ACI CONCRETE FINISHER PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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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.

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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!

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Questions

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1. **Overworking the surface during finishing can cause which combination of effects on the final appearance?**

   A. It increases bleed water and leaves a smooth, glossy finish.

   B. It pulls cement paste to the surface, causes laitance, reduces bleed water segregation, and creates a dull or dusty finish.

   C. It hardens the surface excessively and creates a glassy finish.

   D. It has no effect on appearance if the mix is proper.

2. **If trowel drag occurs due to moisture, what is the recommended correction?**

   A. Re-wet the surface and use a float or steel trowel with light pressure.

   B. Add more water and press harder with trowel.

   C. Wait until next day.

   D. Switch to a rougher trowel with heavy pressure.

3. **What happens when concrete temperature is outside the recommended range?**

   A. Extreme temperatures accelerate or retard finishing, affecting workability and finish quality

   B. Temperature has no effect on finishing

   C. Temperature only affects color

   D. Temperature only affects curing time but not finishing

4. **Which statement about the effect of sand content on water demand is correct?**

   A. Increasing sand decreases water demand

   B. Increasing sand increases water demand

   C. Sand content has no effect on water demand

   D. Water demand is only affected by cement content

5. **A _____ diameter pan is the largest size commonly used on walk-behind machines.**

   A. 24"

   B. 30"

   C. 36"

   D. 42"

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6. What is the difference between a control joint and an expansion joint?

A. A control joint cracks along predetermined line; expansion joint accommodates movement.

B. A control joint allows movement; expansion joint cracks along line.

C. They are the same.

D. Neither provides cracking control.

7. Portland cement will set and harden under water: True or False?

A. True

B. False

C. Sometimes

D. Only with additives

8. What distinguishes wet curing from membrane curing?

A. Membrane curing uses surface sealers or films to prevent moisture loss.

B. Wet curing keeps moisture on the surface with water or mist.

C. Wet curing uses chemical accelerators to cure faster.

D. Membrane curing requires continuous water application.

9. PPE is mandatory for finishers on most sites. Which set is correct?

A. Hard hat, safety glasses, hearing protection, gloves, safety boots, and high-visibility clothing

B. Safety glasses and gloves only

C. No PPE is required on most sites

D. Hard hat and gloves only

10. Which is a likely reason for color variation on a floor finished with both machine and hand tools?

A. Difference in colors

B. Faster backlog completion

C. Improved adhesion

D. Lower surface roughness

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Overworking the surface during finishing can cause which combination of effects on the final appearance?

A. It increases bleed water and leaves a smooth, glossy finish.

B. It pulls cement paste to the surface, causes laitance, reduces bleed water segregation, and creates a dull or dusty finish.

C. It hardens the surface excessively and creates a glassy finish.

D. It has no effect on appearance if the mix is proper.

Overworking the surface during finishing pushes water and fine cement paste toward the top, forming laitance. This weak, paste-rich layer is easy to dust away and can prevent a proper bond with toppings or sealers later. The excessive finishing also dulls the surface and can cause micro-segregation, giving a dusty, non-uniform appearance. So, the combination described—cement paste pulled to the surface, laitance formation, reduced bleed-water/segregation effects, and a dull or dusty finish—best matches what actually happens when you overwork the surface. Other scenarios—creamy bleed-water with a smooth glossy finish, an excessively glassy surface, or no effect if the mix is proper—don't reflect the typical outcome of overworking.

2. If trowel drag occurs due to moisture, what is the recommended correction?

A. Re-wet the surface and use a float or steel trowel with light pressure.

B. Add more water and press harder with trowel.

C. Wait until next day.

D. Switch to a rougher trowel with heavy pressure.

The surface is too slick from moisture, causing the trowel to skid rather than cut cleanly. The way to fix this is to restore a workable moisture level and use a light touch. Lightly re-wetting the surface helps break up the slick film and keeps the concrete plastic enough to finish, while a float or steel trowel with light pressure allows you to smooth and level without sealing the surface or creating gouges. Adding more water and pressing harder will make the surface even slicker and increase drag. Waiting until tomorrow delays finishing, and switching to a rougher trowel with heavy pressure would damage the surface and worsen the drag.

3. What happens when concrete temperature is outside the recommended range?

A. Extreme temperatures accelerate or retard finishing, affecting workability and finish quality

B. Temperature has no effect on finishing

C. Temperature only affects color

D. Temperature only affects curing time but not finishing

Temperature controls how fast concrete hydrates, which directly affects how workable the mix is and how easily you can finish it. In hot conditions, the mix stiffens quickly and water can evaporate fast, giving you little time to strike off and smooth the surface. That often leads to a rough, uneven finish and sometimes surface cracking from plastic shrinkage. In cold conditions, hydration slows, delaying setting and finishing time; the surface can become dull or chalky if not finished or cured properly, and near-freezing temperatures raise the risk of freeze-related damage if moisture is trapped. So when concrete temperature is outside the recommended range, finishing is accelerated or retarded, and both workability and finish quality are affected.

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4. Which statement about the effect of sand content on water demand is correct?

A. Increasing sand decreases water demand

B. Increasing sand increases water demand

C. Sand content has no effect on water demand

D. Water demand is only affected by cement content

Increasing sand in the mix raises the surface area that needs to be wetted by the cement paste. More surface area means you must add more water to achieve the same workability, so the water demand goes up. Sand also can absorb water, especially finer sands, which further increases the amount of water required to maintain the desired slump. The idea that sand content has no effect or that only cement content controls water demand isn't accurate because the fine aggregate directly affects how much water is needed to coat and lubricate all particles.

