

# USNA Professional Competency Board (PCB) Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Copyright</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>How to Use This Guide</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Questions</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Answers</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Explanations</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Next Steps</b> .....	<b>16</b>

SAMPLE

# 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 is the purpose of the AIM-9X Sidewinder?**
  - A. Anti-ship cruise missile.**
  - B. Within-visual-range air-to-air missile for close combat engagements.**
  - C. Beyond-visual-range air-to-air engagements.**
  - D. Air-to-ground precision strike.**
  
- 2. The tactical level is primarily concerned with which activity?**
  - A. Planning long-term national objectives.**
  - B. Coordinating large-scale campaigns.**
  - C. Execution of battles and engagements.**
  - D. Strategic decision making.**
  
- 3. Which rating is represented by AT - Aviation Electronics Technician?**
  - A. AT - Aviation Electronics Technician**
  - B. AE - Aviation Electrician's Mate**
  - C. AW - Aviation Warfare Specialist**
  - D. IT - Information Systems Technician**
  
- 4. What radar does Aegis use?**
  - A. SPY-2**
  - B. SPY-3**
  - C. SPY-6**
  - D. SPY-1**
  
- 5. What are Navy staff codes (N-codes)?**
  - A. N1: Personnel; N2: Intelligence; N3: Operations; N4: Logistics; N5: Plans; N6: Communications.**
  - B. N1: Personnel; N2: Logistics; N3: Operations; N4: Intelligence; N5: Plans; N6: Communications.**
  - C. N1: Personnel; N2: Intelligence; N3: Plans; N4: Logistics; N5: Operations; N6: Communications.**
  - D. N1: Personnel; N2: Communications; N3: Operations; N4: Logistics; N5: Plans; N6: Intelligence.**

- 6. What action did NATO take in response to the invasion?**
- A. Reduced troop presence**
  - B. Implemented no-fly zone**
  - C. Increased support and expansion**
  - D. Negotiated immediate ceasefire**
- 7. Which N-code corresponds to Logistics?**
- A. N3: Operations**
  - B. N6: Communications**
  - C. N5: Plans**
  - D. N4: Logistics**
- 8. What major development is increasing risk on the Korean Peninsula?**
- A. South Korea's economic growth.**
  - B. Improved regional cooperation.**
  - C. North Korea's expanding nuclear weapons and missile programs.**
  - D. Increased tourism.**
- 9. Which of the following is a URL community?**
- A. Surface Warfare (SWO)**
  - B. Engineering Duty Officer (EDO)**
  - C. Public Affairs Officer (PAO)**
  - D. Nurse Corps**
- 10. Which platform is capable of providing airborne early warning and battle management for a carrier air wing?**
- A. The E-2D Hawkeye**
  - B. The F-35C Lightning II**
  - C. The P-8A Poseidon**
  - D. The EA-18G Growler**

## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What is the purpose of the AIM-9X Sidewinder?**

- A. Anti-ship cruise missile.
- B. Within-visual-range air-to-air missile for close combat engagements.**
- C. Beyond-visual-range air-to-air engagements.
- D. Air-to-ground precision strike.

The main idea is short-range air-to-air capability. The AIM-9X Sidewinder is a short-range, infrared-guided missile designed for close-in battles between fighter aircraft. Its imaging infrared seeker lets a pilot detect and lock onto a target that's within visual range, even as both aircraft maneuver aggressively. This makes it well-suited for dogfights and other near encounters where speed and agility dominate. It isn't built for long-range engagements, which use different guidance systems; it isn't for anti-ship or air-to-ground missions, which target different platforms and purposes.

**2. The tactical level is primarily concerned with which activity?**

- A. Planning long-term national objectives.
- B. Coordinating large-scale campaigns.
- C. Execution of battles and engagements.**
- D. Strategic decision making.

At the tactical level, the focus is on turning plans into battlefield action—how units maneuver, coordinate fire, and execute engagements to win specific battles. This involves the actual execution of fights, close coordination of forces, and applying available capabilities to defeat enemy units on the ground within the higher-level orders. By contrast, strategic planning sets national objectives and policy, and the operational level handles campaigns and major operations that connect strategy to battlefield actions. So the activity most associated with the tactical level is the execution of battles and engagements.

**3. Which rating is represented by AT - Aviation Electronics Technician?**

- A. AT - Aviation Electronics Technician**
- B. AE - Aviation Electrician's Mate
- C. AW - Aviation Warfare Specialist
- D. IT - Information Systems Technician

In the Navy, each enlisted job is a rating defined by a two-letter code paired with its full title. The code AT is specifically linked to Aviation Electronics Technician, meaning someone with this rating specializes in avionics systems on aircraft. They handle electronics like radar, navigation, radio, and other flight-critical gear. The other options correspond to different ratings with their own codes: Aviation Electrician's Mate is AE, Aviation Warfare Specialist is AW, and Information Systems Technician is IT. Those codes point to different career fields, not the Aviation Electronics Technician. So the rating represented by AT is Aviation Electronics Technician.

#### 4. What radar does Aegis use?

- A. SPY-2
- B. SPY-3
- C. SPY-6
- D. SPY-1**

The heart of Aegis is its radar teaming, and the system was originally built around SPY-1. SPY-1 is a 3D phased-array radar that provides long-range search and precise track data to guide missiles within the Aegis Combat System. It was the standard radar for Aegis-equipped ships for decades, enabling the integrated sensing and weapon control that defines the system. Over time, upgrades introduced SPY-2, SPY-3, and SPY-6 on various ships, but SPY-1 is the long-standing radar most closely associated with Aegis' beginnings and core operation.

