NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENTIAL GENERAL CONTRACTOR 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. **According to building codes, how high must chimneys extend above surrounding structures within a specified distance?**

   A. 1 foot

   B. 2 feet

   C. 3 feet

   D. 4 feet

2. **In regions where the average January temperature is 25°F or less, what is required for wood shingles?**

   A. Solid sheathing

   B. Wood framing

   C. Metal sheathing

   D. Composite materials

3. **What is the maximum corbelled projection allowed beyond the face of an unreinforced hollow masonry wall?**

   A. 1/4 of the wall thickness

   B. 1/2 of the wall thickness

   C. 1/3 of the wall thickness

   D. Equal to the wall thickness

4. **What is the primary function of a general contractor on a construction project?**

   A. To design the project layout

   B. To supervise and manage the construction process

   C. To provide financing for the project

   D. To handle all interior design decisions

5. **Wood shingles must have a slope of what ratio or greater?**

   A. 2:12

   B. 3:12

   C. 4:12

   D. 5:12

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6. What should a contractor do before starting work on a damaged home?

A. Start repairs immediately

B. Conduct a thorough inspection and obtain necessary clearances

C. Discuss improvements with the homeowner

D. Acquire budget estimates from suppliers

7. How high can hollow masonry piers be if their unsupported height is not more than a certain ratio to their least dimension?

A. 2 times their least dimension

B. 3 times their least dimension

C. 4 times their least dimension

D. 5 times their least dimension

8. What is the minimum thickness requirement for draft-stopping materials?

A. 3/8 inch gypsum

B. 1/2 inch plywood

C. 1/2 inch gypsum or 3/8 inch plywood

D. 1 inch plywood

9. What is the correct headroom requirement for stairways in a residential structure?

A. 6 feet 6 inches

B. 6 feet 9 inches

C. 6 feet 7 inches

D. 6 feet 8 inches

10. Which document outlines the type and scope of work a contractor will perform?

A. A project timeline

B. A contract specification

C. A work order

D. An RFP (Request for Proposal)

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. According to building codes, how high must chimneys extend above surrounding structures within a specified distance?

A. 1 foot

B. 2 feet

C. 3 feet

D. 4 feet

In accordance with building codes, chimneys are required to extend above surrounding structures to ensure that they function effectively and safely exhaust combustion gases. The height requirement of 2 feet above any part of the roof that is within 10 horizontal feet is established to prevent the potential for smoke or harmful gases to be trapped or recirculated back into buildings. This height also helps to create effective draft, which is essential for the chimney to vent properly. Moreover, a chimney that rises adequately above nearby structures minimizes the risk of fire hazards and ensures that the emissions clear any obstructions. Other height options might not provide sufficient clearance in various configurations, which could lead to dangerous build-ups of harmful gases or inefficiencies in the chimney's performance. Therefore, the requirement of extending a chimney at least 2 feet above the prevailing roof lines within the specified distance is crucial for maintaining safe and effective ventilation for residential buildings.

2. In regions where the average January temperature is 25°F or less, what is required for wood shingles?

A. Solid sheathing

B. Wood framing

C. Metal sheathing

D. Composite materials

In regions where the average January temperature is 25°F or less, solid sheathing is required for wood shingles primarily due to the need for improved insulation and moisture control. In colder climates, solid sheathing gives a more continuous and uniform support for shingles, which helps to prevent drafts and air leakage that can occur with spaced boards or other less solid structures. Additionally, solid sheathing can help manage ice dam formation, which is a common issue in colder temperatures. Ice dams can cause significant water damage; therefore, a solid surface under the shingles aids in preventing water from infiltrating through gaps. This requirement ensures that the shingles are properly installed in a manner that allows them to perform effectively and last longer despite the adverse weather conditions characteristic of colder regions. Wood framing, metal sheathing, and composite materials may not provide the same level of insulation or moisture management needed in these specific low-temperature environments, which is why they are not the appropriate choices.

