United States Parachute Association (USPA) A License 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. Don't worry about getting everything right, 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, and take breaks to retain information better.

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.

7. Use Other Tools

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. **At 10,000 feet MSL and above, what are the minimum visibility requirements?**

   A. Two miles

   B. Three miles

   C. Five miles

   D. Seven miles

2. **What is the minimum pull altitude permitted for student skydivers and A license holders?**

   A. 2,500 feet

   B. 3,000 feet

   C. 3,500 feet

   D. 4,000 feet

3. **How do higher wind speeds influence the planned landing pattern?**

   A. They lengthen all legs of the pattern

   B. They create a longer downwind leg and shorter final approach

   C. They have no effect on the landing pattern

   D. They shorten the final approach, lengthen the downwind leg, and adjust pattern entry

4. **How should you steer a parachute with a broken brake line?**

   A. Use the front risers to change direction

   B. Release both brakes and use the back risers

   C. Pull down on the steering toggles

   D. Drop the parachute and use a backup

5. **What is the biggest danger to a jumper when flying the canopy pattern?**

   A. Other jumpers

   B. Weather conditions

   C. Aircraft altitude

   D. Equipment failure

6. What is the best way to change the direction of canopy flight while conserving the most altitude?

A. Sharp turns

B. Braked turns

C. Full-stall turns

D. Slight turns

7. What does the 'check of threes' involve?

A. Three types of parachutes used per jump

B. Checking three key points of equipment and harness

C. Reviewing three ground landing techniques

D. Three jumpers teaming up for safety checks

8. How can you minimize the risk of landing injuries?

A. Jump from a higher altitude

B. Practice correct landing techniques and maintain physical fitness

C. Always land at a designated drop zone

D. Hold onto your parachute until you land

9. What action should be taken if a good canopy is turning during descent?

A. Cut away the main canopy

B. Pump rear risers or steering controls

C. Release the harness and freefall

D. Hold still and wait for stabilization

10. What should a jumper do if they need to cut away after landing on a building?

A. Attach to another jumper

B. Immediately pull the cutaway handle

C. Wait for help before making a decision

D. Perform a PLF

Answers

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

Explanations

1. At 10,000 feet MSL and above, what are the minimum visibility requirements?

A. Two miles

B. Three miles

C. Five miles

D. Seven miles

At 10,000 feet Mean Sea Level (MSL) and above, the minimum visibility requirement is indeed five miles. This standard is established to ensure that pilots and jumpers have adequate sight lines to safely navigate and assess their surroundings while in flight and during landing. Visibility is crucial for maintaining situational awareness; as altitude increases, the visibility requirements also emphasize the need for a better field of view due to the potential for more complex airspace interactions. The five-mile requirement helps ensure that jumpers can spot their intended landing area and any other aircraft or obstructions that may be in the vicinity. This standard is especially important for operations involving multiple aircraft and skydivers to ensure safety by reducing the chances of mid-air collisions or other incidents. In contrast, the other visibility options are lower than the established requirement at this altitude, which could potentially compromise safety by limiting the ability to see and react to surrounding conditions. Thus, adherence to the five-mile visibility standard is vital for safe jumping and flight operations.

2. What is the minimum pull altitude permitted for student skydivers and A license holders?

A. 2,500 feet

B. 3,000 feet

C. 3,500 feet

D. 4,000 feet

The minimum pull altitude for student skydivers and A license holders is set at 3,000 feet above ground level. This altitude is established to ensure that parachutists have adequate time to deploy their canopy and, should any issues arise, enough altitude for a safe emergency procedure. Pulling at this altitude allows for a margin of safety, as it gives skydivers the opportunity to respond to any malfunctions with their equipment. Higher altitudes than this are typically reserved for experienced skydivers or specialized jumps and maneuvers, but for those who are still in the training phase or have just achieved their A license, 3,000 feet strikes a balance between safety and practical jump experience. Altitudes lower than this might not provide sufficient time to handle unexpected situations that could arise during a skydive.