#### 5. What are Navy staff codes (N-codes)?

- A. N1: Personnel; N2: Intelligence; N3: Operations; N4: Logistics; N5: Plans; N6: Communications.**
- B. N1: Personnel; N2: Logistics; N3: Operations; N4: Intelligence; N5: Plans; N6: Communications.
- C. N1: Personnel; N2: Intelligence; N3: Plans; N4: Logistics; N5: Operations; N6: Communications.
- D. N1: Personnel; N2: Communications; N3: Operations; N4: Logistics; N5: Plans; N6: Intelligence.

Navy staff codes organize the Navy's functional responsibilities into six directorates that structure how the staff operates and plans. The standard mapping is N1 with Personnel, N2 with Intelligence, N3 with Operations, N4 with Logistics, N5 with Plans, and N6 with Communications. This arrangement is used on ships and at higher commands to assign authority, coordinate planning, and ensure the right expertise handles each area—manpower and assignments under N1, intelligence analysis under N2, operational planning under N3, supply and maintenance under N4, strategic and contingency planning under N5, and the communications networks under N6. If these functions were shuffled, the organization would lose clarity about who is responsible for each critical area.

**6. What action did NATO take in response to the invasion?**

- A. Reduced troop presence**
- B. Implemented no-fly zone**
- C. Increased support and expansion**
- D. Negotiated immediate ceasefire**

When a major invasion occurs, NATO's response centers on boosting support to the attacked country while strengthening deterrence through a broader alliance posture. In this case, NATO stepped up military and practical support to Ukraine—defensive weapons, training, intelligence sharing, and logistical aid—and moved to bolster the alliance's readiness and presence along the eastern flank, signaling a stronger, more capable deterrent and closer integration with partners. This combination of increased assistance and expanded defensive posture best fits how NATO responds to aggression, aiming to help the victim state while preventing further escalation. A no-fly zone would require enforcing airspace and could provoke direct confrontation with Russia; reducing troop presence would weaken deterrence when a threat remains; and negotiating an immediate ceasefire is a diplomatic aim, not a direct NATO action.

**7. Which N-code corresponds to Logistics?**

- A. N3: Operations**
- B. N6: Communications**
- C. N5: Plans**
- D. N4: Logistics**

In this N-code system, the function that handles coordinating, provisioning, and sustaining resources to support missions is Logistics. That includes moving supplies and equipment, arranging transportation, and ensuring maintenance and overall support for operations. The designation that corresponds to Logistics is N4. This stands apart from Operations, which focuses on executing missions; Communications, which covers information exchange; and Plans, which involves developing courses of action and timing.

**8. What major development is increasing risk on the Korean Peninsula?**

- A. South Korea's economic growth.**
- B. Improved regional cooperation.**
- C. North Korea's expanding nuclear weapons and missile programs.**
- D. Increased tourism.**

The risk on the Korean Peninsula is most significantly increased by North Korea's expanding nuclear weapons and missile programs. When one side develops larger and more capable weapons, it changes the security calculations for everyone in the region: Seoul, Washington, and even Beijing and Moscow must reassess deterrence, defense, and crisis management. This raises the potential for miscalculation during tensions or provocations, as both sides anticipate and prepare for how the other might respond to a test, flare-up, or force posture change. It also tends to provoke responses from allies and rivals alike, fueling a cycle of containment and countermeasures that can escalate tensions rather than reduce them. In short, expanding nuclear and missile capabilities directly inject more uncertainty and pressure into the security environment, making conflict scenarios more plausible and the region more volatile. By comparison, factors like economic growth, improved regional cooperation, or tourism don't inherently push the security risk upward in the same way; they can even contribute to stability, whereas the nuclear-missile program expansion pushes risk up.

**9. Which of the following is a URL community?**

- A. Surface Warfare (SWO)**
- B. Engineering Duty Officer (EDO)**
- C. Public Affairs Officer (PAO)**
- D. Nurse Corps**

Unrestricted Line means a career track for officers who are eligible to command ships or submarines and deploy at sea. The Surface Warfare Officer fits this category, as their training and duties center on operating at sea and leading surface ships and detachments. The other options are not URL: Engineering Duty Officers are in a restricted-line track focused on engineering and technical oversight, Public Affairs Officers are a restricted-line/staff corps track tied to communications and public relations, and the Nurse Corps is a Staff Corps focused on medical service. So, the Surface Warfare Officer is the URL community.

**10. Which platform is capable of providing airborne early warning and battle management for a carrier air wing?**

- A. The E-2D Hawkeye**
- B. The F-35C Lightning II**
- C. The P-8A Poseidon**
- D. The EA-18G Growler**

Airborne early warning and battle management for a carrier air wing relies on a platform that combines persistent surveillance with onboard command-and-control. The E-2 Hawkeye is designed exactly for this role. Its radar senses airspace around the fleet over long ranges, providing continuous detection of aircraft, missiles, and other threats. More than just spotting, its systems fuse sensor data and act as an airborne command post, coordinating fighter direction, interception vectors, and overall air-wing and battle-space management. Modern E-2D variants use the APY-9 radar and advanced data links to share information with ships and other aircraft, delivering a coherent picture to the carrier group and guiding decisions in real time. The other aircraft serve different missions. The F-35C is a multirole fighter that can contribute data but is not the primary platform for airspace surveillance and airborne battle management. The P-8A Poseidon focuses on long-range maritime patrol and reconnaissance, not carrier-based air-wing command. The EA-18G Growler handles electronic warfare and protection operations, not the centralized airborne warning and battle-management role.

## 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://usnapcb.examzify.com>**

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

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