



HSE Specialist Safety Prep

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Practice Questions

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1. What is the minimum class rating required for a safety helmet to be used on a construction site in the UK?

- A. EN 471
- B. EN 166
- C. EN 345
- D. EN 397

2. How often should Class 3 safety harnesses be inspected by a competent person?

- A. Every three months
- B. Every month
- C. Every six months
- D. Annually

3. Which type of fire extinguisher should NEVER be used on a chip pan fire?

- A. Fire blanket
- B. Water
- C. Wet chemical
- D. Foam

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4. What voltage is the standard requirement for portable electrical tools on UK construction sites?

- A. 110 volts
- B. 240 volts
- C. 415 volts
- D. 12 volts



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5. What does a yellow PAT testing label on electrical equipment indicate?

- A. Battery powered equipment
- B. Failed test
- C. 240 volt equipment
- D. 110 volt equipment

6. What is the maximum safe angle for leaning a ladder against a wall using the 1:4 rule?

- A. 60 degrees
- B. 45 degrees
- C. 75 degrees
- D. 90 degrees

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7. What is the minimum height of the top guardrail on a working platform?

- A. 750 mm
- B. 950 mm
- C. 1100 mm
- D. 850 mm

8. Before using a Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP), what must the operator check FIRST?

- A. That they have valid training and certification for that type of MEWP
- B. The weather forecast for the day
- C. The emergency descent system only
- D. The fuel level

9. What colour is a mandatory safety sign, such as one requiring PPE to be worn?

- A. Yellow triangle with black symbol
- B. Red circle with white bar
- C. Green rectangle with white symbol
- D. Blue circle with white symbol

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10. How far should trailing electrical cables be supported off the ground to prevent damage and tripping hazards?

- A. At least 3 metres
- B. At least 1 metre
- C. At least 2 metres
- D. At least 500 mm

11. What is the main purpose of a toeboard on a scaffold platform?

- A. To provide additional support for the platform
- B. To prevent tools and materials falling from the platform
- C. To mark the edge of the working area
- D. To prevent water pooling on the platform

12. A scaffold inspection tag shows it was last inspected 8 days ago. Can you use the scaffold?

- A. No, it must be re-inspected before use
- B. Yes, inspections are valid for 14 days
- C. Yes, but only for light work
- D. Yes, if it looks safe

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13. What does a red prohibition sign with a diagonal bar indicate?

- A. A hazard warning
- B. Fire-fighting equipment location
- C. Emergency exit route
- D. An action that must not be taken

14. What is the recommended minimum number of first aiders required on a construction site with 50 workers?

- A. At least three first aiders
- B. No specific requirement
- C. At least one appointed first aider
- D. At least five first aiders



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15. Poor housekeeping on site is MOST likely to result in which type of accident?

- A. Electrocution
- B. Slips, trips and falls
- C. Asbestos exposure
- D. Noise-induced hearing loss

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16. When should a ladder extend above the landing point or step-off platform?

- A. At least 1 metre above
- B. Exactly level with the platform
- C. At least 500 mm above
- D. At least 2 metres above

17. What is the maximum voltage allowed for portable hand lamps in confined or damp locations?

- A. 12 volts
- B. 110 volts
- C. 50 volts
- D. 25 volts

18. Which colour fire extinguisher contains dry powder and is suitable for most fire types?

- A. Cream label
- B. Black label
- C. Blue label
- D. Yellow label

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19. What is the FIRST action you should take when discovering a small fire on site?

- A. Try to extinguish it immediately
- B. Raise the alarm
- C. Investigate the cause
- D. Close all doors and windows



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20. How often must Residual Current Devices (RCDs) be tested on construction sites?

- A. Daily
- B. Weekly
- C. Monthly
- D. Before first use only

21. What is the minimum safe working distance for mobile plant operating near overhead power lines rated at 33 kV?

- A. 15 metres
- B. 3 metres
- C. 9 metres
- D. 6 metres

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22. Before excavation work begins, what is the PRIMARY purpose of using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) and Signal Generator (Genny)?

- A. To test soil contamination levels
- B. To measure soil compaction
- C. To locate underground services
- D. To determine the water table depth

23. Under what circumstances can an excavator be used as a lifting appliance on a construction site?

- A. Whenever the site supervisor gives permission
- B. When it has been designed, tested and certified for lifting by the manufacturer
- C. Only for loads under 500 kg
- D. When no other lifting equipment is available

24. What document must be in place before entering a confined space on a construction site?

- A. A permit-to-work
- B. A toolbox talk register
- C. A COSHH assessment only
- D. A delivery note

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25. What is the minimum depth of excavation at which edge protection or barriers must be provided to prevent falls?

- A. 5 metres
- B. 1 metre
- C. 3 metres
- D. 2 metres

26. Who must be appointed in writing to supervise lifting operations involving a tower crane on site?

- A. The crane operator
- B. Any site supervisor
- C. An appointed person
- D. The health and safety officer

27. What colour are underground gas pipes typically painted or marked in the UK utility colour code?

- A. Red
- B. Yellow
- C. Blue
- D. Green

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28. Before a lift is made using a mobile crane, what calculation must be checked to ensure safety?

