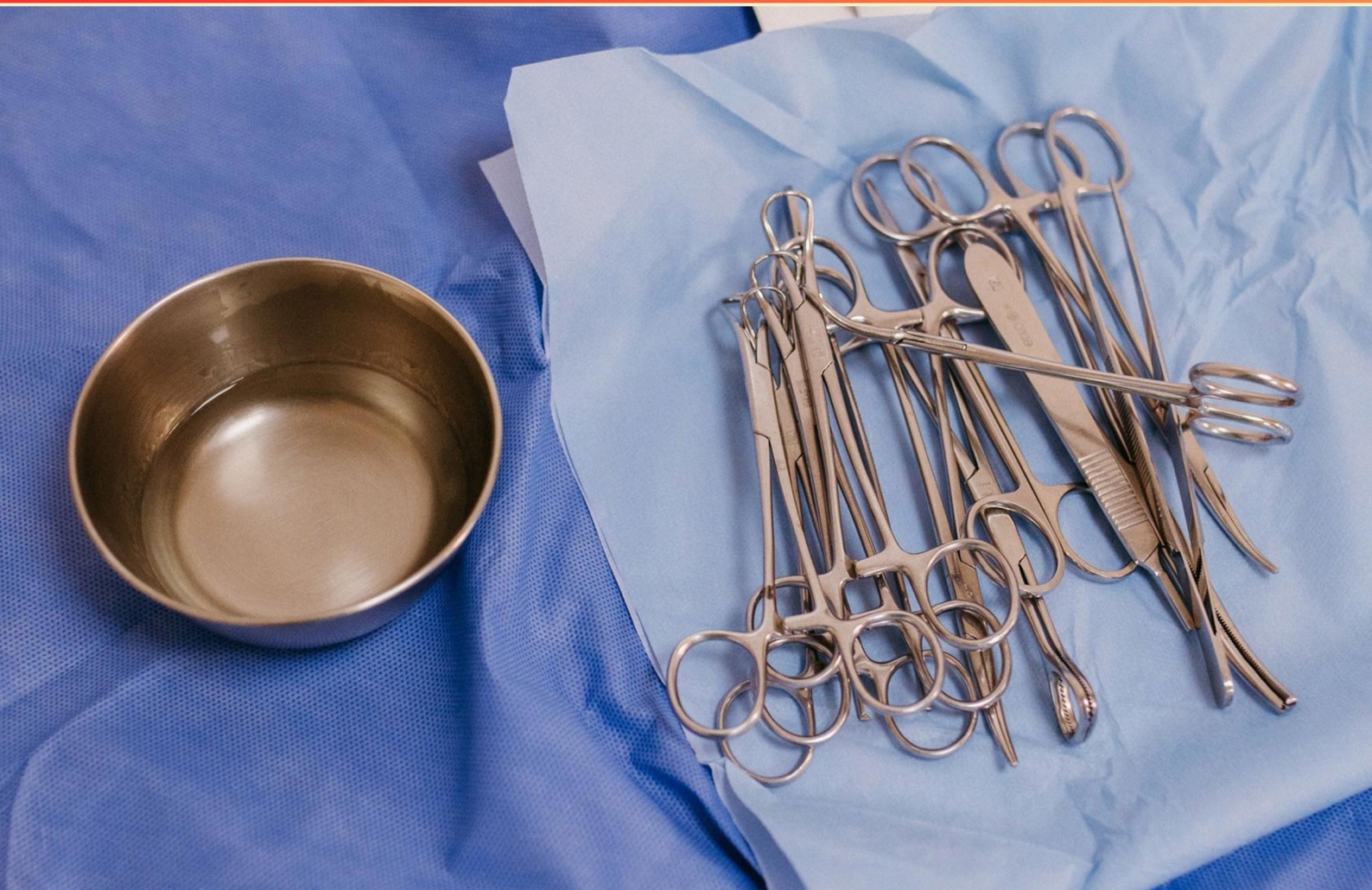


STERILE PROCESSING DEPARTMENT (SPD) CERTIFICATION PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE) STUDY GUIDE



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. What chemicals are commonly used in decontamination and what are the safety precautions?**
 - A. Enzymatic detergents; alkaline cleaners; high-level disinfectants such as glutaraldehyde or ortho-phthalaldehyde; PPE; ventilation; SDS; proper mixing; avoid mixing chemicals.
 - B. Only water and no PPE.
 - C. Mix chemicals arbitrarily without SDS.
 - D. Household cleaners.
- 2. Use life (Disinfectants) refers to which of the following?**
 - A. The length of time disinfectant can be stored
 - B. The length of time or number of uses after which efficiency diminishes
 - C. The rate of evaporation
 - D. The storage temperature requirements
- 3. How should long or wired instruments be loaded and secured in trays to avoid damage and ensure cleaning and sterilization?**
 - A. Nest all long instruments together.
 - B. Load to avoid nesting, keep lumen entries accessible, use racks or baskets, place delicate tips up or to the side, and avoid overloading.
 - C. Place tips facing down.
 - D. Overload trays.
- 4. Which agency is responsible for protecting workers from occupational illnesses and injuries?**
 - A. Department of Transportation (DOT)
 - B. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - C. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - D. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- 5. What term refers to the total number of microorganisms present on a device before sterilization?**
 - A. Bioburden
 - B. Turbidity
 - C. Contamination level
 - D. Sterility index

- 6. How is instrument set traceability maintained?**
- A. Label only the outer box.
 - B. Sets labeled with contents, set numbers or barcodes; scanned in/out; sterilization logs; patient safety.
 - C. Traceability is optional.
 - D. No labeling; rely on memory.
- 7. Which of the following is NOT a cycle phase of a steam sterilizer?**
- A. Conditioning
 - B. Exhaust
 - C. Clean
 - D. Drying
- 8. Which environmental control is included in the recommended practices for sterile storage areas?**
- A. Bright lighting throughout the storage area.
 - B. Storing packs directly on the floor.
