STRUCTURAL SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) 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. When does the secondary search take place?

A. During active fire growth

B. Immediately after arrival

C. After the fire is under control

D. Before the fire starts

2. What is a risk-benefit analysis in SAR planning?

A. It evaluates whether potential rescue benefit justifies risks to rescuers and victims.

B. It focuses solely on equipment costs.

C. It ignores risks to rescuers entirely.

D. It prioritizes speed over safety in all cases.

3. Search and rescue marks should be placed:

A. On the lower third of the door, the lower third of the adjacent wall, or in the landing of the adjacent stairs

B. On the lower third of the adjacent wall

C. In the landing of the adjacent stairs

D. On the ceiling

4. Why should firefighters exit the IDLH before their low-pressure alarm activates?

A. The remaining air is insufficient to exit from deep inside a large structure and does not take into account emergencies that may be encountered

B. Because the alarm is unreliable

C. To save time

D. Because training requires it

5. Escaping to a safe haven is the best option when:

A. There is imminent threat of structural collapse

B. The fire is fully extinguished

C. You are outside the building

D. The alarm stops

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6. How do you determine appropriate cribbing size and height?

A. Based on the load alone.

B. Based on the height available.

C. Based on the distribution area only.

D. Based on the load, distribution area, and required height, ensuring multiple layers and cross-bracing for stability.

7. What is the purpose of load transfer during stabilization?

A. To increase the building's weight on weak sections.

B. To transfer loads to lower floors only.

C. To remove loads from the structure entirely.

D. To move loads from the compromised structure to stable supports, reducing the risk of further collapse.

8. What is the primary reason for knowing your point of no return in air management?

A. To determine when you must exit before air runs out

B. To maximize fuel efficiency

C. To decide when to switch teams

D. To plan for a second rescue attempt

9. If an exterior wall must be breached during search and rescue operations, rescue personnel:

A. Breach immediately to gain access

B. breach only after a full search of the exterior perimeter

C. Notify the building owner before any action

D. Must coordinate with the IC and ventilation teams before making the opening

10. What is the proper PPE decontamination sequence after exposure to hazardous materials?

A. Decontaminate skin and eyes before doffing contaminated gear.

B. Doffing contaminated gear outside, decontaminate skin and eyes, bag and isolate contaminated items, and medically evaluate if exposure occurred.

C. Skip decon and continue working.

D. Wash hands and return to duty.

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. When does the secondary search take place?

A. During active fire growth

B. Immediately after arrival

C. After the fire is under control

D. Before the fire starts

Secondary search is done after the fire has been brought under control, during the overhaul phase. Once conditions are safer and the immediate heat and flames are reduced, crews can conduct a thorough, systematic check of all areas—especially concealed spaces like walls, ceilings, and voids—to confirm no occupants remain and to detect any hidden pockets of fire that could rekindle. This timing allows a more complete search than what's possible during active fire growth, and it follows the initial search that occurs upon arrival while suppression is still ongoing. Leaving the fire site before the fire is controlled would miss people or hidden fires; searching before the fire starts isn't feasible, and searching immediately after arrival is typically part of the initial, rapid search rather than the thorough secondary check.

2. What is a risk-benefit analysis in SAR planning?

A. It evaluates whether potential rescue benefit justifies risks to rescuers and victims.

B. It focuses solely on equipment costs.

C. It ignores risks to rescuers entirely.

D. It prioritizes speed over safety in all cases.

Risk-benefit analysis in SAR planning is the process of weighing the potential rescue benefits against the risks to rescuers and victims to decide whether, how, or when to proceed. Benefits are measured in lives saved, injuries prevented, or safety improvements, while risks include injury or death to rescuers, worsening of the victim's condition, or compromising the mission due to environmental hazards. This analysis guides decisions to continue with a plan, modify tactics, or abort the operation, always balancing safety with effectiveness. It's not just about costs or speed; it's about weighing safety against potential gains. Focusing only on costs misses the benefits and risks, ignoring rescuers' risks is unsafe, and prioritizing speed in all cases contradicts the need for a thoughtful, balanced assessment.

3. Search and rescue marks should be placed:

A. On the lower third of the door, the lower third of the adjacent wall, or in the landing of the adjacent stairs

B. On the lower third of the adjacent wall

C. In the landing of the adjacent stairs

D. On the ceiling

Marks should be placed where they're most likely to be seen by other rescuers as they move through a smoke-filled or debris-filled environment. The lower third of the door, the lower third of the adjacent wall, or on the landing of the adjacent stairs keeps the mark at a visible, practical height and in a predictable location. This height stays within typical line of sight and is not easily obscured by smoke, heat, or clutter, so teams can quickly confirm a space has been searched and know where to look next. Placing marks on the ceiling is avoided because marks up high are easy to miss in poor visibility. Marking on the door or nearby surfaces (wall or stair landing) also helps when doors are left open or partially blocked, ensuring the mark remains in view from the approach.

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4. Why should firefighters exit the IDLH before their low-pressure alarm activates?

A. The remaining air is insufficient to exit from deep inside a large structure and does not take into account emergencies that may be encountered

B. Because the alarm is unreliable

C. To save time

D. Because training requires it

The important idea is air management and safe egress. The low pressure alarm is a warning, not a guarantee you can safely get out. If you're deep inside a large structure, the trip back to an exit can be longer or more difficult than expected, with stairs, obstacles, changes in conditions, or new emergencies arising that increase air use or force detours. Waiting for the alarm to go off means you may run out of usable air before you can reach safety. Planning to exit the IDLH before that alarm activates gives you a safety margin to handle unforeseen delays or complications and ensures you have enough air to retreat to a safe area. The other reasons don't address the real safety need as effectively: alarms aren't relied on as the sole trigger, and the priority is maintaining a sufficient air reserve for a secure exit, not simply saving time or fulfilling training rules.

