



Home Inspector

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Practice Questions

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1. What is the minimum clearance required between the service drop conductors and the roof surface over which they pass (where the roof pitch is less than 4 in 12)?

- A. 8 feet
- B. 3 feet
- C. 10 feet
- D. 18 inches

2. When inspecting a main electrical panel, double-tapped breakers (two conductors under one breaker terminal) are generally considered a defect unless:

- A. The breaker is listed for two conductors by the manufacturer
- B. The panel is rated 200 amps or more
- C. Both conductors are the same gauge
- D. The circuit is a dedicated 20-amp circuit

3. A high-efficiency condensing furnace is identified by which characteristic?

- A. A single-pipe flue vented through the roof
- B. A barometric damper on the flue
- C. A PVC vent pipe rather than a metal flue
- D. A standing pilot light

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4. What does the 'R-value' of insulation measure?

- A. The weight per square foot of the insulation material
- B. The moisture resistance of the insulation
- C. The thermal resistance to heat flow
- D. The fire rating of the insulation product



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5. Which pipe material is identified by its blue color and is commonly used for cold-water supply lines?

- A. PEX-B
- B. CPVC
- C. Galvanized steel
- D. Cast iron

6. Which format must a home inspection report use to clearly separate each inspected system or component?

- A. Organized sections for each system with clearly labeled components
- B. A single continuous narrative paragraph covering all systems
- C. A handwritten checklist provided only upon request
- D. An oral summary delivered after the inspection is completed

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7. What is the minimum overlap (headlap) recommended for standard 3-tab asphalt shingles on a roof with a 4:12 pitch?

- A. 2 inches
- B. 1 inch
- C. 4 inches
- D. 6 inches

8. A home inspection is primarily defined as which of the following?

- A. A visual examination of the readily accessible systems and components of a home
- B. A code compliance inspection of all building systems
- C. A guarantee of the current and future condition of the home
- D. An appraisal of the home's market value

9. Which foundation type consists of concrete walls that enclose a usable below-grade space?

- A. Full basement
- B. Crawl space
- C. Slab-on-grade
- D. Pier and beam



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10. The weatherhead (service entrance head) for overhead service conductors must be located at or above which point relative to the service equipment?

- A. At the electric meter
- B. At the main breaker
- C. Above the service-entrance cable connection to the service drop
- D. At grade level

11. What does AFUE stand for in relation to heating equipment?

- A. Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency
- B. Actual Furnace Utility Estimate
- C. Average Forced Unit Efficiency
- D. Ambient Fuel Use Evaluation

12. Which insulation material typically provides the highest R-value per inch of thickness?

- A. Closed-cell spray polyurethane foam
- B. Fiberglass batt insulation
- C. Cellulose blown-in insulation
- D. Mineral wool batt insulation

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13. CPVC pipe differs from standard PVC pipe primarily in that CPVC is:

- A. Gray in color and used only underground
- B. Rated for hot-water supply up to 180°F (82°C)
- C. Approved only for drainage applications
- D. Made of cross-linked polyethylene

14. When a home inspector identifies a condition that is beyond the scope of the inspection, what should the report state?

- A. The inspector's best guess at a repair cost for the condition
- B. That the condition is acceptable and requires no further review
- C. Nothing; conditions outside scope should simply be omitted
- D. That further evaluation by a qualified specialist is recommended



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15. A home inspector observes granule loss in the gutters and bare patches on asphalt shingles. This condition most likely indicates:

- A. Improper fastening during installation
- B. Below-grade ventilation causing condensation
- C. Hail damage to neighboring properties only
- D. Advanced weathering or aging of the shingles

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16. Which of the following best describes the inspector's obligation when a system is not readily accessible during inspection?

- A. The inspector must disassemble components to gain access
- B. The inspector must return at another time to inspect it
- C. The inspector must note it as outside the scope of inspection
- D. The inspector must estimate the condition based on similar systems

17. A concrete slab poured directly on the ground with no below-grade space is called a:

- A. Raft foundation
- B. Grade beam
- C. Slab-on-grade
- D. Mat foundation

18. A residential service entrance conductor must maintain a minimum clearance above a public sidewalk or walkway of:

- A. 8 feet
- B. 10 feet
- C. 12 feet
- D. 15 feet

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19. Which type of furnace heat exchanger poses a carbon-monoxide risk if it develops cracks?

- A. Electric resistance coil
- B. Clam-shell or tubular heat exchanger in a gas furnace
- C. Copper fin-tube radiator
- D. PVC condensate coil

20. A home inspector finds 5.5 inches of fiberglass batt insulation in the attic. Assuming R-3.2 per inch, what is the approximate total R-value?

- A. R-13
- B. R-17.6
- C. R-21
- D. R-11

21. A home inspector notices orange-red, rigid plastic supply pipes connected to a water heater. What material are these pipes most likely made of?