5. A _____ diameter pan is the largest size commonly used on walk-behind machines.

A. 24"

B. 30"

C. 36"

D. 42"

The diameter of the pan on a walk-behind concrete finishing machine affects both productivity and handling. A wider pan finishes a larger area in one pass, which speeds up work, but it also adds weight and makes turning and steering more challenging for the operator. The largest pan size that is still practical and commonly used on walk-behind units is 36 inches. It provides a good balance: you can cover more slab with each pass without overwhelming the operator or requiring a heavier, harder-to-maneuver machine. Larger diameters, like 42 inches, exist but are less common on walk-behind machines because they are harder to control and push, and are more typical of ride-on trowels or specialized setups. Smaller diameters, such as 24 or 30 inches, are easier to maneuver in tight spaces or on smaller slabs.

6. What is the difference between a control joint and an expansion joint?

A. A control joint cracks along predetermined line; expansion joint accommodates movement.

B. A control joint allows movement; expansion joint cracks along line.

C. They are the same.

D. Neither provides cracking control.

When concrete hardens, it shrinks and moves with temperature changes, so we use joints to manage cracks and movement. A control joint is placed to create a planned, weak plane where cracking will occur, guiding cracks to form along that line rather than randomly. This helps control where the cracks appear and keeps them straight and predictable. An expansion joint, on the other hand, is designed to allow actual movement between sections of concrete. It uses a space filled with flexible material or filler to absorb expansion and contraction without transferring stresses or forcing cracks into the adjacent slab. So the statement that a control joint cracks along a predetermined line and an expansion joint accommodates movement is the best description of their difference.

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7. Portland cement will set and harden under water: True or False?

A. True

B. False

C. Sometimes

D. Only with additives

Portland cement is hydraulic, meaning it reacts with water to harden. When mixed with water, chemical hydration forms calcium silicate hydrates and calcium hydroxide that bind the paste and any aggregates, and these reactions proceed whether the mixture is in air or underwater. So it will set and harden underwater. Additives aren't required for underwater setting, though they can adjust setting time or workability and special underwater concrete methods can help control washout.

8. What distinguishes wet curing from membrane curing?

A. Membrane curing uses surface sealers or films to prevent moisture loss.

B. Wet curing keeps moisture on the surface with water or mist.

C. Wet curing uses chemical accelerators to cure faster.

D. Membrane curing requires continuous water application.

The key idea is how curing methods manage moisture loss from the concrete as it hardens. Wet curing keeps the surface moist by applying water directly or maintaining a damp surface with mist, wet burlap, or similar methods, so hydration can continue actively. This approach focuses on providing ongoing moisture to the concrete, which helps strength gain and minimizes shrinkage early on. Membrane curing, in contrast, uses surface sealers or films to seal in moisture, forming a barrier to evaporation rather than adding water. That's why the statement about wet curing described as keeping moisture on the surface with water or mist is the best fit. The other ideas mix in aspects of membrane curing or introduce concepts not specific to wet curing—films that prevent moisture loss, or the notion of continuous water application being tied to membrane curing, or mentioning chemical accelerators, which aren't the curing method itself.

9. PPE is mandatory for finishers on most sites. Which set is correct?

A. Hard hat, safety glasses, hearing protection, gloves, safety boots, and high-visibility clothing

B. Safety glasses and gloves only

C. No PPE is required on most sites

D. Hard hat and gloves only

Finishers face hazards from wet concrete, flying particles, loud equipment, sharp edges, and heavy objects. Wearing a full, appropriate PPE set is essential to protect against these hazards. The best choice includes a hard hat for head protection, safety glasses for eye protection, hearing protection for loud tasks, gloves for hand protection, safety boots for foot protection, and high-visibility clothing to stay seen around moving machinery. Each piece addresses a common risk on finishing jobs: the hard hat guards against impacts and falling debris; safety glasses shield eyes from dust and chips; hearing protection reduces noise exposure; gloves protect hands from cuts and chemical contact; safety boots prevent injuries from heavy objects and provide grip on slippery surfaces; high-visibility clothing helps operators and coworkers notice you in busy work zones. This comprehensive set reflects the typical baseline PPE required on most sites. Options that omit one or more of these protections leave gaps—such as only having eye protection and gloves, or only hard hat and gloves—so they aren't sufficient. Claims that no PPE is required on most sites are inaccurate, since PPE is routinely mandated for finishing work.

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10. Which is a likely reason for color variation on a floor finished with both machine and hand tools?

A. Difference in colors

B. Faster backlog completion

C. Improved adhesion

D. Lower surface roughness

Color variation shows up when the surface finish changes how much cement paste remains exposed and how the aggregate looks. Finishing with machine tools and finishing with hand tools create different surface textures and levels of paste removal, so some areas reveal more cement or different aggregate than others. Those differences in exposure and material appearance change the shade of the surface, making patches look lighter or darker. The other options don't explain why color changes: scheduling speed doesn't affect color, adhesion is about bonding, and surface roughness is about texture rather than color. To keep a uniform color, use consistent finishing methods and curing across the floor.

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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.

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

https://aciconcretefinisher.examzify.com

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

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