

PSI Cosmetology 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 is the lowest level of decontamination?**
 - A. Disinfection**
 - B. Sanitizing a surface**
 - C. Sterilizing**
 - D. Cleaning**
- 2. All of the following are characteristics of temporary hair color EXCEPT?**
 - A. Lasting for several weeks**
 - B. No chemical change to hair shaft**
 - C. Washes out with shampoo**
 - D. Attaching to the outer layer of hair**
- 3. Which of the following are the qualifications to be an EPA approved disinfectant?**
 - A. A virucide, fungicide, and bleach**
 - B. A virucide, fungicide, bactericide, and disinfectant**
 - C. A disinfectant and cleaner**
 - D. An antiseptic and a bactericide**
- 4. What is the first step in responding to a blood exposure incident?**
 - A. Notify a supervisor**
 - B. Stop the service**
 - C. Clean the area**
 - D. Cover the wound**
- 5. Which abrasive file is recommended for shaping a weak natural nail?**
 - A. 120 grit**
 - B. 180 grit**
 - C. 240 grit**
 - D. 320 grit**

- 6. What is the Decontamination Method 2 for blood or other infectious materials on items?**
- A. Sterilizing only**
 - B. Cleaning then disinfecting**
 - C. Cleaning then sterilizing**
 - D. Using disposable items**
- 7. All of the following are determined by a strand test in a color service EXCEPT?**
- A. How much color to use for service**
 - B. Expected end result**
 - C. Processing time**
 - D. Color absorption level**
- 8. What is the primary ingredient in most hair relaxers?**
- A. Ammonium thioglycolate**
 - B. Sodium hydroxide or calcium hydroxide**
 - C. Hydrogen peroxide**
 - D. Glycerin**
- 9. What is the correct way to apply a thin coat of wax when shaping the eyebrow?**
- A. Apply against the hair growth.**
 - B. Apply in the same direction as the hair growth.**
 - C. Apply in a circular motion.**
 - D. Apply with a spatula.**
- 10. Which of the following types of hair removal uses a caustic alkali preparation?**
- A. Shaving.**
 - B. Threading.**
 - C. Depilatories.**
 - D. Waxing.**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the lowest level of decontamination?

- A. Disinfection**
- B. Sanitizing a surface**
- C. Sterilizing**
- D. Cleaning**

The lowest level of decontamination is sanitizing a surface. Sanitization is a process that significantly reduces the number of microorganisms on a surface to a safe level, as determined by public health standards. This is crucial in environments like salons, where cleanliness is paramount in preventing the spread of infections and ensuring client safety. Sanitizing typically involves the use of chemical agents or heat, which may eliminate some but not all microorganisms compared to more advanced methods. This makes it an essential practice for maintaining hygiene in everyday situations, but it does not guarantee complete eradication of all pathogens. While cleaning refers to the removal of dirt and debris from surfaces and is a necessary first step before sanitizing, it does not necessarily reduce the microbial load to the same extent that sanitizing does. Disinfection takes things a step further by killing a higher number of specific pathogens but may not achieve complete sterilization. Sterilization is the highest level of decontamination, eliminating all forms of microbial life, including spores.

2. All of the following are characteristics of temporary hair color EXCEPT?

- A. Lasting for several weeks**
- B. No chemical change to hair shaft**
- C. Washes out with shampoo**
- D. Attaching to the outer layer of hair**

Temporary hair color is designed to provide a quick and easily reversible option for changing hair color. A key characteristic of temporary hair color is that it does not create a lasting change to the hair shaft itself. It can be applied and washed out without causing damage or altering the hair's structure. This type of color typically attaches to the outer layer of the hair and can be easily removed with a regular shampooing routine. The duration that temporary hair color lasts is generally much shorter than several weeks; it is often meant to last for just a few shampoos. This makes the option of lasting for several weeks inaccurate for temporary hair color, as its main advantage is the ease of change without a long-term commitment. Thus, the correct characteristic that differentiates temporary hair color from other types of hair coloring products is its brief duration, reinforcing its purpose for those seeking a temporary or experimental color change.