- A. PEX-A
- B. Polybutylene
- C. CPVC
- D. Copper type M

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22. A home inspector discovers an improperly bonded gas pipe near the water heater. How should this be reported?

- A. As a safety hazard requiring immediate correction by a licensed professional
- B. As a cosmetic deficiency with low priority
- C. As within normal limits because bonding rarely causes problems
- D. Only in a verbal summary, not in the written report

23. Which roofing material requires the greatest structural support due to its weight, typically 900–1,200 lb per 100 sq ft (one square)?

- A. Clay tile
- B. Asphalt shingle
- C. Metal standing-seam
- D. Wood shake



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24. The purpose of a home inspection report is to:

- A. Provide an estimate of repair costs for all deficiencies
- B. Describe the condition of inspected systems and components at the time of the inspection
- C. Certify that the home meets all local building codes
- D. Provide a warranty against defects discovered after the inspection

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25. What is the minimum recommended clearance between the ground and floor joists in a crawl space?

- A. 12 inches
- B. 18 inches
- C. 24 inches
- D. 36 inches

26. When inspecting a service entrance, a home inspector finds that the service entrance cable is stapled directly to the wood framing inside the wall cavity without protection. This is a concern because:

- A. It increases voltage drop
- B. It voids the meter warranty
- C. It reduces ampacity below rating
- D. Physical damage to the cable could cause a fire or shock hazard

27. A mid-efficiency gas furnace with 80% AFUE should be vented using what material?

- A. Schedule 40 PVC pipe
- B. Flexible aluminum foil duct
- C. Type B double-wall vent pipe
- D. Single-wall galvanized sheet-metal flue pipe connected to a Type B vent

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28. In cold climates, where should a vapor retarder typically be installed relative to the insulation?

- A. On the cold side, facing toward the exterior
- B. In the middle of the insulation layer
- C. On the underside of the floor joists only
- D. On the warm side, facing toward the interior

29. What deficiency is most commonly associated with polybutylene (PB) water supply piping installed in homes built between 1978 and 1995?

- A. It is too rigid and cracks at fittings when thermally cycled
- B. It corrodes rapidly when exposed to softened water
- C. It off-gasses lead into the water supply
- D. It is prone to failure and leaking, especially at acetal plastic fittings

30. An inspector finds that the home's smoke detectors are missing from every bedroom. How should this condition be categorized in the report?

- A. Minor deficiency — smoke detectors are the owner's responsibility, not inspected
- B. Deferred maintenance item requiring attention within one year
- C. Safety hazard — smoke detectors must be installed per local requirements
- D. Cosmetic issue that does not affect the sale



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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. A — 8 feet

NEC 230.24 requires at least 8 feet of clearance above a roof surface for service conductors where the pitch is less than 4/12. Steeper pitches allow a reduced 3-foot clearance.

2. A — The breaker is listed for two conductors by the manufacturer

Most circuit breakers are only listed for one conductor per terminal. Double-tapping with a breaker not rated for it can cause loose connections, overheating, and nuisance tripping. Only breakers specifically listed (by the manufacturer) for dual conductors are acceptable.

3. C — A PVC vent pipe rather than a metal flue

Condensing furnaces extract so much heat that the flue gases cool below the dew point; the resulting condensate requires corrosion-resistant PVC venting rather than metal flue pipe. This is the field identifier for AFUE \geq 90% units.

4. C — The thermal resistance to heat flow

R-value measures thermal resistance — the higher the R-value, the greater the insulation's ability to resist heat flow. It does not measure weight, moisture, or fire resistance.

5. A — PEX-B

PEX (cross-linked polyethylene) tubing is color-coded: blue for cold water and red for hot water. CPVC is cream/white and used for hot and cold supply; galvanized and cast iron are not color-coded blue.

6. A — Organized sections for each system with clearly labeled components

Home inspection standards of practice require reports to be organized with distinct sections for each system. This allows clients and agents to easily locate information about specific components.

7. A — 2 inches

Standard 3-tab asphalt shingles require a minimum 2-inch headlap on roofs with a 4:12 or steeper pitch to ensure water cannot penetrate the underlying course. Manufacturer instructions typically specify this minimum.

8. A — A visual examination of the readily accessible systems and components of a home

A home inspection is a visual examination of the readily accessible installed systems and components of a home. It is not a code inspection, appraisal, or guarantee of condition.

9. A — Full basement

A full basement foundation uses poured concrete or masonry walls extending several feet below grade, creating an enclosed livable or storage space. Crawl spaces are shallower and not considered basements; slab foundations have no below-grade space; pier-and-beam foundations rest on discrete supports.

10. C — Above the service-entrance cable connection to the service drop

The weatherhead must be positioned at the top of the service entrance so that the drip loop directs water



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away and the conductors enter from above, preventing water infiltration.

