CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD PRACTICE EXAM (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. **What does it mean when the instruction Switch Yes (SW-Y) is included on a Track Authority in CTC Territory?**

   A. The control point is outside the limits

   B. The entry point requires no further authority

   C. The limits are extended beyond the control point

   D. The control point is included in the limits

2. **When a dragging equipment detector requires stopping and awaiting confirmation to pass, who should confirm it's safe to pass before you resume?**

   A. The crew or RTC

   B. The EIC

   C. Yardmaster

   D. Dispatcher

3. **How long is a Track Authority in effect?**

   A. Until a crew member reports that the train has cleared the limits and the authority is made void

   B. Until the RTC issues a new authority

   C. For a fixed duration of 2 hours

   D. Until the next scheduled stop

4. **When a train passes a signal requiring movement at restricted speed, how far must it proceed at restricted speed?**

   A. Until the next signal is encountered

   B. Until the leading wheels pass the next signal and that signal is more favorable than a restricting or a point where movement at restricted speed is no longer required

   C. Until the track is clear beyond the next interlocking

   D. Until the crew receives a further instruction

5. **The information about a fixed signal may be shared over the radio only under which condition?**

   A. Only when the signal is green

   B. The information is given between members of the same crew or the information is needed to warn of an emergency

   C. Only when the signal is malfunctioning

   D. Only when the information is posted publicly

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6. Blue signals that have been placed by the car department can be removed by :

A. The RTC supervisor

B. Only the craft or group who place them

C. Any employee on duty

D. The track supervisor

7. In order to apply the air brakes on cars attached to a locomotive with the air cut in, you would tell the engineer to set brakes (piston out) or release the brakes (piston in)?

A. Release brakes (piston in)

B. Set brakes (piston out)

C. Hold brakes (piston mid)

D. None

8. What is the proper action regarding a derail in the vicinity to ensure safety before movement?

A. Leave it as is

B. Lock the derail in the derailing position

C. Lock the derail in the non-derailing position

D. Remove the derail from service

9. If you are hit by a detector for a hot wheel or hot journal, you must not travel over which switch while the engineer pulls up for inspection?

A. Diverging Route Switch

B. Switch Facing Point Switch

C. Grade Crossing Switch

D. Mainline-Crossover Switch

10. If you are approaching a train on the adjacent track that sets off a dragging equipment detector, your train must immediately:

A. Stop the train immediately until confirmed safe to pass by crew or RTC.

B. Speed up to clear the detectors.

C. Ignore the detector and continue.

D. Sound the horn and proceed.

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What does it mean when the instruction Switch Yes (SW-Y) is included on a Track Authority in CTC Territory?

A. The control point is outside the limits

B. The entry point requires no further authority

C. The limits are extended beyond the control point

D. The control point is included in the limits

In this scenario, the key idea is how Track Authority in CTC Territory defines its reach and what a Switch Yes indicator tells you about that reach. When you see a switch marked as included within the authority, it means the control point at that switch lies inside the authority's limits. In other words, the movement authority covers that switch location, so you are authorized to operate up to and through that switch as part of the same block of track under that authority. If the switch were not included, the control point would sit outside the limits, and you would need additional or separate authority to go beyond or through that switch. The other options describe situations that don't align with the meaning of including the switch in the limits.

2. When a dragging equipment detector requires stopping and awaiting confirmation to pass, who should confirm it's safe to pass before you resume?

A. The crew or RTC

B. The EIC

C. Yardmaster

D. Dispatcher

When a dragging equipment detector stops a train, only the person with authority to authorize movement on that route can clear the train to resume. In practice, that clearance comes from either the crew aboard the train or the Rail Traffic Controller (RTC). The crew may confirm that the drag has been addressed and it's safe to move, or the RTC can assess the situation and issue the go-ahead after ensuring the track is clear and no other movements are affected. The other roles—Employee in Charge, Yardmaster, or Dispatcher—do not provide the immediate safety clearance for passing a drag-detector stop in this mainline context.

3. How long is a Track Authority in effect?

A. Until a crew member reports that the train has cleared the limits and the authority is made void

B. Until the RTC issues a new authority

C. For a fixed duration of 2 hours

D. Until the next scheduled stop

Track Authority is a temporary permission to occupy a defined section of track that remains in effect as long as the train is within the authorized limits. It is cancelled when the train has cleared those limits, which is typically confirmed by the crew reporting clearance and the authority being made void. This ensures that occupancy is clearly ended before another movement can be authorized, preventing conflicts with other trains or movements. That's why the best choice is that the authority lasts until the crew reports that the train has cleared the limits and the authority is void. It isn't a fixed time (like two hours), nor does it wait for a new authority to be issued by the RTC, and it isn't tied to the next scheduled stop.

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4. When a train passes a signal requiring movement at restricted speed, how far must it proceed at restricted speed?

