

SITE CHARACTERIZATION EXAM 1 PRACTICE (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



**SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE
WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS**

**VISIT US ONLINE FOR
THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE**

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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. Which description best fits in-situ sampling?

- A. Samples are removed for lab analysis
- B. Analysis is conducted on-site in a mobile lab
- C. Data are collected directly in the field at the site
- D. Samples are dried before analysis

2. In the RFI, which statement is true?

- A. The nature and extent of releases is characterized
- B. The temperature of the site is the primary factor
- C. The color of building paint defines contamination
- D. The site history is irrelevant

3. Pathways for contaminants include which of the following?

- A. Ingestion and inhalation
- B. Groundwater and soil moisture
- C. Airflow only
- D. Surface water, groundwater, and wind

4. How can groundwater flow direction be determined at a site?

- A. By measuring rainfall intensity
- B. By analyzing soil color
- C. By measuring hydraulic heads across wells and using gradient analysis; mapping head contours indicates flow direction
- D. By measuring surface temperature

5. In planning, execution, and evaluation, QA/QC should be ...

- A. Limited to planning
- B. Abbreviated
- C. Primarily ignored
- D. Implemented throughout all phases

- 6. Remedy Selection is conducted by a regulator. Which of the following is true?**
- A. A remedy is selected for the site or facility
 - B. The site owner selects the remedy without regulator involvement
 - C. The remedy is chosen by the weather
 - D. The final remedy is determined by public vote
- 7. OSHA: The Occupational Safety and Health Act.**
- A. It Regulates Consumer Product Labeling
 - B. It Governs Worker Safety Records
 - C. It Controls Environmental Cleanup Programs
 - D. It Enforces Rules to Ensure Safe and Healthful Working Conditions
- 8. The 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act add to the permit process for industries that generate air pollution and require monitoring and sampling.**
- A. The 1990 amendments add to the permit process for industries that generate air pollution and require monitoring and sampling
 - B. The amendments eliminated the permit system
 - C. The amendments focus only on water pollution
 - D. The amendments removed all monitoring requirements
- 9. Which statement about comparing roto sonic and hollow-stem auger drilling is true?**
- A. Hollow-stem auger is faster for unconsolidated soils but may not recover intact samples; roto sonic provides better core recovery in hard soils
 - B. Roto sonic is faster in all soil types and yields better cores
 - C. Hollow-stem auger always yields best cores in all soils
 - D. There is no difference between the methods
- 10. In a CERCLA Site Inspection (SI), what is a primary objective of the SI?**
- A. Determines if hazardous substances are present at the site and whether or not they are being released to the environment
 - B. The objectives of the SI are to provide a basis for ranking the site (Placement on the NPL), and to determine if immediate health or environmental risks exist requiring emergency response
 - C. Collects available information
 - D. Ranks the site solely by expected cleanup cost

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which description best fits in-situ sampling?

- A. Samples are removed for lab analysis
- B. Analysis is conducted on-site in a mobile lab
- C. Data are collected directly in the field at the site**
- D. Samples are dried before analysis

In-situ sampling means collecting measurements directly at the location of interest, in the natural environment, using portable tools so you don't move samples to a lab. That's why the best description is data collected directly in the field at the site—it captures conditions as they are without transport or alteration. Removing samples for lab analysis breaks the in-place measurement idea, since the sample is moved away from its environment. An analysis done on-site in a mobile lab is close, but it still involves processing outside the original location, whereas true in-situ emphasis is on field data collection. Drying samples before analysis is a processing step that typically happens after collection and outside the raw field conditions.

2. In the RFI, which statement is true?

- A. The nature and extent of releases is characterized**
- B. The temperature of the site is the primary factor
- C. The color of building paint defines contamination
- D. The site history is irrelevant

In an RFI, the focus is on identifying and describing releases: what contaminants were released, in what amounts, where they are located, and how far and in what media they have spread. This information provides the basis for risk assessment and planning follow-up actions. Temperature is not the primary factor in defining releases, paint color has no bearing on contamination, and site history is relevant to understanding potential releases rather than being irrelevant.

3. Pathways for contaminants include which of the following?

- A. Ingestion and inhalation
- B. Groundwater and soil moisture
- C. Airflow only
- D. Surface water, groundwater, and wind**

Pathways describe how contaminants move through the environment from a source to receptors, by traveling in environmental media. The major transport media are water and air. Contaminants can move with surface water in rivers, lakes, and streams, and they can also move with groundwater through aquifers, delivering contaminants to water supplies and ecosystems. The atmosphere carries contaminants as airborne particles or gases, allowing them to disperse over distances and eventually deposit elsewhere. This is why surface water, groundwater, and wind capture the key transport routes. Ingestion and inhalation are exposure routes—ways people or organisms come into contact with contaminants after they've moved through the environment—not the transport media themselves. Focusing only on airflow omits important waterborne pathways, and mentioning only groundwater and soil moisture leaves out surface water and the role of the atmosphere.

4. How can groundwater flow direction be determined at a site?

- A. By measuring rainfall intensity
- B. By analyzing soil color
- C. By measuring hydraulic heads across wells and using gradient analysis; mapping head contours indicates flow direction**
- D. By measuring surface temperature

Groundwater flow follows the hydraulic gradient, moving from higher hydraulic head to lower hydraulic head. To determine flow direction at a site, measure hydraulic heads at multiple wells across the area, ideally during the same groundwater conditions. Use those head values to compute the gradient between locations and plot head contours (equipotential lines) on a map. The flow direction is perpendicular to these contours, from high head toward low head, which aligns with Darcy's law that relates flow to the gradient. Rainfall intensity tells you about recharge, not the current direction of groundwater movement. Soil color doesn't indicate the subsurface hydraulic gradient, and surface temperature reflects near-surface conditions rather than subsurface flow.