11. A — Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency

AFUE — Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency — measures what percentage of fuel is converted to usable heat over a heating season. The higher the AFUE, the more efficient the furnace.

12. A — Closed-cell spray polyurethane foam

Closed-cell spray polyurethane foam achieves approximately R-6 to R-7 per inch, the highest of common insulation types. Fiberglass, cellulose, and mineral wool typically range from R-3 to R-4 per inch.

13. B — Rated for hot-water supply up to 180°F (82°C)

CPVC (chlorinated polyvinyl chloride) is formulated to withstand higher temperatures—up to approximately 180°F—making it suitable for hot-water distribution inside homes. Standard PVC is limited to cold water and drainage.

14. D — That further evaluation by a qualified specialist is recommended

When a condition exceeds the inspector's scope or expertise, the report should recommend further evaluation by an appropriate specialist. Guessing at costs or omitting the observation entirely would be a disservice to the client.

15. D — Advanced weathering or aging of the shingles

Granules protect the asphalt mat from UV degradation. Heavy granule loss in gutters combined with bare patches signals the shingles are near or past their service life due to weathering and UV exposure.

16. C — The inspector must note it as outside the scope of inspection

If a system or component is not readily accessible, the inspector must note it as outside the scope of the inspection in the report. Inspectors are not required to disassemble components or make multiple visits.

17. C — Slab-on-grade

A slab-on-grade is a single layer of concrete poured directly on prepared soil, providing the floor and foundation in one element. Raft and mat foundations are large floating slabs used on poor soils; grade beams are thickened edges of slabs or beams connecting piers.

18. B — 10 feet

NEC 230.24(B) requires service conductors to maintain at least 10 feet of clearance above walkways accessible only to pedestrians, ensuring pedestrian safety beneath the wires.

19. B — Clam-shell or tubular heat exchanger in a gas furnace

In a gas furnace, combustion gases pass through the heat exchanger while circulating air flows over the outside. A cracked heat exchanger can allow combustion byproducts—including CO—to enter the living space.

20. B — R-17.6

5.5 inches \times R-3.2 per inch = R-17.6. R-13 corresponds to 3.5-inch batts in a 2 \times 4 wall, not 5.5 inches of attic insulation.

21. C — CPVC

CPVC supply pipe is cream or light yellow, but the newer 'hot-water' variant sold under brands such as FlowGuard Gold is often distinguished from PVC by its buff/cream color. Orange-red rigid plastic near a water heater is most consistent with CPVC, which is the only common hot-water-rated rigid plastic. PEX is flexible;



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polybutylene is gray/blue and no longer manufactured.

22. A — As a safety hazard requiring immediate correction by a licensed professional

An improperly bonded gas pipe creates a shock and fire risk and is a safety hazard. It must be noted in the written report and referred to a licensed professional for correction.

23. A — Clay tile

Clay tile is one of the heaviest roofing materials at roughly 900–1,200 lbs per square, compared to ~250 lbs for asphalt shingles. Inspectors must consider whether the framing was designed for this extra load.

24. B — Describe the condition of inspected systems and components at the time of the inspection

A home inspection report describes the condition of inspected systems and components at the time of the inspection. It is not a cost estimate, code certification, or warranty.

25. B — 18 inches

Most building codes and the IRC require at least 18 inches of clearance between the ground and the bottom of floor joists in a crawl space to allow for inspection and maintenance. Tighter clearances impede access and moisture management.

26. D — Physical damage to the cable could cause a fire or shock hazard

Service entrance cable in accessible locations must be protected from physical damage. Unprotected cable is subject to nail punctures and abrasion, which can compromise the insulation and create hazards.

27. D — Single-wall galvanized sheet-metal flue pipe connected to a Type B vent

An 80% AFUE non-condensing furnace produces hot flue gases. The code-compliant approach is single-wall connector pipe from the furnace to a Type B double-wall vent or masonry chimney; single-wall alone is not permitted in concealed spaces or within combustible framing.

28. D — On the warm side, facing toward the interior

In cold climates the vapor retarder is placed on the warm-in-winter (interior) side of the insulation to slow moisture migration from the living space into the wall cavity, where it could condense.

29. D — It is prone to failure and leaking, especially at acetal plastic fittings

Polybutylene tubing and its acetal plastic fittings were found to react with chlorine and oxidants in municipal water, causing micro-fractures and leaks. A class-action settlement (Cox v. Shell) addressed these failures. Inspectors must note PB as a deficiency requiring evaluation.

30. C — Safety hazard — smoke detectors must be installed per local requirements

Smoke detectors are a life-safety item. Absence in sleeping areas is a safety hazard, not a deferred maintenance item. The inspector should note missing detectors and recommend installation per local building codes.



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