3. Which of the following are the qualifications to be an EPA approved disinfectant?

A. A virucide, fungicide, and bleach

B. A virucide, fungicide, bactericide, and disinfectant

C. A disinfectant and cleaner

D. An antiseptic and a bactericide

To be classified as an EPA-approved disinfectant, a product must demonstrate effectiveness against a range of pathogens. This includes being a virucide (effective against viruses), fungicide (effective against fungi), and bactericide (effective against bacteria). The requirement that a product must be a disinfectant is also crucial, as this term indicates it has the ability to eliminate or inactivate harmful microorganisms on surfaces. Therefore, the inclusion of virucide, fungicide, bactericide, and the label of disinfectant collectively qualifies a product for EPA approval. This comprehensive effectiveness is necessary to ensure safety and efficacy in environments such as salons, where the risk of cross-contamination is present.

4. What is the first step in responding to a blood exposure incident?

A. Notify a supervisor

B. Stop the service

C. Clean the area

D. Cover the wound

The initial response to a blood exposure incident is to stop the service. This action is critical because it ensures that the situation is under control and prevents further exposure to blood or any potential pathogens. By halting any ongoing procedures, the safety of both the client and the practitioner is prioritized. Stopping the service allows for an assessment of the situation, including determining the extent of the exposure and implementing proper safety protocols. Once the service is stopped, other steps can be taken, such as notifying a supervisor, cleaning the area to prevent contamination, and addressing any injuries, such as covering a wound. Taking this immediate action helps to create a safer environment and mitigate risks associated with blood exposure incidents.

5. Which abrasive file is recommended for shaping a weak natural nail?

- A. 120 grit**
- B. 180 grit**
- C. 240 grit**
- D. 320 grit**

Choosing the right abrasive file for shaping a weak natural nail is crucial for maintaining its health and integrity. A 240 grit file is ideal for this purpose because it provides a gentle touch that can effectively shape the nail without causing excessive damage. The finer grit level, such as 240, is less abrasive, making it suitable for delicate or weak nails, as it reduces the risk of splitting or breaking. Grain size is essential when working with weak nails; coarser grits (lower number) are more aggressive and can remove more material quickly, which is not advisable for weak nails. Finer grits, like 180, while still somewhat usable, may not offer the same gentleness as 240 grit. Similarly, the 320 grit file, while very fine and gentle, may not be as effective in shaping as the 240 grit, which strikes a better balance between gentle shaping and effectiveness. Overall, the 240 grit file is the appropriate choice because it allows for careful and precise shaping while minimizing the risk to the natural nail's health.

6. What is the Decontamination Method 2 for blood or other infectious materials on items?

- A. Sterilizing only**
- B. Cleaning then disinfecting**
- C. Cleaning then sterilizing**
- D. Using disposable items**

The correct approach for Decontamination Method 2 regarding blood or other infectious materials on items is cleaning followed by sterilizing. This method is critical in ensuring that any surfaces or tools that may have been contaminated are made safe for use. Decontamination involves a two-step process: first, cleaning, which removes dirt and debris, and second, sterilizing, which effectively eliminates all forms of microbial life, including bacteria and viruses. This is particularly important in a cosmetology setting where the tools used may come into contact with skin or bodily fluids, thus posing a risk of infection if proper procedures are not adhered to. While sterilizing only deals with the elimination of microorganisms, it does not address the initial removal of dirt and organic matter, which can inhibit the effectiveness of the sterilization process. Using disposable items minimizes risk but does not address the need for decontamination in scenarios where non-disposable tools are utilized. Cleaning followed by sterilization is the most comprehensive and protective method against the spread of infections in a professional environment.

