

# Union Pacific (UP) Return to Work 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. 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. Under blue flag conditions, when may you release the hand brakes on your train?**
  - A. Immediately after the flag is placed.**
  - B. Never; hand brakes must remain released.**
  - C. When the locomotive is started.**
  - D. Only if directed by the employee who placed the blue flag or the EIC.**
  
- 2. Your train received a class 1 air brake test and inspection before departing its initial terminal. After you set out cars from the train, what air brake test will be required?**
  - A. Class 3 Application and Release**
  - B. Class 2 Release**
  - C. Class 1 Re-test**
  - D. Full service test**
  
- 3. Before performing the hand operation on a switch for a controlled siding pickup, which three elements must you obtain from the dispatcher?**
  - A. Job brief with dispatcher on moves to be made, receive authority to enter control point, and receive permission to place the switch in hand operation.**
  - B. Only permission from supervisor.**
  - C. Only with radio.**
  - D. Only with sign-off.**
  
- 4. After passing an Approach signal and reducing speed to 30 mph, you see a Clear signal ahead. After briefing with the crew, when can you resume speed?**
  - A. Immediately to the maximum speed of the train.**
  - B. Maintain 30 mph until the next signal changes.**
  - C. Resume at the top speed permitted by the signal.**
  - D. Wait for dispatcher permission before resuming any acceleration.**

- 5. Who may authorize releasing hand brakes on a blue-flagged train?**
- A. The employee who placed the blue flag or the EIC of the employees working on the blue-flagged train.**
  - B. Any supervisor.**
  - C. The conductor only.**
  - D. The dispatcher.**
- 6. How should you respond to an instruction that asks you to leave a derail in non-derailing position if that contradicts safe operating rules?**
- A. Tell him you can't**
  - B. Do it anyway**
  - C. Review with a supervisor**
  - D. Ignore and proceed**
- 7. The MYO instructs you to leave the derail in the non-derailing position at the east end of the yard when finished with your work. How should you respond?**
- A. Tell him you can't**
  - B. Follow the instruction**
  - C. Ignore the instruction**
  - D. Report to supervision after**
- 8. What information is required on an air slip for a Transfer Train Movement Air Test?**
- A. No slip required**
  - B. Car numbers and air pressures**
  - C. Conductor signature**
  - D. The slip must include all car numbers and pressures**
- 9. The Good Faith Challenge covers which operations?**
- A. Shoving, leaving in the foul, switches and derails**
  - B. Signals and protect rail cars**
  - C. Track maintenance procedures**
  - D. Yard switching sequences**

**10. How far behind a derail in the derauling position must you stop?**

- A. 50 feet**
- B. 150 feet**
- C. 200 feet**
- D. 100 feet**

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## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Under blue flag conditions, when may you release the hand brakes on your train?**

- A. Immediately after the flag is placed.**
- B. Never; hand brakes must remain released.**
- C. When the locomotive is started.**
- D. Only if directed by the employee who placed the blue flag or the EIC.**

Blue flag protection means the track is safeguarded and no train movement should occur until someone in charge authorizes it. The person who placed the blue flag, or the engineer/employee in charge, has the authority to direct when it is safe to release the hand brakes and proceed. Releasing hand brakes without that explicit direction could move equipment into a protected area and endanger workers, so movement—or release of brakes—is only allowed when specifically instructed by the flagger or the EIC. This is why you must await their directive before releasing the hand brakes. The other scenarios would bypass the required authorization.

**2. Your train received a class 1 air brake test and inspection before departing its initial terminal. After you set out cars from the train, what air brake test will be required?**

- A. Class 3 Application and Release**
- B. Class 2 Release**
- C. Class 1 Re-test**
- D. Full service test**

When the train's makeup changes, you need a fresh air brake check to confirm the brakes still work properly on the new configuration. After setting out cars, the required test is the Class 3 Application and Release. This test checks that brakes on the remaining portion of the train apply correctly and then release, ensuring there are no leaks or stuck brakes and that the system responds as it should with the changed train length. It's a targeted check for changes in the train consist, quicker than a full-service recheck. Other tests aren't the best fit here. A full-service test is more comprehensive than necessary for simply removing cars. A release-only test wouldn't verify that the brakes actually apply. Re-running the initial Class 1 test wouldn't reflect the new train configuration.

**3. Before performing the hand operation on a switch for a controlled siding pickup, which three elements must you obtain from the dispatcher?**

- A. Job brief with dispatcher on moves to be made, receive authority to enter control point, and receive permission to place the switch in hand operation.**
- B. Only permission from supervisor.**
- C. Only with radio.**
- D. Only with sign-off.**

Before you can perform a hand operation on a switch for a controlled siding pickup, you must have complete authorization and a clear plan from the dispatcher. The dispatcher's job brief lays out the moves to be made, so you know exactly what trains or engines will be active, what routes are involved, and the sequence of work. This keeps you informed about the scope and timing of operations and helps prevent conflicts with other movements. You also need explicit authority to enter the control point. This gives you legal clearance to be at the location where the switch control is, ensuring you're protected and that your presence is coordinated with the overall track authority and signal system. Finally, you must have permission to place the switch in hand operation. This confirms you are authorized to physically set the switch and that you're performing this action under the dispatcher's instructions and with the proper safety protections in place. Other options fall short because they don't guarantee all three elements together. A supervisor's permission alone doesn't provide the job plan or control-point access, and a radio or sign-off by itself doesn't ensure you have the complete, dispatcher-authorized plan, control-point entry, and switch-hand-operation permission.