5. In planning, execution, and evaluation, QA/QC should be ...

- A. Limited to planning
- B. Abbreviated
- C. Primarily ignored
- D. Implemented throughout all phases**

Quality assurance and quality control should be implemented throughout all phases of planning, execution, and evaluation. In planning, QA/QC establishes the standards, protocols, acceptance criteria, and documentation practices that guide every activity. In execution, it translates into calibration of instruments, use of field blanks and duplicates, adherence to procedures, and ongoing data checks to catch problems early. In evaluation, QA/QC verifies data integrity, assesses whether results meet quality criteria, records deviations, and drives corrective actions before reporting. This continuous application ensures data are reliable and comparable across the project, rather than being trustworthy only at the start or neglected during later stages.

6. Remedy Selection is conducted by a regulator. Which of the following is true?

- A. A remedy is selected for the site or facility**
- B. The site owner selects the remedy without regulator involvement
- C. The remedy is chosen by the weather
- D. The final remedy is determined by public vote

Remedy selection is a regulatory decision. The regulator analyzes remediation options for a site or facility, weighing factors like protectiveness, effectiveness, feasibility, and cost, along with site conditions and potential exposure pathways. While the site owner can propose options and public input may be invited, the final choice of which remedy to implement rests with the regulator. Weather does not determine the remedy, and public voting is not how the remedy is chosen. So, the statement that a remedy is selected for the site or facility by the regulator is the correct one.

7. OSHA: The Occupational Safety and Health Act.

- A. It Regulates Consumer Product Labeling
- B. It Governs Worker Safety Records
- C. It Controls Environmental Cleanup Programs
- D. It Enforces Rules to Ensure Safe and Healthful Working Conditions**

OSHA is designed to protect workers by enforcing standards that keep the workplace safe and healthy. The Occupational Safety and Health Act established OSHA to set and enforce these safety rules, inspect workplaces, and provide training and assistance to employers and employees. That focus on enforcing requirements to prevent injuries and illnesses is why this option is the best fit. Other tasks mentioned fit under different authorities—consumer product labeling is handled by agencies like the consumer product safety regulators, environmental cleanup by environmental protection agencies, and while recordkeeping is part of OSHA's duties, the core purpose emphasized here is enforcement of safety and health standards.

8. The 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act add to the permit process for industries that generate air pollution and require monitoring and sampling.

- A. The 1990 amendments add to the permit process for industries that generate air pollution and require monitoring and sampling**
- B. The amendments eliminated the permit system
- C. The amendments focus only on water pollution
- D. The amendments removed all monitoring requirements

The main idea being tested is how the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act strengthened regulation of air-polluting industries by expanding the permit framework and adding mandatory monitoring. The amendments introduced a centralized operating permit system (Title V) for major sources, ensuring facilities must hold and update permits that spell out emissions, controls, and compliance status. They also lock in ongoing monitoring, sampling, testing, and reporting to verify that facilities stay within permit limits and standards. This combination—more formal permits plus mandatory monitoring and reporting—captures the essence of the 1990 changes. This aligns with the option that describes adding to the permit process and requiring monitoring and sampling. The other statements misstate the impact: there was no elimination of the permit system, the focus is not exclusively on water pollution (that's the domain of the Clean Water Act), and monitoring requirements were not removed.

9. Which statement about comparing rotosonic and hollow-stem auger drilling is true?

- A. Hollow-stem auger is faster for unconsolidated soils but may not recover intact samples; rotosonic provides better core recovery in hard soils
- B. Rotosonic is faster in all soil types and yields better cores
- C. Hollow-stem auger always yields best cores in all soils
- D. There is no difference between the methods

The main idea is that drilling methods trade speed for sample quality depending on soil type. Hollow-stem auger often moves fastest in loose, unconsolidated soils because cuttings are easily lifted and transported to the surface, so you can advance quickly. However, in these loose conditions the sample inside a core can be disturbed or lost, leading to poorer intact core recovery. Rotosonic drilling, on the other hand, uses high-frequency vibration to reduce friction and help cut through tougher, more cohesive or dense materials, which tends to preserve and recover a better, longer continuous core in hard soils. Because of that difference, the statement correctly reflects that hollow-stem auger is faster in unconsolidated soils but may not yield intact samples, while rotosonic provides better core recovery in hard soils. The other options overstate one method's performance across all conditions or deny any difference, which don't fit how these techniques behave in varying soils.

10. In a CERCLA Site Inspection (SI), what is a primary objective of the SI?

- A. Determines if hazardous substances are present at the site and whether or not they are being released to the environment
- B. The objectives of the SI are to provide a basis for ranking the site (Placement on the NPL), and to determine if immediate health or environmental risks exist requiring emergency response
- C. Collects available information
- D. Ranks the site solely by expected cleanup cost

The main idea behind a Site Inspection is to quickly assess whether a site may pose hazards and, crucially, to translate what is found into timely programmatic decisions. In CERCLA, the SI is shaped to give enough information to determine how the site should be prioritized and whether immediate actions are needed to protect health or the environment. That means its strongest objective is to provide a basis for ranking the site on the National Priorities List and to flag any urgent risks that would require emergency response. This helps decision-makers decide if the site warrants listing and if rapid containment or cleanup actions are necessary, before moving on to more detailed studies. Collecting available information and identifying hazards are part of the process, but they serve the larger purpose of informing prioritization and urgent response needs rather than serving as ends in themselves. Ranking by cleanup cost, on the other hand, isn't the aim of the SI.

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://sitecharacterization1.examzify.com>

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

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