Structural Search and Rescue (SAR) 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. Under normal conditions, air management increases your work time, but if you are lost or trapped, it:

A. Extends your ability to operate longer in place

B. Decreases your energy consumption

C. Has no impact on survival time

D. Increases the amount of time you can survive before escaping or being rescued

2. Actions such as opening a bypass valve on a cylinder, sharing air, and breathing directly from the cylinder are:

A. Harsh safety violations.

B. Possible solutions to air emergencies.

C. Unacceptable under any circumstances.

D. Procedures to terminate operations.

3. How does staying low to the floor improve survivability?

A. Temperatures are cooler and air may be less contaminated

B. You are less visible to responders

C. It improves oxygen intake

D. It is louder and audible to others

4. Which basic firefighting skill serves as an essential survival skill during search and rescue operations?

A. Maintaining situational awareness

B. Forcing a window or cutting through debris

C. Deploying a hoseline

D. Ventilating a room

5. Which statement about air-monitoring device safety is true?

A. They are foolproof.

B. They must be calibrated only yearly.

C. They may be unsafe if used incorrectly, jeopardizing safety.

D. They never fail.

6. The four steps involved in VEIS are:

A. Vent, Evacuate, Isolate, Suppress

B. Vent, Enter, Isolate, Search

C. Ventilate, Enter, Isolate, Scan

D. Vent, Inspect, Isolate, Seek

7. A primary search is:

A. A quick exterior sweep

B. A search limited to a single room

C. A search after overhaul

D. A fast, thorough search performed either before or during fire suppression operations

8. What should RIC do while searching for a downed firefighter to maintain safety?

A. Stop frequently and briefly remain silent

B. Shout instructions loudly to guide others

C. Move as quickly as possible without pause

D. Ignore environmental changes

9. If an exterior wall must be breached during search and rescue operations, rescue personnel:

A. Breach immediately to gain access

B. breach only after a full search of the exterior perimeter

C. Notify the building owner before any action

D. Must coordinate with the IC and ventilation teams before making the opening

10. A minimum of ___ firefighters are needed to perform VEIS if using a ladder.

A. Three

B. Two

C. Four

D. Five

Answers

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

Explanations

1. Under normal conditions, air management increases your work time, but if you are lost or trapped, it:

A. Extends your ability to operate longer in place

B. Decreases your energy consumption

C. Has no impact on survival time

D. Increases the amount of time you can survive before escaping or being rescued

Air management is about pacing and conserving the air you have so you can keep working longer when you're actively moving or performing tasks. In normal conditions, reducing exertion, taking controlled breaths, and resting when possible stretch the time you can operate on a given cylinder. But when you're lost or trapped, your survival time is driven more by environmental hazards, exposure, injuries, and how quickly you can alert rescuers or escape than by how efficiently you breathe. The amount of time you can survive in such a situation is limited by the overall conditions and the rescue timeline, not by air-conservation tricks alone. So, while air management helps you work longer under normal task load, it doesn't meaningfully extend how long you can survive once you're stuck or lost. Focus in such moments shifts to signaling for help, staying warm, conserving energy, and prioritizing escape or rescue.

2. Actions such as opening a bypass valve on a cylinder, sharing air, and breathing directly from the cylinder are:

A. Harsh safety violations.

B. Possible solutions to air emergencies.

C. Unacceptable under any circumstances.

D. Procedures to terminate operations.

When facing an air emergency, the focus is on securing breathable air through emergency options rather than normal, everyday procedures. Opening a bypass valve on the cylinder can route air around the regulator, providing flow when the regulator isn't delivering air properly. Sharing air with a buddy is a way to use another air source to extend breathing time while moving to safety. Breathing directly from the cylinder is a last-resort option to obtain air if the regulator is unavailable, allowing a brief continuation of breathing while planning an exit. These actions are contingency measures used in critical situations to preserve life, not standard procedures, and they are not simply harsh violations or generic steps to terminate operations. They require proper training and strict safety considerations.

3. How does staying low to the floor improve survivability?

A. Temperatures are cooler and air may be less contaminated

B. You are less visible to responders

C. It improves oxygen intake

D. It is louder and audible to others

Staying low takes advantage of how heat and smoke behave in a fire or smoky environment. Hot gases and most of the smoke rise, leaving cooler, cleaner air near the floor. By staying down, you're breathing air that's less contaminated and experience less radiant heat, which lowers the risk of burns and inhalation injuries. That's why the answer focusing on cooler temperatures and air that may be less contaminated is the best choice. The other ideas don't address the main danger in these situations—heat and smoke—so they don't explain why staying low improves survivability.

4. Which basic firefighting skill serves as an essential survival skill during search and rescue operations?

A. Maintaining situational awareness

B. Forcing a window or cutting through debris

C. Deploying a hoseline

D. Ventilating a room

Creating a quick, controllable path to safety is the key survival ability in a fire-ground search and rescue. Forcing a window or cutting through debris is that direct, hands-on skill: it lets you rapidly breach barriers to reach a victim or to escape deteriorating conditions when doors are blocked or unusable. This capability provides immediate access or exit, which can be the difference between getting to someone in need or getting out alive yourself. Maintaining situational awareness matters for safety and planning, and deploying a hoseline or ventilating a room are important firefighting tasks, but they don't address the need for a fast, reliable means to enter or escape a dangerous area as effectively as forcible entry does.

