U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) EM 385-1-1 Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide

Everything you need from our exam experts!

Table of Contents

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. **According to EM 385-1-1, what is required for fire protection on construction sites?**

   A. Only training for fire awareness

   B. Fire drills conducted once a year

   C. Proper fire prevention measures including equipment, training, and drills

   D. Use of water sources for immediate fire control

2. **What does the term "hazard analysis" refer to in EM 385-1-1?**

   A. The process of documenting project costs

   B. The evaluation of training programs

   C. The process of identifying potential hazards and developing mitigation measures

   D. The assessment of employee performance

3. **Which document is essential for compliance when working on equipment under energized conditions?**

   A. Site safety rules

   B. Lockout/tagout procedures

   C. Energized work permit

   D. Daily briefing notes

4. **What is the minimum body weight for workers that needs special consideration in excavation settings?**

   A. 150 lbs

   B. 130 lbs

   C. 100 lbs

   D. 160 lbs

5. **Define "lockout/tagout" in the context of EM 385-1-1.**

   A. A system for ensuring that intact machinery remains operational

   B. A procedure to ensure machines are properly shut off and unable to be started up

   C. A method for tagging equipment that is in use

   D. A protocol for machinery refurbishment

6. How does EM 385-1-1 define "workplace violence"?

- **A. Acts of violence or threats of violence against workers during work-related activities**
- **B. Any aggressive behavior among employees in the workplace**
- **C. Incidents of bullying or harassment in the office**
- **D. Physical harm caused by equipment failure during work**

7. What action is required if there's a risk of drowning on a job site?

- **A. Use of helmets**
- **B. Providing PFDs**
- **C. Employing safety nets**
- **D. Conducting evacuation drills**

8. What is the primary purpose of the EM 385-1-1 document?

- **A. To establish safety and health requirements for all USACE activities**
- **B. To provide guidelines for environmental assessments**
- **C. To outline financial management procedures**
- **D. To describe standard engineering practices**

9. A competent person must conduct documented inspections of each excavation for what condition?

- **A. Before the work begins only**
- **B. Before each work site and through the work shift**
- **C. At the end of each day**
- **D. Weekly or bi-weekly**

10. When personnel are required to enter excavations over what depth must a means of entry and exit be provided for every specified horizontal travel distance?

- **A. 2ft, 20ft**
- **B. 4ft, 25ft**
- **C. 5ft, 30ft**
- **D. 6ft, 15ft**

Answers

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

Explanations

1. According to EM 385-1-1, what is required for fire protection on construction sites?

A. Only training for fire awareness

B. Fire drills conducted once a year

C. Proper fire prevention measures including equipment, training, and drills

D. Use of water sources for immediate fire control

The requirement for fire protection on construction sites, as outlined in EM 385-1-1, emphasizes the necessity of comprehensive fire prevention measures that encompass a multi-faceted approach. This includes having the appropriate firefighting equipment readily available on site, ensuring that personnel are trained in fire safety practices, and conducting drills to prepare workers for emergency situations. This holistic strategy is crucial because it not only promotes immediate response capabilities in the event of a fire but also fosters a culture of safety awareness among workers. Proper equipment, such as fire extinguishers and hoses, must be accessible and regularly inspected to ensure they are in working order. Training on how to use this equipment effectively prepares workers to act swiftly and confidently in emergencies. Regular drills reinforce this training, allowing personnel to practice their response to a fire scenario, thereby increasing their readiness and decreasing the likelihood of panic during an actual emergency. The other options do not capture the comprehensive nature of what is required. Just training for fire awareness, for instance, would not sufficiently prepare workers without the inclusion of proper equipment and drills. Fire drills merely once a year may not be frequent enough to ensure that workers retain their skills, while relying solely on water sources does not address all aspects of fire prevention and emergency response.

2. What does the term "hazard analysis" refer to in EM 385-1-1?

A. The process of documenting project costs

B. The evaluation of training programs

C. The process of identifying potential hazards and developing mitigation measures

D. The assessment of employee performance

The term "hazard analysis" in EM 385-1-1 specifically refers to the process of identifying potential hazards and developing mitigation measures. This process is essential in ensuring safety and compliance with safety standards in various operations. It involves systematically examining the environment and activities associated with a project to identify risks that could harm workers or affect the project. Through hazard analysis, safety professionals can determine what specific hazards exist, assess the likelihood of those hazards causing harm, and establish appropriate measures to mitigate or eliminate the risks. This proactive approach is critical for creating a safe work environment, enabling effective communication of hazards, and ensuring that all workers are trained and prepared to handle the risks associated with their tasks. This distinguishes hazard analysis from other concepts like documenting project costs, evaluating training programs, or assessing employee performance, as those focus on different aspects of project management and safety rather than the direct identification and management of hazards.

