SCDHEC Onsite Wastewater Systems (Regulation 61-56) 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 main role of a septic tank within an onsite wastewater system?

A. To store purified water

B. To separate solids from liquids

C. To filter heavy metals

D. To disinfect wastewater

2. How often should a septic tank be pumped out?

A. Every year

B. Every 2 years

C. Every 3 to 5 years

D. Every 5 to 7 years

3. What is the primary purpose of gel coating?

A. To enhance structural integrity

B. To provide a smooth, watertight surface

C. To reduce weight in construction materials

D. To strengthen bond strength between layers

4. What condition does the presence of bluish or grayish colors in soil usually indicate?

A. High organic matter content

B. Soil nutrient depletion

C. Prolonged saturation and reduced conditions

D. Excellent drainage capabilities

5. What is a distinguishing feature of smectites in expansive soils?

A. They are non-plastic

B. They indicate high permeability

C. They are very sticky and plastic

D. They are found in sandy soils

6. What shifts the responsibility for community wastewater systems to the Department?

A. Implementation of state laws only

B. Approval of common ownership and management structures

C. Certification of all installers of the system

D. Installation of the system

7. What type of systems can Tier 1 installers manage?

A. All types of commercial wastewater systems

B. Gravity-fed residential onsite wastewater systems

C. High-tech sewage treatment plants

D. Only residential systems requiring repairs

8. What components are not part of an onsite wastewater system?

A. Grease traps and similar holding systems

B. Septic tanks and leach fields

C. Collection and treatment units for sewage

D. Residential wastewater disposal systems

9. Which aspect does not affect the performance of resin used in fiberglass products?

A. Mechanical strength

B. Color of the resin

C. Chemical and thermal performance

D. Resistance to abrasion

10. What type of wastewater does a Nonwater-Carried Sewage Treatment System NOT utilize?

A. Gray water

B. Black water

C. Any water at all

D. Aerated water

Answers

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

Explanations

1. What is the main role of a septic tank within an onsite wastewater system?

A. To store purified water

B. To separate solids from liquids

C. To filter heavy metals

D. To disinfect wastewater

The primary role of a septic tank within an onsite wastewater system is to separate solids from liquids. When wastewater enters the septic tank, it undergoes a natural process of separation. Heavier solids settle at the bottom, forming sludge, while lighter materials, like oils and grease, float to the top, creating a scum layer. The middle layer, which consists of partially clarified liquid, retains some nutrients and microorganisms. This separation process is crucial for preventing solids from entering the drain field, which could lead to clogs and system failure. Although other options involve important processes related to water management, they do not accurately describe the main function of a septic tank. For instance, septic tanks do not purify water or provide disinfection; instead, these processes occur later in the treatment sequence, primarily in the drain field or through additional treatment systems. Additionally, while septic tanks may inadvertently trap some heavy metals due to settling, their design and function are not specifically intended for filtering these substances.

2. How often should a septic tank be pumped out?

A. Every year

B. Every 2 years

C. Every 3 to 5 years

D. Every 5 to 7 years

The recommended frequency for pumping out a septic tank is generally every 3 to 5 years. This interval helps to prevent solids from building up in the tank, which can lead to clogs in the drain field and ultimately result in costly damage or system failure. Regular pumping allows for adequate function of the septic system by ensuring that the bacteria in the tank can effectively break down waste without being overwhelmed by accumulated solids. Factors influencing the pumping frequency include the tank size, the number of occupants in the household, and the amount of wastewater generated. For instance, homes with higher water usage or more occupants may need to pump their tanks more frequently within that 3 to 5-year window. This guideline serves to maintain the health and efficiency of the onsite wastewater system, supporting proper treatment of household waste.

3. What is the primary purpose of gel coating?

A. To enhance structural integrity

B. To provide a smooth, watertight surface

C. To reduce weight in construction materials

D. To strengthen bond strength between layers

The primary purpose of gel coating is to provide a smooth, watertight surface. Gel coatings are commonly used in various applications, including the manufacturing of composites, to enhance the appearance and durability of the surface. This coating not only improves the aesthetic qualities by offering a glossy finish but also acts as a protective layer that shields the underlying materials from moisture, UV radiation, and chemicals. By creating a watertight barrier, gel coatings help prevent water infiltration, which can lead to deterioration over time. In contrast, while enhancing structural integrity plays a significant role in overall material performance, it is not the primary function of gel coating. Additionally, reducing weight in construction materials addresses material efficiency rather than surface properties, which gel coating does not specifically aim to achieve. Lastly, although strengthening bond strength between layers can be important in composite construction, gel coating focuses more on surface smoothness and protection rather than reinforcing adhesive connections.

4. What condition does the presence of bluish or grayish colors in soil usually indicate?

A. High organic matter content

B. Soil nutrient depletion

C. Prolonged saturation and reduced conditions

D. Excellent drainage capabilities

The presence of bluish or grayish colors in soil typically indicates prolonged saturation and reduced conditions. This color change is often due to the lack of oxygen in the soil, which occurs when the soil is saturated for extended periods, such as during heavy rainfall or flooding. In such anaerobic conditions, iron compounds in the soil can be reduced, leading to the development of these distinct colors. In contrast, high organic matter content, soil nutrient depletion, and excellent drainage capabilities generally do not lead to bluish or grayish soil colors. High organic matter often results in darker soil, while nutrient depletion does not have a specific color indicator like bluish or grayish tones. Excellent drainage would not contribute to prolonged saturation, and thus, would not produce the color changes associated with reduced soil conditions. The unique coloration of the soil serves as a crucial indicator for soil health and water management practices, making it an essential aspect of understanding onsite wastewater system performance.