 - C. Protection from sunlight and dust.
 - D. Temperature and humidity control, clean and dry conditions, minimal dust, proper ventilation, and protection from sunlight.
- 9. Which organization focuses on research and revised standards for use, care and processing of medical devices?**
- A. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - B. Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI)
 - C. Association of Operating Room Nurses (AORN)
 - D. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- 10. If a BI indicates a sterility failure, what is the recommended next step?**
- A. Ignore the result if the load looks fine.
 - B. Re-run all cycles immediately without investigation.
 - C. Initiate recall or salvage process according to policy, quarantine affected items, investigate root cause.
 - D. Dispose all items without attempt to salvage.

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What chemicals are commonly used in decontamination and what are the safety precautions?

- A. Enzymatic detergents; alkaline cleaners; high-level disinfectants such as glutaraldehyde or ortho-phthalaldehyde; PPE; ventilation; SDS; proper mixing; avoid mixing chemicals.**
- B. Only water and no PPE.
- C. Mix chemicals arbitrarily without SDS.
- D. Household cleaners.

Chemical decontamination relies on selecting appropriate cleaners and disinfectants for the load and following safety precautions to protect staff. Enzymatic detergents help break down organic debris, making soils easier to remove; alkaline cleaners further loosen and lift soils. For equipment that can't withstand heat sterilization, high-level disinfectants like glutaraldehyde or ortho-phthalaldehyde are used, but they require strict handling, correct contact times, and compatibility with the device. Safety measures include using the proper PPE, ensuring adequate ventilation to avoid exposure to fumes, and consulting the Safety Data Sheets for each chemical to understand hazards and first-aid steps. Proper mixing instructions must be followed, and mixing chemicals together should be avoided unless explicitly approved by label directions and the SDS. Household cleaners are not appropriate for medical device decontamination because they lack proven efficacy and the necessary safety data.