**4. After passing an Approach signal and reducing speed to 30 mph, you see a Clear signal ahead. After briefing with the crew, when can you resume speed?**

- A. Immediately to the maximum speed of the train.**
- B. Maintain 30 mph until the next signal changes.**
- C. Resume at the top speed permitted by the signal.**
- D. Wait for dispatcher permission before resuming any acceleration.**

When a signal clears, you have authorization to proceed, but only up to the speed shown as allowed for that signal in the current block. After an Approach signal you were limited to 30 mph to ensure you can respond to the upcoming signal. Seeing a Clear signal means the restriction is lifted for the next block, so you may accelerate again—but to the top speed permitted by that signal for the area you're entering. This keeps you within the official track speed limits and within safe stopping distances. So the best approach is to resume at the maximum speed allowed by the signal you've just received, not the train's absolute top speed or a fixed earlier limit. Dispatcher permission isn't required for routine movement once the signal is Clear, and maintaining 30 mph would unnecessarily underutilize the line's available speed.

**5. Who may authorize releasing hand brakes on a blue-flagged train?**

- A. The employee who placed the blue flag or the EIC of the employees working on the blue-flagged train.**
- B. Any supervisor.**
- C. The conductor only.**
- D. The dispatcher.**

Blue-flag protection stops movement to protect workers. Releasing hand brakes is a movement-related action that should only occur when it's safe to proceed, under the control of the person who placed the blue flag or the Employee In Charge (EIC) of the crew working on the blue-flagged train. The flag placer or the EIC are responsible for confirming all safety conditions are met before any movement, so they are the ones authorized to release the brakes. Supervisors, dispatchers, or conductors don't automatically have that authority unless they are the flag placer or acting as the EIC.

**6. How should you respond to an instruction that asks you to leave a derail in non-derailing position if that contradicts safe operating rules?**

- A. Tell him you can't**
- B. Do it anyway**
- C. Review with a supervisor**
- D. Ignore and proceed**

The main idea here is that safety rules override any instruction that would put people or equipment at risk. If someone asks you to leave a derail in a non-derailing position, that goes against established safe operating procedures and creates a clear hazard. The correct response is to refuse, saying you can't comply because it's unsafe and not allowed by the rules. This protects workers and prevents potential accidents. If there's doubt or you need a higher-level decision, you can involve a supervisor to review the situation and determine the proper course of action, but your immediate action should be to refuse the unsafe instruction and communicate that you cannot proceed with it. The other options would either involve acting against safety rules or ignoring the risk, which is unacceptable in any safety-critical environment.

**7. The MYO instructs you to leave the derail in the non-derailing position at the east end of the yard when finished with your work. How should you respond?**

- A. Tell him you can't**
- B. Follow the instruction**
- C. Ignore the instruction**
- D. Report to supervision after**

When safety or procedure is at stake, you must not follow an instruction that could create an unsafe condition. The correct approach is to tell him you can't comply with leaving the derail in that position and seek the proper confirmation or authorization from supervision or follow the established SOP. This sets a clear safety boundary, ensures the operation aligns with yard rules, and prompts the appropriate review to resolve the situation. Leaving a derail in a non-derailing position without authorization could allow movement that wasn't approved or could create an unexpected hazard in the yard. Stopping and escalating ensures proper control and protection for everyone on site.

**8. What information is required on an air slip for a Transfer Train Movement Air Test?**

- A. No slip required**
- B. Car numbers and air pressures**
- C. Conductor signature**
- D. The slip must include all car numbers and pressures**

For this Transfer Train Movement Air Test, no slip is required. The idea is that, for this specific operation, there isn't a need to record per-car data on a separate slip. The test is handled within the standard transfer move process, and the verification of the air brake system is captured through the movement procedure or other official records rather than a dedicated air slip. If a slip were used, it would typically list each car number and its corresponding air pressures and might include a conductor's signature. But for this scenario, those details aren't needed on a slip because the procedure relies on the transfer move's usual documentation channels.

**9. The Good Faith Challenge covers which operations?**

- A. Shoving, leaving in the foul, switches and derails**
- B. Signals and protect rail cars**
- C. Track maintenance procedures**
- D. Yard switching sequences**

Good Faith Challenge is about stopping unsafe acts during real-time operations. It applies to actions with immediate safety risks to people and equipment, such as moving cars by shoving, leaving a car fouling the track, and the conditions around switches and derails. These scenarios can lead to runaway movements, derailments, or injuries if not checked, so a worker steps in in good faith to pause the action, verify everyone's clear, and ensure proper protections are in place. Other options involve signaling, protection procedures, track maintenance, or yard sequencing—important topics, but they don't capture the specific, high-risk operations where a good-faith challenge is most critical.

**10. How far behind a derail in the derailing position must you stop?**

- A. 50 feet**
- B. 150 feet**
- C. 200 feet**
- D. 100 feet**

The main idea is keeping a safe stopping distance behind a derail that's in the derailing position. A derail is set to intentionally derail equipment to protect against a collision, and when it's in that active position there's a risk of unexpected movement, debris, or the derail mechanism itself. To reduce the chance of being struck or fouling the track, you must stop far enough back to have time to react and to stay out of the derail's zone. 100 feet is the standard minimum distance prescribed. It gives you enough space to see what's happening, brake safely, and move if needed, while staying clear of any potential movement of a derailed car or the derail equipment. Stopping only 50 feet away would leave insufficient clearance and reaction time. Stopping much farther than 100 feet isn't the mandated distance, even though it would be safe; the rule specifies 100 feet.

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## 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](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**<https://upreturntowork.examzify.com>**

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

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