7. All of the following are determined by a strand test in a color service EXCEPT?

- A. How much color to use for service**
- B. Expected end result**
- C. Processing time**
- D. Color absorption level**

In a color service, a strand test is crucial for determining several important factors related to the hair coloring process. It helps assess how the hair will react to the color applied, and the results of this test inform the stylist about the expected end result, processing time, and color absorption level. The expected end result reflects how the color will appear after application, taking into account the hair's current condition and existing color. Processing time is also determined by how the hair interacts with the dye during the test, which can significantly influence when the color reaches the desired level of development. Additionally, the color absorption level is key in understanding how well the hair will take to the color, which can vary based on hair type and previous treatments. However, how much color to use for the service is not typically assessed through a strand test. The overall quantity needed is usually determined based on the hair's length, thickness, and density rather than the results of a strand test. Therefore, it's more about the general application logistics than about the specific outcome of the hair coloring process that a strand test addresses.

8. What is the primary ingredient in most hair relaxers?

- A. Ammonium thioglycolate**
- B. Sodium hydroxide or calcium hydroxide**
- C. Hydrogen peroxide**
- D. Glycerin**

The primary ingredient in most hair relaxers is sodium hydroxide or calcium hydroxide. These compounds are known as lye relaxers, and they work by breaking down the disulfide bonds in the hair's protein structure, allowing it to be reshaped into a straighter form. The effectiveness of sodium hydroxide or calcium hydroxide in relaxing hair is due to their strong alkaline nature, which significantly alters the hair's pH and allows for the modification of its texture. While ammonium thioglycolate is also used in some types of hair relaxers, it is more commonly associated with permanent waves and is not the primary ingredient in the stronger, lye-based relaxers. Hydrogen peroxide is typically used as a bleaching agent or oxidizing agent in hair coloring processes, while glycerin is a humectant that is used in various cosmetic formulations for its moisturizing properties, but it does not contribute to hair relaxing.

9. What is the correct way to apply a thin coat of wax when shaping the eyebrow?

- A. Apply against the hair growth.**
- B. Apply in the same direction as the hair growth.**
- C. Apply in a circular motion.**
- D. Apply with a spatula.**

When shaping the eyebrow, the correct technique is to apply a thin coat of wax in the same direction as the hair growth. This method ensures that the wax adheres effectively to the hairs, allowing for a cleaner and more precise removal during the waxing process. Following the natural direction of the hair minimizes the risk of breakage and ensures that the hairs are pulled out from the root, resulting in less discomfort and a smoother finish. Applying the wax against the hair growth can lead to hair breaking or creating a less effective grip on the hairs, making the process more painful and less efficient. Using a circular motion may hinder the wax's ability to grab the hairs properly, while applying with a spatula is merely a method of application and doesn't specifically address the direction of wax application. Focusing on the direction of hair growth is crucial for achieving the best results in eyebrow shaping.

10. Which of the following types of hair removal uses a caustic alkali preparation?

- A. Shaving.**
- B. Threading.**
- C. Depilatories.**
- D. Waxing.**

The type of hair removal that utilizes a caustic alkali preparation is depilatories. These products are formulated with chemical agents, often containing alkaline substances, which break down the protein structure of the hair, allowing it to be easily wiped away from the skin's surface. Depilatories offer a non-mechanical method of hair removal, making them appealing for larger areas or when a more profound and longer-lasting removal is desired compared to methods like shaving, which only cuts hair at the surface level. In contrast, shaving involves using a razor to cut hair at the skin's surface, and does not employ caustic chemicals. Threading is a precise method involving the use of a twisted thread to pull hair from the follicle, which does not involve any chemical agents. Waxing involves applying a sticky substance that adheres to hair and pulls it out when removed, but it also does not use a caustic alkali. Therefore, depilatories are specifically designed to chemically dissolve hair, confirming that they are the correct choice for this question.

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://psicosmetology.examzify.com>

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