3. How do higher wind speeds influence the planned landing pattern?

A. They lengthen all legs of the pattern

B. They create a longer downwind leg and shorter final approach

C. They have no effect on the landing pattern

D. They shorten the final approach, lengthen the downwind leg, and adjust pattern entry

Higher wind speeds significantly affect the planned landing pattern, particularly by lengthening the downwind leg while shortening the final approach. When jumping with higher winds, the parachutist experiences increased ground speed. This means that while flying downwind—where the wind is at their back—parachutists cover more distance than they would in calmer conditions. As a result, the downwind leg must be longer to account for this increased speed, allowing the parachutist to maintain control and properly align for landing. On the other hand, the final approach, which is the leg where the parachutist transitions from horizontal flight to vertical descent before landing, becomes shorter because they are moving faster over the ground. The parachutist must also adjust their entry into the landing pattern to ensure safe descent and landing, taking into account both their speed and height above ground. This adjustment is vital for maintaining a safe and accurate landing. Overall, higher wind speeds necessitate changes in the landing pattern to adapt to the variations in ground speed and ensure a safe landing approach, which makes the correct answer comprehensive and applicable to real-world scenarios in skydiving.

4. How should you steer a parachute with a broken brake line?

A. Use the front risers to change direction

B. Release both brakes and use the back risers

C. Pull down on the steering toggles

D. Drop the parachute and use a backup

Steering a parachute with a broken brake line requires a technique that can effectively control the parachute's direction while safely managing the limited functionality of the equipment. When the brake line is broken, using the back risers becomes the most effective method for steering. Pulling down on the back risers will cause the parachute to turn in the desired direction, even with one of the primary steering controls (the brake toggles) compromised. This technique helps maintain control and allows the jumper to navigate towards a safe landing area. Using front risers to steer is an option; however, this does not provide the same degree of control and may lead to a more aggressive turn, affecting the descent rate and stability. Releasing both brakes could further compromise control, and pulling down on the steering toggles is ineffective because the broken line means those toggles won't function correctly. Dropping the parachute and using a backup is not a viable option when attempting to steer for a safe landing; a backup system should only be activated in extreme situations where deploying a main parachute is no longer feasible. Thus, the correct method for steering a parachute with a broken brake line is to rely on the back risers for directional control.

5. What is the biggest danger to a jumper when flying the canopy pattern?

A. Other jumpers

B. Weather conditions

C. Aircraft altitude

D. Equipment failure

The biggest danger to a jumper when flying the canopy pattern is other jumpers. When parachutists are under canopy, they must navigate the airspace where multiple jumpers are flying. This can lead to risks such as mid-air collisions or interference with another jumper's landing approach. Maintaining awareness of the position and movements of other jumpers is crucial for safe canopy deployment and landing. While weather conditions, aircraft altitude, and equipment failure also pose risks, they are generally considered more pertinent to other phases of the jump. Weather conditions can affect visibility and wind patterns before and during the descent, but once in the canopy, the immediate dangers arise primarily from other jumpers. Aircraft altitude is important for ensuring that jumpers have enough altitude to safely deploy their parachutes, but it doesn't directly impact the canopy flying phase. Equipment failure can lead to catastrophic situations, but it is less common than the potential for collision with other jumpers during descent and landing.

6. What is the best way to change the direction of canopy flight while conserving the most altitude?

A. Sharp turns

B. Braked turns

C. Full-stall turns

D. Slight turns

Braked turns are the best method for changing the direction of canopy flight while conserving the most altitude. When a skydiver makes a braked turn, they apply brakes to the canopy, which causes it to slow down slightly and change direction more smoothly compared to other turning techniques. This method allows for a controlled descent and maintains more lift as the canopy angles into the turn. These turns also generate less drag and turbulence compared to sharp turns or full-stall turns, which can result in significant altitude loss. Sharp turns can cause the canopy to lose lift rapidly due to the increased angle of attack and the abruptness of the maneuver, while full-stall turns can result in an unintended descent or loss of control entirely. Slight turns, while they do conserve more altitude than the sharper methods, do not provide the same level of directional change in a timely manner that braked turns offer. Thus, braked turns strike the right balance between changing direction effectively and minimizing altitude loss, making them the preferred choice amongst experienced jumpers for tactical navigation during canopy flight.