- A. The radius and safe working load from the load chart
- B. The fuel consumption rate
- C. The crane's service history
- D. The operator's hours worked that day

29. In a confined space entry scenario, what is the PRIMARY role of the standby person positioned outside?

- A. To prevent unauthorized access to the work area only
- B. To pass tools and materials into the space
- C. To record the time spent in the confined space
- D. To maintain communication and raise the alarm if needed



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30. What is the purpose of a Temporary Works Coordinator (TWC) on a construction project?

- A. To manage subcontractor payments
- B. To order materials for the project
- C. To ensure temporary structures are properly designed, checked and installed
- D. To conduct final building inspections



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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. D — EN 397

Safety helmets used on construction sites must meet EN 397 standard as a minimum. This ensures adequate protection against falling objects and impact.

2. C — Every six months

Class 3 safety harnesses must be formally inspected by a competent person every six months, in addition to daily pre-use checks by the user.

3. B — Water

Water extinguishers must never be used on cooking oil or chip pan fires as the water will cause the burning oil to explode and spread, creating a much larger fire hazard.

4. A — 110 volts

110 volts centre-tapped to earth (55V to earth) is the standard for portable tools on construction sites as it significantly reduces the risk of fatal electric shock.

5. D — 110 volt equipment

A yellow PAT testing label indicates that the equipment is rated at 110 volts, which is the standard voltage for portable equipment on construction sites.

6. C — 75 degrees

The 1:4 rule means the base of the ladder should be 1 unit out for every 4 units up, creating an angle of approximately 75 degrees from the horizontal for safe and stable use.

7. B — 950 mm

The top guardrail on a working platform must be at least 950 mm above the platform surface to provide effective fall protection as required by the Work at Height Regulations.

8. A — That they have valid training and certification for that type of MEWP

Before using any MEWP, the operator must first ensure they hold valid certification and training for that specific type of machine to operate it safely and legally.

9. D — Blue circle with white symbol

Mandatory signs that require specific actions, such as wearing PPE, are blue circles with white symbols. This is the standard under the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations.

10. C — At least 2 metres

Trailing cables should be suspended at least 2 metres above ground level or walkways to prevent damage from vehicles and plant, and to eliminate tripping hazards.

11. B — To prevent tools and materials falling from the platform

Toeboards (minimum 150 mm high) are designed to prevent tools, materials and debris from falling off the edge of working platforms and potentially injuring people below.



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12. A — No, it must be re-inspected before use

Scaffolds must be inspected at least every 7 days and after any event that could affect stability. An 8-day-old inspection is out of date, so the scaffold should not be used until re-inspected.

13. D — An action that must not be taken

Red circular signs with a diagonal bar are prohibition signs that indicate actions that must not be taken, such as no smoking, no entry, or no unauthorised access.

14. C — At least one appointed first aider

For construction sites with 50 workers, HSE guidance recommends at least one appointed first aider per 50 workers, plus adequate provision of first aid equipment and facilities.

15. B — Slips, trips and falls

Poor housekeeping, such as materials left in walkways, debris, and cluttered work areas, is the leading cause of slips, trips and falls, which account for the majority of construction site injuries.

16. A — At least 1 metre above

To provide a safe handhold when getting on or off, a ladder should extend at least 1 metre (approximately 5 rungs) above the landing point or platform.

17. D — 25 volts

In confined spaces or damp locations, portable hand lamps must be no more than 25 volts to minimise the risk of electric shock in these higher-risk environments.

18. C — Blue label

Dry powder fire extinguishers have a blue label and can be used on Class A (combustibles), Class B (flammable liquids), Class C (gases) and electrical fires, making them versatile for most situations.

19. B — Raise the alarm

The first priority on discovering any fire is to raise the alarm so that everyone on site is alerted to evacuate. Only then should you attempt to fight a small fire if safe to do so and you are trained.

20. A — Daily

RCDs protecting electrical equipment on construction sites must be tested daily using the built-in test button to ensure they will operate correctly and provide protection against electric shock.

21. D — 6 metres

For overhead power lines rated between 33 kV and 66 kV, the minimum safe working distance is 6 metres to prevent arcing and electrocution risks.

22. C — To locate underground services

A CAT and Genny are used together to locate and trace underground services such as electric cables, gas pipes, and telecommunications lines before digging to prevent strikes.

23. B — When it has been designed, tested and certified for lifting by the manufacturer

Excavators can only be used for lifting if they have been specifically designed and tested for that purpose by the manufacturer, with appropriate certification and marked safe working loads.

24. A — A permit-to-work

A permit-to-work system is mandatory for confined space entry. It ensures all risks have been assessed,



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controls are in place, and authorized persons approve the work before entry.

25. D — 2 metres

Edge protection must be provided for excavations 2 metres or deeper to prevent workers from falling in. Shallower excavations may also require protection depending on risk assessment.

26. C — An appointed person

Under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER), an appointed person must be designated in writing to plan and supervise all lifting operations.

27. B — Yellow

According to UK utility marking standards, gas pipes are identified with yellow markings to distinguish them from other underground services.

28. A — The radius and safe working load from the load chart

The radius and load chart must be checked to ensure the crane's safe working load is not exceeded at the specific operating radius and configuration.

29. D — To maintain communication and raise the alarm if needed

The standby person maintains constant communication with workers inside the confined space and can raise the alarm and initiate rescue procedures if an emergency occurs.

30. C — To ensure temporary structures are properly designed, checked and installed

The TWC ensures that temporary structures such as scaffolding, propping, and excavation support are properly designed, checked, and safely installed before use.



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