A. Until the next signal is encountered

B. Until the leading wheels pass the next signal and that signal is more favorable than a restricting or a point where movement at restricted speed is no longer required

C. Until the track is clear beyond the next interlocking

D. Until the crew receives a further instruction

When a signal directs movement at restricted speed, you must keep that restricted speed until you reach a signal that is more favorable than a restricting signal, and only then can you proceed with normal speed. The key is that the restriction ends when the leading wheels have passed the next signal and that signal no longer imposes restricted movement. This ensures you have a clear view of the subsequent aspect and the block is safe to continue at a higher speed. In practice, you don't stop at every signal or wait for a new instruction; you ride the restrictions forward to the point where the next signal indicates it's safe to accelerate. The other options don't fit because they either assume waiting for further instructions, waiting for interlocking clearance, or continuing beyond a still-restricting signal.

5. The information about a fixed signal may be shared over the radio only under which condition?

A. Only when the signal is green

B. The information is given between members of the same crew or the information is needed to warn of an emergency

C. Only when the signal is malfunctioning

D. Only when the information is posted publicly

Communicating fixed-signal information over the radio is restricted to those who actually need it to operate safely. The rule is that this information can be shared within the same crew, so everyone on the train has the necessary instructions, and it can be shared to warn others if there's an emergency. This keeps the information targeted, reduces the chance of confusion, and avoids exposing sensitive signaling details to people who don't need them. Other scenarios don't fit because sharing with people outside the crew or publicly would clutter lines of communication and could lead to miscommunication or safety risks. Likewise, limiting sharing only to times when a signal is green or only when a signal is malfunctioning doesn't align with the safety need to promptly inform crew members and, in emergencies, warn others as needed.

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6. Blue signals that have been placed by the car department can be removed by :

A. The RTC supervisor

B. Only the craft or group who place them

C. Any employee on duty

D. The track supervisor

Blue signals placed by the car department are a protection measure for ongoing work. The crew that places them is responsible for safeguarding that specific work area and for knowing exactly when the work is finished and it's safe to remove the protection. Allowing someone else to remove the signals could lead to removing protection too soon or without full awareness of the current conditions, creating a serious safety risk. While supervisors may oversee operations, they do not carry the authority to remove blue signals placed by the car department. Similarly, any employee on duty might not have complete knowledge of the work status. Therefore, the proper person to remove these blue signals is the craft or group that placed them.

7. In order to apply the air brakes on cars attached to a locomotive with the air cut in, you would tell the engineer to set brakes (piston out) or release the brakes (piston in)?

A. Release brakes (piston in)

B. Set brakes (piston out)

C. Hold brakes (piston mid)

D. None

Brakes are applied by the brake cylinder pushing the piston outward. When the air system is supplying the train (air cut in), a brake command that applies the train brakes makes the piston extend, pressing the brake shoes against the wheels. Therefore, to apply the air brakes on cars attached to a locomotive, you tell the engineer to set brakes, so the piston moves out. Releasing brakes would retract the piston (piston in) and release the braking force.

8. What is the proper action regarding a derail in the vicinity to ensure safety before movement?

A. Leave it as is

B. Lock the derail in the derailing position

C. Lock the derail in the non-derailing position

D. Remove the derail from service

When a derail is nearby and movement is about to occur, the device should be secured so it cannot cause an unintended derail. A derail has two positions: non-derailing, where the wheel runs on the rail as normal, and derailing, where the wheel would be guided off the rail. Locking the derail in the non-derailing position ensures trains or equipment can move safely without being diverted off the track. This keeps the movement on the intended route and protects workers and equipment. Leaving it in the derailing position could trigger a derailment unexpectedly, while removing the device from service is unnecessary unless the entire device is being removed for maintenance.

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9. If you are hit by a detector for a hot wheel or hot journal, you must not travel over which switch while the engineer pulls up for inspection?

A. Diverging Route Switch

B. Switch Facing Point Switch

C. Grade Crossing Switch

D. Mainline-Crossover Switch

When a detector flags a hot wheel or hot journal, the train must stop and the crew will inspect. The safety issue is crossing a switch that is facing the point while the locomotive is still in the process of stopping and the switch may not be secured for the train's route. A facing-point switch has the points ahead of the train's lead axle, so if the switch isn't properly lined and locked, the wheel can be forced onto the wrong rail as you pass, risking a derailment. For that reason, you must not travel over that switch until the engineer has completed the inspection and the switch is confirmed to be correctly relined and secured. Other switch types may be managed or protected differently, but the facing-point switch presents the most immediate derailment risk in this scenario.

10. If you are approaching a train on the adjacent track that sets off a dragging equipment detector, your train must immediately:

A. Stop the train immediately until confirmed safe to pass by crew or RTC.

B. Speed up to clear the detectors.

C. Ignore the detector and continue.

D. Sound the horn and proceed.

When a dragging equipment detector on the adjacent track signals, you must stop immediately because a loose or dragging item can cause a derailment or damage if the train keeps moving. The detector flag indicates a potential hazard that you cannot safely assess or clear while in motion. You then wait for explicit clearance from the crew or the Rail Traffic Controller to pass, after they verify that nothing is dragging and it's safe to proceed. Do not try to fix it by speeding up, ignore it, or rely on a horn; those actions do not address the risk and are not permitted.

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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://cnrailroad.examzify.com

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

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