5. Escaping to a safe haven is the best option when:

A. There is imminent threat of structural collapse

B. The fire is fully extinguished

C. You are outside the building

D. The alarm stops

When there is imminent threat of structural collapse, moving to a safe haven is the best option because it places you in a location that is structurally sound and protected from falling debris, heat, and smoke while help can be reached. A safe haven provides a temporary refuge where you can wait for rescue without exposing yourself to the immediate hazards of a compromised building. Waiting for the fire to be fully extinguished isn't reliable, because dangerous conditions can persist or recur even after flames seem out, and surprises like hidden embers or structural failures can trap you. Being outside the building means you're already out of the danger zone, so there's no need to seek a safe haven inside. If the alarm stops, hazards can still be present—smoke, gas, or potential reignition—and rescue may still be underway, so that moment isn't a guaranteed signal to relax or remain without shelter.

6. How do you determine appropriate cribbing size and height?

A. Based on the load alone.

B. Based on the height available.

C. Based on the distribution area only.

D. Based on the load, distribution area, and required height, ensuring multiple layers and cross-bracing for stability.

Determining cribbing size and height is about balancing the load, the contact area, and how tall the setup needs to be, with stability built in through multiple layers and cross-bracing. Start by estimating the load you must support and choose cribbing that can carry that force with a safe margin, so the members won't crush or deform. Next, consider how that load will distribute across the ground or surface beneath it; a larger distribution area reduces point pressures and helps prevent failure of the underlying material. Finally, assess how tall you need the structure to be to achieve the rescue objective, ensuring you have enough layers to reach that height without overloading any single piece. Interlocking layers and cross-bracing are essential to keep the stack rigid and resist tipping or lateral movement. Together, these factors—load, distribution area, and required height—guide cribbing selection to create a stable, safe support.

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7. What is the purpose of load transfer during stabilization?

A. To increase the building's weight on weak sections.

B. To transfer loads to lower floors only.

C. To remove loads from the structure entirely.

D. To move loads from the compromised structure to stable supports, reducing the risk of further collapse.

The main idea here is to keep the structure from failing by changing where the weight goes. During stabilization, you're trying to take the load off damaged or unstable parts and move it onto solid, stable supports. By doing this, the compromised areas aren't bearing the full force of the building anymore, which lowers the risk of progressive collapse and creates a safer environment for rescuers and any occupants. In practice, crews use shoring, cribbing, and other supports to route loads to intact bearing points—like strong columns, walls, or the ground—so the overall system has a safe, temporary load path. It's not about adding weight to weak sections, nor is it limited to sending loads to lower floors. The goal is to transfer loads to stable supports to reduce the danger of further collapse. While you can't remove every load completely, the stabilization process aims to divert it away from damaged areas.

8. What is the primary reason for knowing your point of no return in air management?

A. To determine when you must exit before air runs out

B. To maximize fuel efficiency

C. To decide when to switch teams

D. To plan for a second rescue attempt

Knowing your point of no return in air management is about maintaining a safety buffer. It marks the moment when you no longer have enough air to safely reach a designated landing or bailout point and still come back, so continuing would put you at risk of not returning. This threshold drives the crucial decision to exit or abort before air runs out, preserving the crew's ability to reach safety. While other factors like fuel efficiency or team changes can influence how you operate, they aren't the primary trigger for safe decision-making that the point of no return provides.

9. If an exterior wall must be breached during search and rescue operations, rescue personnel:

A. Breach immediately to gain access

B. breach only after a full search of the exterior perimeter

C. Notify the building owner before any action

D. Must coordinate with the IC and ventilation teams before making the opening

Coordinating with the incident commander and the ventilation teams before making any exterior wall opening is essential for safe and effective rescue operations. The incident commander oversees the overall plan and safety priorities, ensuring that a wall breach fits into the tactical objectives and does not create uncontrolled risk. Ventilation teams manage air flow, smoke, heat, and pressure differentials to prevent dangerous conditions such as backdraft, flashover, or smoke spreading to firefighters and trapped civilians. By aligning the breach with the IAP and ventilation strategy, rescuers can choose the opening location and method to minimize hazards, maintain a breathable environment for teams inside, and preserve the structural stability as much as possible. This coordinated approach also improves communication, accountability, and scene control, which are critical when every move can change the fire behavior and victim access. Jumping ahead without IC and ventilation input can cause unpredictable air movement, place rescuers at risk, and undermine the overall rescue effort.

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10. What is the proper PPE decontamination sequence after exposure to hazardous materials?

A. Decontaminate skin and eyes before doffing contaminated gear.

B. Doffing contaminated gear outside, decontaminate skin and eyes, bag and isolate contaminated items, and medically evaluate if exposure occurred.

C. Skip decon and continue working.

D. Wash hands and return to duty.

The aim is to minimize self-contamination and the spread of hazardous material by sequencing decontamination and doffing carefully. Start by cleaning skin and eyes to remove contaminants from the body before touching or removing any gear, reducing the chance that material will be smeared onto clean areas or onto the gear you handle. Doffing contaminated gear outside the exposed zone keeps contaminants out of clean areas and minimizes the risk of bringing hazardous material into the rest of the environment. After gear is removed, decontaminate skin and eyes again because some material can transfer to skin during the removal process, so a second wash helps ensure you're no longer contaminated. Bag and isolate the contaminated items so they can't spread the hazard to others or to clean surfaces while you're finishing up. Finally, seek medical evaluation if exposure occurred to assess the extent of exposure, monitor for symptoms, and determine any needed treatment. This sequence combines effective removal of contaminants with containment and medical follow-up, which is essential for responder safety.

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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://structuralsar.examzify.com

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

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