2. Use life (Disinfectants) refers to which of the following?

- A. The length of time disinfectant can be stored
- B. The length of time or number of uses after which efficiency diminishes**
- C. The rate of evaporation
- D. The storage temperature requirements

Use life describes how long a disinfectant remains effective after it has been prepared, opened, or used a certain number of times. This concept focuses on the period or the number of uses during which the product maintains its antimicrobial potency. Over time, the active ingredients can degrade, contaminants can be introduced, or dilution and evaporation can reduce concentration, all of which lessen the disinfectant's ability to kill microbes. That's why you must discard or replace it once the specified use life has elapsed to ensure proper disinfection. The other factors listed relate to different ideas: how long a product can be stored before opening (shelf life), how quickly the liquid volume or potency can drop due to evaporation (evaporation rate), or the conditions needed to store it (storage temperature).

3. How should long or wired instruments be loaded and secured in trays to avoid damage and ensure cleaning and sterilization?

- A. Nest all long instruments together.
- B. Load to avoid nesting, keep lumen entries accessible, use racks or baskets, place delicate tips up or to the side, and avoid overloading.**
- C. Place tips facing down.
- D. Overload trays.

Long or wired instruments must be loaded so they stay separated and secure, protecting delicate parts and allowing effective cleaning and sterilization. Avoid nesting—when instruments nest together, they can bend, chip tips, trap debris, and prevent detergents or sterilant from reaching all surfaces. Keep lumen entries accessible so cleaning agents can flush through and verification can occur, ensuring hollow shafts are clear. Use racks or baskets to maintain separation and prevent movement during cycles. Place delicate tips up or to the side to prevent bending or contact with other instruments. And avoid overloading the tray, which restricts circulation of cleaning agents and sterilant and can leave areas inadequately treated. Putting instruments in a nested arrangement, tipping tips downward, or packing trays too full increases the risk of damage and compromises cleaning and sterilization.

4. Which agency is responsible for protecting workers from occupational illnesses and injuries?

- A. Department of Transportation (DOT)
- B. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- C. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- D. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**

Safety in the workplace is protected by an agency that writes rules, inspects sites, and enforces compliance to prevent injuries and illnesses. That agency is OSHA. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is the part of the federal Department of Labor dedicated to ensuring safe and healthy working conditions. It creates standards on areas like hazard communication, machine guarding, respiratory protection, and bloodborne pathogens, and it requires employers to maintain safe workplaces, train employees, and keep records of injuries and illnesses. OSHA also conducts inspections and can issue citations or penalties to ensure compliance. The other agencies have different primary focuses: the DOT regulates transportation safety; the CDC focuses on public health surveillance and disease prevention; the EPA protects environmental quality. In workplaces such as healthcare or sterile processing, OSHA governs the safety practices that protect workers from occupational hazards.

5. What term refers to the total number of microorganisms present on a device before sterilization?

- A. Bioburden
- B. Turbidity
- C. Contamination level
- D. Sterility index

Bioburden is the total number of viable microorganisms present on a device before sterilization. It covers the actual microbial load that the sterilization process must overcome, including bacteria, fungi, and spores that may be on instruments from manufacturing or prior use. This concept is central to sterilization validation because knowing the pre-sterilization load helps determine the necessary sterilization parameters and the level of microbial reduction needed to achieve sterility assurance. Turbidity describes the cloudiness of a liquid culture that indicates microbial growth, not the initial load on a device. Contamination level is a general term and not a standardized measure for pre-sterilization microbial burden. Sterility index isn't a standard term used to quantify pre-sterilization contamination. So, bioburden best describes the pre-sterilization microbial population.

6. How is instrument set traceability maintained?

- A. Label only the outer box.
- B. Sets labeled with contents, set numbers or barcodes; scanned in/out; sterilization logs; patient safety.
- C. Traceability is optional.
- D. No labeling; rely on memory.

Maintaining instrument set traceability hinges on creating a traceable identity for each set and recording its handling through every processing step. The best approach labels sets with their contents and a unique set number or barcode, then scans the set in and out at each stage and captures sterilization cycle logs and delivery details. This creates an auditable chain of custody so you know exactly what's in the set, when it was sterilized, who processed it, and when it reached the patient's environment, which protects patient safety. Labeling only the outer box can fail if the box is opened, contents are swapped, or multiple sets share a box, making traceability incomplete. Traceability is not optional, and relying on memory or omitting labeling fails to provide the necessary, verifiable records.