3. Which document is essential for compliance when working on equipment under energized conditions?

A. Site safety rules

B. Lockout/tagout procedures

C. Energized work permit

D. Daily briefing notes

The energized work permit is essential for compliance when working on equipment under energized conditions because it is specifically designed to ensure that all safety measures are in place before any work is conducted on or near energized equipment. This document outlines the potential hazards associated with the work, specifies the necessary precautions and protective measures that must be taken, and ensures that workers are aware of the risks involved. By requiring a formal permit, the process emphasizes the importance of hazard recognition and management, ensuring that only qualified personnel conduct work in these high-risk situations. The energized work permit serves as both a planning tool and a communication mechanism among workers involved in the task, thereby promoting a culture of safety and accountability. Other documents mentioned, such as site safety rules, lockout/tagout procedures, and daily briefing notes, play important roles in overall workplace safety; however, they do not specifically focus on the unique risks associated with energized work as the energized work permit does.

4. What is the minimum body weight for workers that needs special consideration in excavation settings?

A. 150 lbs

B. 130 lbs

C. 100 lbs

D. 160 lbs

In excavation settings, there are specific considerations regarding workers' safety and the physical demands of the job. The minimum body weight of 130 lbs is significant because it aligns with safety protocols that ensure workers are adequately equipped to handle the stresses involved in excavation activities. A weight threshold is important in the context of equipment, manual handling tasks, and the dynamics of working in potentially hazardous environments like trenches or pits. Workers below this weight may not have the physical stability or strength required to manage their own safety and the safety of others effectively during excavation operations. This consideration can relate to the ergonomics of the tasks performed and the necessary physical capability to respond to emergencies or exert control over tools and equipment. Therefore, setting a minimum weight for special evaluation helps in assessing the overall safety and readiness of workers in such potentially hazardous environments.

5. Define "lockout/tagout" in the context of EM 385-1-1.

A. A system for ensuring that intact machinery remains operational

B. A procedure to ensure machines are properly shut off and unable to be started up

C. A method for tagging equipment that is in use

D. A protocol for machinery refurbishment

"Lockout/tagout" in the context of EM 385-1-1 refers to a procedure designed to ensure that machines are properly shut off and are unable to be started up again until maintenance work is completed. This safety protocol is critical for protecting workers from the unexpected energization or startup of machinery during maintenance or servicing activities. The process involves using locks and tags to indicate that a machine should not be operated. The lockout component effectively prevents access to energy sources, while the tagout component serves as a warning that the machine is not to be operated until it is removed. This method is essential for maintaining a safe work environment, especially in industries where machinery can unexpectedly become dangerous if not properly secured. Implementing effective lockout/tagout procedures significantly reduces the risk of accidents and injuries in the workplace related to machinery operation.

6. How does EM 385-1-1 define "workplace violence"?

A. Acts of violence or threats of violence against workers during work-related activities

B. Any aggressive behavior among employees in the workplace

C. Incidents of bullying or harassment in the office

D. Physical harm caused by equipment failure during work

The definition of "workplace violence" as outlined in EM 385-1-1 is specifically focused on acts of violence or threats of violence directed at workers during their work-related activities. This definition encompasses a range of behaviors, including physical attacks, threats of physical harm, or any form of intimidation that can create a hostile environment for employees. This definition is particularly significant in the context of workplace safety because it emphasizes the responsibility of employers to ensure a safe working environment free from threats and violent acts. By defining workplace violence in this manner, EM 385-1-1 recognizes the potential risks that employees may face while performing their duties and underscores the importance of establishing preventive measures and protocols to address such incidents. In contrast, other options suggest definitions that either narrow the scope of violence or address issues like harassment or equipment safety, which do not encompass the broader understanding of workplace violence as intended by EM 385-1-1. By focusing solely on violence or threats related to work activities, the correct definition effectively addresses the specific context and challenges that organizations must manage to promote employee well-being and safety.