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3. What is the maximum corbelled projection allowed beyond the face of an unreinforced hollow masonry wall?

A. 1/4 of the wall thickness

B. 1/2 of the wall thickness

C. 1/3 of the wall thickness

D. Equal to the wall thickness

The maximum corbelled projection allowed beyond the face of an unreinforced hollow masonry wall is defined to ensure structural integrity and stability. A projection that extends too far can create leverage and stress on the wall, leading to potential failure. In this context, a projection of 1/2 of the wall thickness strikes a balance between functionality and safety. It allows for some architectural design flexibility, enabling the masonry to accommodate elements like ledges or architectural features while maintaining enough structural strength. Exceeding this limit could risk the overall stability of the wall, making 1/2 of the wall thickness the maximum allowable projection for corbelled brickwork in compliant construction practices. This understanding aligns with building codes and best practices in masonry construction, ensuring that walls can withstand the loads and forces especially in unreinforced forms, which lack additional support mechanisms typically associated with reinforced masonry.

4. What is the primary function of a general contractor on a construction project?

A. To design the project layout

B. To supervise and manage the construction process

C. To provide financing for the project

D. To handle all interior design decisions

The primary function of a general contractor on a construction project is to supervise and manage the construction process. This role encompasses a variety of responsibilities that ensure the project is completed on time, within budget, and according to the specified quality standards. A general contractor coordinates between different subcontractors, suppliers, and workers, facilitating communication and ensuring that tasks are completed in the right sequence. They are also responsible for obtaining the necessary permits, scheduling inspections, and addressing any issues that might arise during construction. In doing so, a general contractor acts as the central figure in the construction project, ensuring that all moving parts come together seamlessly. They provide the leadership needed to guide the project from inception to completion while adhering to safety regulations and compliance standards. This multifaceted role is crucial for the successful execution of construction projects, making the supervision and management of the construction process a defining characteristic of what general contractors do.

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5. Wood shingles must have a slope of what ratio or greater?

A. 2:12

B. 3:12

C. 4:12

D. 5:12

Wood shingles must have a slope of 3:12 or greater to ensure proper water runoff and prevent water from pooling on the roof surface. This slope ratio means that for every 12 horizontal inches, the roof rises 3 vertical inches. A slope of this steepness allows for adequate drainage, which is vital for safeguarding the shingles from water damage, moss growth, and potential leaks. If the slope is less than 3:12, wood shingles may not shed water effectively, increasing the risk of issues such as deterioration, and may not comply with building codes or manufacturer recommendations for wood roofing materials. Understanding the importance of the slope helps in making informed decisions in both construction and maintenance, as it directly impacts the longevity and performance of the roofing system.

6. What should a contractor do before starting work on a damaged home?

A. Start repairs immediately

B. Conduct a thorough inspection and obtain necessary clearances

C. Discuss improvements with the homeowner

D. Acquire budget estimates from suppliers

Before a contractor begins work on a damaged home, conducting a thorough inspection and obtaining necessary clearances is essential. This step allows the contractor to assess the extent of the damage, identify any potential hazards, and understand the specific repairs needed for the property. A comprehensive inspection helps to uncover underlying issues that may not be immediately visible, such as structural problems, water damage, or mold, which could affect both the safety of the crew and the future integrity of the home. Furthermore, obtaining necessary clearances ensures that the contractor is compliant with local regulations, building codes, and any permits required for the work. This diligence protects both the homeowner's investment and the contractor's credibility. In contrast, starting repairs immediately could lead to overlooking critical problems that could worsen over time. Discussing improvements with the homeowner is important, but it should occur after assessing the damage to provide informed options. Acquiring budget estimates from suppliers is a useful step but should come after a thorough evaluation has been conducted to create an accurate scope of work. Therefore, the emphasis on inspection and obtaining clearances establishes a solid foundation for any subsequent actions.

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7. How high can hollow masonry piers be if their unsupported height is not more than a certain ratio to their least dimension?

