet, overloading that portion of the bed while the far end stays underutilized. That uneven loading can lead to ponding, premature clogging, and poor treatment because only part of the trench is contributing to infiltration. Using a distribution pipe that extends across a substantial portion of the trench ensures the effluent enters at several points along the bed, spreading the hydraulic load and promoting uniform moisture and infiltration throughout the trench. This minimizes the risk of short-circuiting flow to the outlet and helps the system perform as designed over varying soil conditions and seasonal changes. In practice, this means designing the pipe length to cover most or all of the trench length, rather than just a short section. If there are multiple trenches, each trench should have distribution piping arranged to distribute flow along its own bed, with additional components like distribution boxes used to balance the flow between trenches.

8. What material is placed above the distribution pipes?

A. Septic stone

B. Gravel

C. Sand

D. Topsoil

The key idea is that the area directly above the distribution pipes needs a clean, free-draining layer to spread the effluent and keep soil from clogging the pipes. Septic stone is a washed, coarse aggregate designed for this role, providing the voids that let liquid move evenly into the surrounding trench. Sand would clog the pores and impede drainage, topsoil would compact and block infiltration, and while gravel can serve a similar purpose, septic stone is the material specified for this layer in many on-site systems. So, the material placed above the distribution pipes is septic stone.

9. What T time should be used to design the trenches for a fully raised leaching bed?

A. The percolation time of the raised leaching bed fill

B. The percolation time of the native soil

C. The rainfall intensity

D. The groundwater seepage rate

The design of trenches in a fully raised leaching bed relies on how fast effluent can move through the bed media itself. In a raised bed, the water first percolates through the raised bed fill material before reaching the underlying gravel and native soil, so the governing flow rate is the percolation time of that bed fill. Using this T time ensures the trenches are sized for the actual infiltration capacity of the engineered media, preventing groundwater from rising to the surface or the bed from becoming oversaturated. Using the percolation time of native soil would ignore the engineered medium that dictates flow in a raised system, leading to an incorrect design. Rainfall intensity affects surface drainage and stormwater considerations, not the subsurface infiltration rate of the bed media. Groundwater seepage rate concerns leakage toward the water table, which is not what determines trench infiltration capacity in a raised bed.

10. From the holding tank example, how close is the tank to the house?

A. 7 m

B. 5 m

C. 10 m

D. 35 m

The main idea here is setback distance—the space you keep between a holding tank and the house to protect the home from odors, gases, and potential backflow, while still allowing easy access for pumping and maintenance. Seven meters is used in the holding tank example as a practical minimum that provides a comfortable buffer for odor control and service access, without making the system footprint excessive. Five meters would put the tank closer and may not meet some codes or odor considerations; ten meters is a larger, but still common, spacing that's acceptable in many situations but isn't the figure given in the example; thirty-five meters would be unnecessarily far and would complicate maintenance access.

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://onsitesewagesys.examzify.com

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