Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) 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. 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!

Questions

1. What population size defines a large water system?

A. More than 1,000 people

B. More than 5,000 people

C. More than 10,000 people

D. More than 50,000 people

2. What is Scripto Cryptosporidium known for?

A. Being a non-pathogenic organism

B. Being often found in contaminated water sources

C. Being a major cause of airborne diseases

D. Being linked to food poisoning in dairy products

3. What are virus particles primarily composed of?

A. Protein and fatty acids

B. Genetic material

C. Cells and tissues

D. Water and sugar

4. What does the Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule aim to improve?

A. Groundwater quality standards

B. Surface water treatment regulations for large systems

C. Wastewater management practices

D. Drinking water taste and clarity

5. What does the term 'disinfection' in water treatment refer to?

A. The removal of sediments from water

B. The process of removing dissolved minerals

C. The killing or inactivation of pathogens

D. The filtration of large particles from water

6. What are suspended solids primarily responsible for in water?

A. Decreasing water temperature

B. Causing turbidity and cloudiness

C. Increasing dissolved oxygen levels

D. Filtering harmful bacteria

7. Which organism is known to cause primary amoebic meningoencephalitis?

A. Acanthamoeba

B. Naegleria fowleri

C. Entamoeba histolytica

D. Giardia lamblia

8. Which symptoms are commonly associated with Toxoplasma infection in humans?

A. Long-term fatigue and weakness

B. Flu-like symptoms

C. Severe abdominal pain

D. Skin rashes and lesions

9. Which technique is considered essential for pathogen removal in water treatment?

A. Chemical treatment

B. Biological filtration

C. Effective filtration

D. Reverse osmosis

10. In which context is the term "cyst" primarily used in relation to Giardia?

A. As a reproductive structure

B. As a pathogenic form

C. In water testing

D. In animal anatomy

Answers

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

Explanations

1. What population size defines a large water system?

A. More than 1,000 people

B. More than 5,000 people

C. More than 10,000 people

D. More than 50,000 people

A large water system is defined by the number of individuals it serves, and the correct threshold for this classification is a population size of more than 10,000 people. This distinction is important because large water systems typically have more complex regulatory requirements and operational challenges compared to smaller systems. For example, systems serving populations greater than 10,000 people are often subject to more stringent monitoring, reporting, and treatment requirements under federal and state regulations due to the larger number of consumers who could be impacted by water quality issues. This classification ensures that larger systems are equipped with the necessary infrastructure and quality assurance processes to deliver safe drinking water to a significant population. In contrast, smaller populations, such as those below this threshold, might not face the same level of regulatory scrutiny and can operate under different guidelines. Understanding this classification assists environmental health specialists in prioritizing resources and compliance activities appropriately when managing public health concerns related to drinking water.

2. What is Scripto Cryptosporidium known for?

A. Being a non-pathogenic organism

B. Being often found in contaminated water sources

C. Being a major cause of airborne diseases

D. Being linked to food poisoning in dairy products

Scripto Cryptosporidium is known primarily for being often found in contaminated water sources. This protozoan parasite is notably resilient and can survive in harsh environmental conditions, which enables it to persist in various aquatic environments. Humans and animals can contract Cryptosporidium through the ingestion of water that has been contaminated with the feces of infected individuals. This characteristic makes it a significant public health concern, particularly in areas with inadequate water treatment facilities or where recreational water activities occur in contaminated lakes or pools. The other options do not accurately reflect the characteristics or public health impact of Cryptosporidium. For instance, while the organism itself does not cause airborne diseases and is not classified as non-pathogenic, it is primarily associated with waterborne transmission rather than being a foodborne pathogen linked to dairy or other products. Understanding these key attributes of Scripto Cryptosporidium is essential for implementing effective water safety and public health interventions.

3. What are virus particles primarily composed of?

A. Protein and fatty acids

B. Genetic material

C. Cells and tissues

D. Water and sugar

Virus particles are primarily composed of genetic material, which can be either DNA or RNA. This genetic material is encapsulated in a protective protein coat called a capsid. Some viruses also have an outer envelope made of lipids, but the core component that distinguishes viruses is their genetic material, which is essential for replication and identifying the virus's specificity. The composition of proteins or fatty acids, cells and tissues, and water and sugar is either less relevant or does not accurately represent the fundamental structure of virus particles. Understanding the essential components of viruses helps in comprehending how they function, replicate, and interact with host cells, which is crucial for developing vaccines and treatments against viral infections.

4. What does the Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule aim to improve?

A. Groundwater quality standards

B. Surface water treatment regulations for large systems

C. Wastewater management practices

D. Drinking water taste and clarity

The Interim Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule focuses on improving the treatment regulations specific to surface water systems, particularly for large public water systems. This rule was established to enhance the quality of drinking water sourced from surface water, addressing both microbial contaminants, particularly pathogens, as well as improving the overall performance of water treatment processes. By setting higher treatment standards and requirements, the rule ensures that large systems utilize advanced technologies and practices to effectively manage and reduce contaminants in drinking water supplies. This is crucial, as surface water is more prone to contamination than groundwater, and thus requires stringent treatment measures to ensure safety and compliance with health standards. The goal of this rule is to reduce the risk of waterborne diseases and protect public health, hence its focus on large systems that serve numerous individuals. Other options, like groundwater quality standards or wastewater management, do not align with the specific aims of this rule, which is centered primarily around the treatment and safety of drinking water derived from surface sources.