A. 2 times their least dimension

B. 3 times their least dimension

C. 4 times their least dimension

D. 5 times their least dimension

Hollow masonry piers, which are structural elements often used to support loads in a building, must adhere to specific engineering guidelines regarding their height in relation to their least dimension. The height-to-least-dimension ratio is crucial for ensuring stability and structural integrity. The established ratio of up to four times the least dimension for unsupported height is grounded in engineering principles that take into account the material properties and the load-bearing capabilities of masonry. This limitation helps to prevent buckling and structural failure under load. By adhering to this guideline, builders can ensure that the piers can safely carry the intended loads without compromising safety. This is essential for maintaining the overall integrity of the structure and for ensuring that it complies with building codes and standards designed to promote longevity and safety in construction. Thus, the correct choice reflects industry best practices and regulatory standards for constructing hollow masonry piers.

8. What is the minimum thickness requirement for draft-stopping materials?

A. 3/8 inch gypsum

B. 1/2 inch plywood

C. 1/2 inch gypsum or 3/8 inch plywood

D. 1 inch plywood

Minimum thickness requirements for draft-stopping materials are crucial for ensuring both safety and compliance with building codes. Draft-stopping limits the movement of air and smoke through concealed spaces in buildings. In this context, the correct answer indicates that either 1/2 inch gypsum or 3/8 inch plywood can be utilized as acceptable materials for draft-stopping. Using 1/2 inch gypsum board is a common practice as it provides a sturdy barrier capable of resisting the passage of smoke and flames. Similarly, 3/8 inch plywood offers sufficient strength and durability for achieving the desired fire stop performance. Building codes typically specify these thicknesses based on their ability to effectively manage fire and smoke in spaces that may otherwise allow these elements to travel freely, increasing risk. In contrast, the other options do not fully meet the standards set for draft-stopping. While 3/8 inch gypsum is a standard size, it does not provide the same level of fire protection as the specified materials, and options such as 1 inch plywood exceed the requirement unnecessarily. Understanding these nuances is essential for compliance with building codes and for ensuring safety in construction practices.

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9. What is the correct headroom requirement for stairways in a residential structure?

A. 6 feet 6 inches

B. 6 feet 9 inches

C. 6 feet 7 inches

D. 6 feet 8 inches

The correct headroom requirement for stairways in a residential structure is 6 feet 8 inches. This specific height is established to ensure that occupants can comfortably and safely navigate the stairway without the risk of bumping their heads, particularly when carrying objects or using the stairs in a typical manner. Adequate headroom reduces the likelihood of accidents and enhances overall safety within the home. Building codes, including those applicable in North Carolina, set these minimum requirements to promote safety and accessibility throughout residential structures. The headroom measurement is taken vertically from the sloped line adjacent to the stair tread nosing to the ceiling or any overhead obstruction. It's crucial for contractors and builders to adhere to this standard during construction and renovation projects to comply with local building codes and regulations, ensuring the well-being of the residents.

10. Which document outlines the type and scope of work a contractor will perform?

A. A project timeline

B. A contract specification

C. A work order

D. An RFP (Request for Proposal)

The contract specification is a comprehensive and formal document that details the specific types of work a contractor will perform as part of a construction project. This document serves as a critical reference point for all parties involved, outlining not only the scope of work but also the materials to be used, quality standards, and any applicable codes or regulations that must be adhered to. By establishing clear expectations and requirements, the contract specification helps to prevent misunderstandings and disputes between the contractor and the client. It is an essential part of the contractual agreement, ensuring that both parties have a shared understanding of what the project entails and the responsibilities involved. In contrast, a project timeline focuses primarily on the scheduling and sequencing of tasks rather than the specifics of the work itself. A work order is typically a shorter document used to communicate specific tasks to be performed but lacks the detailed scope and specifications contained within a contract specification. An RFP (Request for Proposal) is used to solicit proposals from contractors and outlines what the client is looking for in terms of project goals and scope, but it does not detail the obligations of the contractor once selected.

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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:

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

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