5. Which statement about air-monitoring device safety is true?

A. They are foolproof.

B. They must be calibrated only yearly.

C. They may be unsafe if used incorrectly, jeopardizing safety.

D. They never fail.

Air-monitoring devices are essential safety tools, but they're not infallible. Their readings depend on proper use and regular maintenance. Sensors can drift over time, pumps or batteries can fail, and calibration or bump testing might be skipped or performed incorrectly. Environmental conditions, sensor poisoning, or exposure to gases outside what the sensor can detect can also distort readings. Because of these possibilities, the devices can be unsafe if used incorrectly, which is why a careless approach to calibration, testing, or interpretation can jeopardize safety. In short, these tools enhance safety when used correctly and maintained, but they do not guarantee safety on their own.

6. The four steps involved in VEIS are:

A. Vent, Evacuate, Isolate, Suppress

B. Vent, Enter, Isolate, Search

C. Ventilate, Enter, Isolate, Scan

D. Vent, Inspect, Isolate, Seek

VEIS is a structured rescue approach used to safely search in a potentially hazardous environment. The sequence focuses on steps that prepare the interior for safe entry and systematic searching: first Ventilate to purge heat and contaminants and improve air quality and visibility; then Enter to begin the interior operation with the safety plan in place; then Isolate to control the scene—secure the area, close doors, and limit the spread of hazards; and finally Search to locate victims and assess hazards inside. This order matters because improving air quality and visibility before entry, and containing hazards before performing a search, are what make the rescue operation safer and more effective. The phrasing Vent, Enter, Isolate, Search matches this standard sequence.

7. A primary search is:

A. A quick exterior sweep

B. A search limited to a single room

C. A search after overhaul

D. A fast, thorough search performed either before or during fire suppression operations

A primary search is an interior, rapid yet thorough check for occupants conducted during active fire suppression or just before it begins, with the goal of locating and removing anyone in danger as quickly as possible. The emphasis is on speed and completeness relevant to life safety, not on a casual look. Conducting it before or during suppression ensures responders find people early, coordinate rescue with attack operations, and maximize chances of a safe exit for occupants. This isn't just a quick exterior sweep, and it isn't limited to one room. It targets likely areas where people might be found—such as bedrooms and hallways on the path to egress—while maintaining safety and awareness of fire and structural conditions. A later, more thorough or different-type search would occur after the fire is under control (overhaul) or once occupants have been accounted for, which is why the primary search is distinguished by its timing and interior, life-safety focus.

8. What should RIC do while searching for a downed firefighter to maintain safety?

A. Stop frequently and briefly remain silent

B. Shout instructions loudly to guide others

C. Move as quickly as possible without pause

D. Ignore environmental changes

The main idea is that safety on an interior search mission depends on pausing to reassess and listen, so the crew can detect the downed firefighter, hear any calls or sounds, and observe evolving conditions without rushing ahead. Stopping frequently and briefly remaining silent gives the team a chance to pick up any signals from the trapped person, note changes in heat, smoke, or gas, and recheck their path and air supply. It also helps reduce unnecessary noise that could mask important cues and keeps radio communications clearer for coordination as needed. Shouting instructions loudly can create confusion and waste valuable air, and it can drown out important sounds from the victim or other warnings. Moving as quickly as possible without pause invites missed hazards, disorientation, and premature exhaustion, jeopardizing both the search and the rescuer. Ignoring environmental changes leaves the team exposed to sudden risks like heat buildup, smoke progression, or compromised structural integrity.

9. If an exterior wall must be breached during search and rescue operations, rescue personnel:

A. Breach immediately to gain access

B. breach only after a full search of the exterior perimeter

C. Notify the building owner before any action

D. Must coordinate with the IC and ventilation teams before making the opening

Coordinating with the incident commander and the ventilation teams before making any exterior wall opening is essential for safe and effective rescue operations. The incident commander oversees the overall plan and safety priorities, ensuring that a wall breach fits into the tactical objectives and does not create uncontrolled risk. Ventilation teams manage air flow, smoke, heat, and pressure differentials to prevent dangerous conditions such as backdraft, flashover, or smoke spreading to firefighters and trapped civilians. By aligning the breach with the IAP and ventilation strategy, rescuers can choose the opening location and method to minimize hazards, maintain a breathable environment for teams inside, and preserve the structural stability as much as possible. This coordinated approach also improves communication, accountability, and scene control, which are critical when every move can change the fire behavior and victim access. Jumping ahead without IC and ventilation input can cause unpredictable air movement, place rescuers at risk, and undermine the overall rescue effort.

10. A minimum of ____ firefighters are needed to perform VEIS if using a ladder.

A. Three

B. Two

C. Four

D. Five

VEIS relies on coordinating ventilation, entry, and search while keeping the ladder stable and the scene under control. When a ladder is in use, you need a team that can cover each of these tasks without leaving anyone unsafe or operations stalled. One firefighter on the ladder handles the ventilation task, establishing and maintaining the required opening and airflow. Inside, another firefighter performs the search and helps with entry, advancing toward the fire room and locating possible victims or occupants. A third firefighter stays outside to manage scene safety, assist with door control and access, and support the overall operation as needed. Having this three-person combination ensures ventilation can begin promptly, interior search can start without delay, and ladder safety and exterior coordination are maintained. If fewer firefighters are available, critical tasks may be delayed or safety could be compromised. Conversely, more personnel can add safety margins, but the minimum required arrangement is this distribution of roles.

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://structuralsar.examzify.com

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