5. What does the term 'disinfection' in water treatment refer to?

A. The removal of sediments from water

B. The process of removing dissolved minerals

C. The killing or inactivation of pathogens

D. The filtration of large particles from water

The term 'disinfection' in water treatment specifically refers to the killing or inactivation of pathogens. This is a critical step in ensuring that drinking water is safe for consumption. Pathogens, which include bacteria, viruses, and protozoa, can pose significant health risks if ingested. Disinfection aims to eliminate these harmful microorganisms to prevent waterborne diseases. The process can involve various methods such as chlorination, ultraviolet (UV) light treatment, or using ozone. Each of these methods serves to effectively neutralize pathogens while aiming to maintain the water's other qualities. In contrast, removing sediments, filtering large particles, or eliminating dissolved minerals, while essential in water treatment processes, are not considered disinfection as they do not target biological contaminants specifically. Thus, the focus on pathogen control distinctly characterizes the function of disinfection in water treatment processes.

6. What are suspended solids primarily responsible for in water?

A. Decreasing water temperature

B. Causing turbidity and cloudiness

C. Increasing dissolved oxygen levels

D. Filtering harmful bacteria

Suspended solids are primarily responsible for causing turbidity and cloudiness in water because they consist of tiny particles that remain floating in the water column. When these particles are present in significant amounts, they scatter and absorb light, reducing water clarity. This turbidity can have several implications for aquatic ecosystems as it affects the penetration of sunlight, which is essential for the photosynthesis of aquatic plants. It can also interfere with the growth and behavior of aquatic organisms, as well as complicate water treatment processes. Therefore, the presence of suspended solids directly correlates with increased turbidity, making this the correct response.

7. Which organism is known to cause primary amoebic meningoencephalitis?

A. Acanthamoeba

B. Naegleria fowleri

C. Entamoeba histolytica

D. Giardia lamblia

Naegleria fowleri is well-known as the causative agent of primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM), a rare but serious infection of the brain typically associated with warm freshwater and poorly maintained swimming pools. This free-living amoeba can enter the body through the nasal passages, often when individuals are swimming or diving in contaminated water, and then migrate to the brain, causing severe inflammation and rapid neurological decline. Acanthamoeba, while also a free-living amoeba, is primarily associated with keratitis and can cause granulomatous amebic encephalitis in immunocompromised individuals rather than PAM. Entamoeba histolytica is a protozoan parasite primarily known for causing amoebic dysentery and liver abscesses, acting mainly in the gastrointestinal tract. Giardia lamblia is another protozoan that causes giardiasis, a gastrointestinal infection characterized by diarrhea and is not involved in central nervous system infections. Therefore, Naegleria fowleri stands out clearly as the organism associated specifically with primary amoebic meningoencephalitis.

8. Which symptoms are commonly associated with Toxoplasma infection in humans?

A. Long-term fatigue and weakness

B. Flu-like symptoms

C. Severe abdominal pain

D. Skin rashes and lesions

Toxoplasma infection in humans is primarily associated with flu-like symptoms, which may include fever, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue. These symptoms often resemble those of a mild viral illness and typically occur in otherwise healthy individuals who are infected with Toxoplasma gondii, the parasite responsible for toxoplasmosis. While severe cases can lead to complications in immunocompromised patients or pregnant women, the initial response to the infection is generally mild and flu-like for the majority of the population. This understanding is crucial when assessing potential infections and their symptoms, as early identification and management can significantly mitigate complications. Other symptoms provided in the options, such as long-term fatigue and weakness, severe abdominal pain, or skin rashes and lesions, are less specific to Toxoplasma infection and could be indicative of a variety of other conditions.

9. Which technique is considered essential for pathogen removal in water treatment?

A. Chemical treatment

B. Biological filtration

C. Effective filtration

D. Reverse osmosis

The technique that is considered essential for pathogen removal in water treatment is effective filtration. Effective filtration is a critical step in various water treatment processes as it helps in physically removing pathogens, particulates, and microorganisms from water sources. This process typically involves using filter media to capture and retain contaminants while allowing clean water to pass through. Effective filtration minimizes the health risks associated with pathogenic microorganisms, ensuring that the treated water is safe for consumption and use. This technique can include activated carbon filters, membrane filters, and other filtration methods specifically designed to target different types of pathogens. While chemical treatment, biological filtration, and reverse osmosis are important in specific scenarios, they may not always be sufficient on their own for the effective removal of all pathogens. Chemical treatments, for example, can kill pathogens but may not remove them from the water. Biological filtration relies on microorganisms to degrade contaminants, which may not address all health concerns. Reverse osmosis is highly effective at removing many contaminants, including some pathogens, but requires additional processes to ensure comprehensive treatment.

10. In which context is the term "cyst" primarily used in relation to Giardia?

A. As a reproductive structure

B. As a pathogenic form

C. In water testing

D. In animal anatomy

The term "cyst" in relation to Giardia is primarily understood as a pathogenic form because it signifies a resistant form of the organism that can survive in harsh environmental conditions. Giardia lamblia, the protozoan responsible for giardiasis, exists in two stages: the trophozoite and the cyst. The cyst stage is particularly important in the context of infection; it is the form that is resistant to environmental stressors and is most commonly found in contaminated water sources. When ingested, these cysts can hatch in the intestines, leading to infection and gastrointestinal symptoms. In contrast, while the cyst can be viewed as a reproductive structure in some microorganisms, in the case of Giardia, it is not its primary function to reproduce, but rather to ensure survival and transmission. Regarding water testing, while cysts are indeed tested for in environmental health surveillance, this aspect does not capture the essence of the term's primary role in disease manifestation. Lastly, the term is not used in a significant context concerning animal anatomy in relation to Giardia specifically. Thus, the focus on the cyst's pathogenic nature highlights its critical role in the infection cycle of Giardia.

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://envihealthspecialistrehs.examzify.com

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