7. Which of the following is NOT a cycle phase of a steam sterilizer?

- A. Conditioning
- B. Exhaust
- C. Clean
- D. Drying

Steam sterilizer cycles flow through four main phases: conditioning, exposure, exhaust, and drying. Conditioning warms the chamber, removes air, and prepares the load so that steam can penetrate properly. Exposure is the actual sterilization step, where the load is held at the target temperature for the required time to inactivate microorganisms. Exhaust then removes steam and gases from the chamber, helping to stop the exposure and start the drying process. Drying uses heat and often a vacuum to remove moisture so the load exits dry and ready for handling. Cleaning, on the other hand, is done prior to the sterilizer cycle in the decontamination process; it is not considered one of the cycle phases. Therefore, the option that is not a cycle phase is cleaning.

8. Which environmental control is included in the recommended practices for sterile storage areas?

- A. Bright lighting throughout the storage area.
- B. Storing packs directly on the floor.
- C. Protection from sunlight and dust.
- D. Temperature and humidity control, clean and dry conditions, minimal dust, proper ventilation, and protection from sunlight.**

Environmental control in sterile storage areas keeps stored items sterile by managing moisture, dust, air quality, and light exposure. The best approach includes regulating temperature and humidity to prevent condensation and microbial growth, maintaining clean and dry conditions to avoid moisture and dirt, minimizing dust to reduce particulates that can contaminate packs, ensuring proper ventilation to keep air moving and limit stagnant air, and protecting items from sunlight to prevent degradation and UV damage. Together, these controls address the main ways the environment can compromise sterility during storage. Lacking them—such as relying only on bright lighting, storing packs directly on the floor, or neglecting ventilation and sunlight protection—can lead to moisture buildup, contamination, packaging damage, and degraded sterility.

9. Which organization focuses on research and revised standards for use, care and processing of medical devices?

- A. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- B. Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI)**
- C. Association of Operating Room Nurses (AORN)
- D. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Standards development and revision for how medical devices are used, cared for, and processed is the focus here. The organization that concentrates its work on researching and updating these standards is the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation. AAMI develops and maintains guidelines for device safety and performance, including the cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization of reusable equipment, and it actively updates these standards as new evidence and technologies emerge. In everyday SPD practice, you'll see AAMI standards referenced as authoritative requirements, such as those guiding reprocessing workflows and device handling. Other groups have different primary roles: the CDC emphasizes infection prevention and public health guidance, AORN focuses on perioperative nursing practice and operating room workflows, and OSHA governs workplace safety and occupational protection.

10. If a BI indicates a sterility failure, what is the recommended next step?

- A. Ignore the result if the load looks fine.
- B. Re-run all cycles immediately without investigation.
- C. Initiate recall or salvage process according to policy, quarantine affected items, investigate root cause.**
- D. Dispose all items without attempt to salvage.

When a biological indicator indicates a sterility failure, the primary concern is patient safety. That result means the sterilization cycle may not have achieved the required kill, so you cannot assume items are sterile. Containment and documentation come first: quarantine the affected items, clearly segregate them from usable stock, and prevent their use. Notify the appropriate supervisor or chain of command and document the BI result in the sterile processing records and BI log. Follow the facility's policy for action: initiate recall or salvage procedures as directed, assess whether items can be salvaged or must be disposed of, and arrange any needed traceability. A root-cause investigation should be started to determine what failed—review cycle parameters (time, temperature, pressure), sterilizer performance data, load contents and packaging integrity, BI test validity, and related processing steps. The investigation should also assess environmental factors and equipment maintenance records to identify and correct the underlying issue. This approach ensures unsafe items are not released, while allowing appropriate salvage or recall actions to protect patients and maintain regulatory and quality standards. Re-running cycles without stopping to investigate risks repeating the failure; ignoring the result is unsafe; disposing all items without policy guidance would be inappropriate.

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://spdcert.examzify.com>

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

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