7. What does the 'check of threes' involve?

A. Three types of parachutes used per jump

B. Checking three key points of equipment and harness

C. Reviewing three ground landing techniques

D. Three jumpers teaming up for safety checks

The 'check of threes' specifically involves checking three key points of equipment and harness before a jump to ensure safety and readiness. This pre-jump procedure emphasizes the importance of verifying that essential components are properly secured and functioning to minimize risks during the jump. Typically, the three points include the main parachute, reserve parachute, and the harness, which are critical for the safety of the jumper. By ensuring that these elements are correctly in place, a jumper can have increased confidence in their equipment, leading to a safer and more controlled jump experience.

8. How can you minimize the risk of landing injuries?

A. Jump from a higher altitude

B. Practice correct landing techniques and maintain physical fitness

C. Always land at a designated drop zone

D. Hold onto your parachute until you land

Minimizing the risk of landing injuries involves adopting strategies that enhance both technique and physical preparation. Practicing correct landing techniques is essential to ensure you can absorb the impact of landing safely. Good landing posture, such as keeping your legs together and bending your knees upon touchdown, significantly reduces the strain on your body and the risk of injury. In addition, maintaining physical fitness is crucial for skydivers. A strong core, legs, and overall physical condition improve your control during landing and can help you recover from unexpected conditions or misjudgments. By being physically prepared, your body can better handle the stress and dynamic movements involved in landing. While other options may contribute to safety, they do not directly address the fundamental components of minimizing injury risk through technique and fitness. Hence, focusing on these foundational elements is the most effective way to enhance landing safety.

9. What action should be taken if a good canopy is turning during descent?

A. Cut away the main canopy

B. Pump rear risers or steering controls

C. Release the harness and freefall

D. Hold still and wait for stabilization

When faced with a situation where a good canopy is turning during descent, the appropriate action is to pump the rear risers or steering controls. This technique is effective because it allows the parachutist to counteract the turn and stabilize the canopy. By manipulating the rear risers or the steering toggles, the jumper can apply input that might realign the parachute and correct its flight path. This approach is essential in managing the canopy's performance, ensuring the parachutist stays in a controlled descent and avoids any potential issues that could arise from a disorienting turn. Proper use of these control inputs can also help maintain a safe landing trajectory. In contrast, cutting away the main canopy is not advisable since the parachute is functioning correctly and does not require emergency measures. Releasing the harness to freefall would be dangerous, as it eliminates any control over the descent and significantly increases the risk of injury. Lastly, holding still and waiting for stabilization does not actively address the issue of the turning canopy and may lead to further instability or complications during descent. Therefore, the best course of action is to actively manage the canopy's performance through rear riser or steering control manipulation.

10. What should a jumper do if they need to cut away after landing on a building?

A. Attach to another jumper

B. Immediately pull the cutaway handle

C. Wait for help before making a decision

D. Perform a PLF

In a situation where a jumper has landed on a building and finds the need to cut away, waiting for help before making a decision is critical for safety. The jumper may be in a precarious or dangerous situation, and making hasty decisions can result in injury or further complications. By waiting for assistance, the jumper can evaluate the situation more clearly, get guidance from professionals or experienced personnel on the ground, and ensure that any actions taken will be the safest and most effective. It's crucial to take into account the specific circumstances on the building, such as obstacles, hazards, or the presence of other people. Assessing these factors with the help of others can lead to better clinical judgment regarding whether to cut away or how to proceed. Cutting away immediately could potentially lead to an uncontrolled descent or further emergencies, especially if the jumper is unsure of their surroundings. Similarly, attaching to another jumper or performing a parachute landing fall (PLF) may not be viable or safe options, given the complexities involved on a building landing, where conditions can vastly differ from a typical landing zone. This highlights the importance of careful assessment and prioritizing personal safety by waiting for appropriate help before taking action.

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://uspaalicense.examzify.com

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