7. What action is required if there's a risk of drowning on a job site?

A. Use of helmets

B. Providing PFDs

C. Employing safety nets

D. Conducting evacuation drills

Providing personal flotation devices (PFDs) is crucial in situations where there is a risk of drowning on a job site. PFDs are designed to keep a person afloat in water, significantly increasing their chances of survival if they fall into a body of water or are submerged. The use of PFDs is a mandated safety measure in environments such as construction sites near bodies of water, where employees may be exposed to drowning hazards. The decision to prioritize PFDs aligns with safety regulations and best practices to mitigate specific risks associated with water activities. Ensuring that workers wear PFDs can not only provide immediate protection but also foster a culture of safety where employees are aware of the risks and the safety measures in place to protect them. Other measures, while also important, do not specifically address the immediate risk of drowning as effectively as PFDs. Helmets, safety nets, and evacuation drills serve different safety purposes and may not be effective in preventing drowning incidents directly. Helmets protect against head injuries, safety nets can capture falling personnel or objects, and evacuation drills are essential for emergency preparedness but do not provide direct protection against drowning in water-related situations.

8. What is the primary purpose of the EM 385-1-1 document?

A. To establish safety and health requirements for all USACE activities

B. To provide guidelines for environmental assessments

C. To outline financial management procedures

D. To describe standard engineering practices

The primary purpose of the EM 385-1-1 document is to establish safety and health requirements specifically for all U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) activities. This document serves as a comprehensive guide that outlines the necessary safety protocols and health measures that must be adhered to during project execution. By setting these standards, the document aims to ensure a safe working environment for personnel, mitigate risks associated with construction and operational activities, and promote overall health and safety compliance within the Corps' projects. The focus on safety and health requirements is paramount, as it reflects the Corps' commitment to protecting its workers, contractors, and the public from potential hazards. Additionally, by establishing clear guidelines, the EM 385-1-1 promotes consistency across various projects and reinforces the importance of integrating safety into the project planning and execution phases. Other options do not align with the primary focus of EM 385-1-1. While environmental assessments, financial management, and standard engineering practices are crucial aspects of project management, the central theme of this specific document is strictly related to safety and health requirements.

9. A competent person must conduct documented inspections of each excavation for what condition?

A. Before the work begins only

B. Before each work site and through the work shift

C. At the end of each day

D. Weekly or bi-weekly

The correct answer emphasizes the necessity for a competent person to conduct documented inspections of each excavation before each work site and throughout the work shift. This requirement is rooted in safety regulations designed to minimize the risk of accidents and ensure the integrity of excavation work. Regular inspections are essential because conditions can change rapidly due to environmental factors, equipment use, or other activities happening nearby. By ensuring that inspections are documented and occur both before commencing work and periodically throughout the shift, any potential hazards can be identified and mitigated in a timely manner. This ongoing oversight is critical in maintaining not just compliance with safety regulations, but also the health and safety of workers on the site, as it allows for immediate responses to new conditions that may arise during excavation activities. Documented inspections provide a formal record that can be referenced later should safety issues arise, fostering accountability and reinforcing safety protocols. This proactive approach supports both the completion of the project in a safe manner and compliance with the standards set by USACE EM 385-1-1.

10. When personnel are required to enter excavations over what depth must a means of entry and exit be provided for every specified horizontal travel distance?

A. 2ft, 20ft

B. 4ft, 25ft

C. 5ft, 30ft

D. 6ft, 15ft

The requirement for providing a means of entry and exit for personnel working in excavations is established in safety standards to protect workers from hazards related to confined spaces and prevent accidents. When the depth of an excavation exceeds a specific amount, employees are at increased risk of cave-ins, and having a safe way to enter and exit the excavation becomes critical for their safety. In this context, the correct choice specifies that when personnel are required to enter excavations that are more than 4 feet deep, a means of entry and exit must be provided for every 25 feet of horizontal travel distance within the excavation. This requirement ensures that in case of an emergency or if workers need to evacuate quickly, they have a safe and accessible way to do so. The stipulation of 4 feet as the critical depth aligns with safety regulations aimed at reducing the risks associated with excavations. The horizontal travel distance of 25 feet ensures that there are adequate access points within the excavation, further enhancing safety for workers. This is particularly important in larger excavations where travel distances can be significant, increasing the need for multiple access points. Providing a means of entry and exit is vital for maintaining worker safety and compliance with safety standards in excavation work. It allows for quick escape routes

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://usace-em385certification.examzify.com

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