5. What is a distinguishing feature of smectites in expansive soils?

A. They are non-plastic

B. They indicate high permeability

C. They are very sticky and plastic

D. They are found in sandy soils

Smectites are a type of clay mineral commonly found in expansive soils, and a key distinguishing feature of smectites is their highly plastic and sticky nature. This plasticity is due to the unique layered structure of smectite minerals, which allows them to absorb significant amounts of water and swell. When wet, smectite clays can expand and become quite pliable, making them capable of holding together in various forms while changing consistency. This characteristic is particularly important in construction and geotechnical contexts, as it can lead to challenges such as foundation movement or structural damage due to soil expansion and contraction. The other options do not accurately describe smectites. The non-plastic nature would imply they do not retain water or change shape, which directly contradicts their expansive properties. High permeability is associated with soils that allow water to flow through easily, but smectites generally retain water, leading to low permeability in expansive clays. As for the identification of smectites in sandy soils, sandy soils typically do not possess significant amounts of smectite due to their coarser texture and lack of fine clay content. Thus, the choice identifying smectites as very sticky and plastic accurately reflects their distinct behavior and properties compared to other soil

6. What shifts the responsibility for community wastewater systems to the Department?

A. Implementation of state laws only

B. Approval of common ownership and management structures

C. Certification of all installers of the system

D. Installation of the system

The correct answer refers to the process by which community wastewater systems are officially governed and managed. When approval of common ownership and management structures occurs, it formalizes the framework within which these systems operate. This approval is significant because it establishes clear accountability and responsibility for the maintenance, operation, and regulatory compliance of the community wastewater systems. By recognizing a unified management structure, the Department can ensure that there is a designated entity responsible for the proper functioning of the system, facilitating oversight, monitoring, and adherence to state regulations. This is particularly important in the context of community systems, which need careful coordination to safeguard public health and the environment. The other options focus on different aspects that do not directly confer the responsibility of wastewater systems to the Department in the same way. While state laws, certification of installers, and installation practices are essential components of wastewater management, they do not shift ownership or management responsibility in the way that an approved management structure does.

7. What type of systems can Tier 1 installers manage?

A. All types of commercial wastewater systems

B. Gravity-fed residential onsite wastewater systems

C. High-tech sewage treatment plants

D. Only residential systems requiring repairs

Tier 1 installers are specifically trained and authorized to manage gravity-fed residential onsite wastewater systems. These systems are simpler in design and operation compared to other types of systems, making them suitable for installers at this training level. The focus on gravity-fed systems allows these installers to effectively install and maintain systems that are commonly found in residential settings, ensuring they adhere to the necessary regulations and standards outlined by SCDHEC. This specialization helps to ensure that installations are conducted safely and efficiently, reducing the risk of environmental contamination associated with improper wastewater management. The other options represent types of systems that require different levels of expertise or technology, which are not covered by the Tier 1 training.

8. What components are not part of an onsite wastewater system?

A. Grease traps and similar holding systems

B. Septic tanks and leach fields

C. Collection and treatment units for sewage

D. Residential wastewater disposal systems

The components that are typically considered part of an onsite wastewater system include septic tanks, leach fields, collection units, and treatment units specifically designed to manage wastewater from residences. Grease traps and similar holding systems, while important in managing grease and larger food particles from kitchen drainage and preventing clogs, are not generally classified as components of an onsite wastewater system in the context of Regulation 61-56. These systems are typically found in commercial kitchens or specific wastewater treatment facilities and do not directly contribute to the main residential wastewater disposal processes. Understanding the distinction between these components is key in identifying what constitutes an onsite wastewater system versus ancillary systems that may be used for specific purposes. This clarity is essential for anyone involved in the design, installation, or management of onsite wastewater systems.

9. Which aspect does not affect the performance of resin used in fiberglass products?

A. Mechanical strength

B. Color of the resin

C. Chemical and thermal performance

D. Resistance to abrasion

The color of the resin does not affect the functional performance of the resin used in fiberglass products. While color may be important for aesthetic purposes or for branding, it does not influence the mechanical strength, chemical stability, thermal performance, or resistance to abrasion. The mechanical strength of the resin impacts how well the fiberglass can withstand loads, the chemical and thermal performance determines its durability under various environmental conditions, and the resistance to abrasion is crucial for applications where the surface may experience wear and tear. These factors play a critical role in ensuring the overall functionality and longevity of fiberglass products, while the color merely serves a visual or marketing purpose.

10. What type of wastewater does a Nonwater-Carried Sewage Treatment System NOT utilize?

A. Gray water

B. Black water

C. Any water at all

D. Aerated water

A Nonwater-Carried Sewage Treatment System is designed to treat sewage without relying on water to transport the waste. This type of system typically processes solid waste directly, such as in composting toilets or incinerating toilet systems. Since the primary focus is on treating waste without the use of water, the system does not utilize any water at all, which makes the choice indicating "any water at all" correct. In this context, gray water refers to wastewater that comes from sources like sinks, showers, and washing machines, while black water pertains to waste that comes from toilets. Both types of water are associated with traditional sewage systems that use water for transportation. Aerated water might imply a process involving air injection or aeration, which is not applicable in a nonwater-carried system. Hence, it reinforces that the Nonwater-Carried Sewage Treatment System operates independently of any water use in its sewage treatment process.

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://scdhecreg6156.examzify.com

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