

PRACTICE EXAM 9 — WDI CATEGORY SIMULATION (50 QUESTIONS)

1. Which is the single most reliable indicator that a subterranean termite infestation is currently active?

- A. A broken mud tube that termites rebuild with fresh material
- B. The general age of the structure being inspected
- C. A history of swarmers reported several years ago
- D. The presence of an old, dry, crumbling tube

2. Of the following, which is the most accurate statement about drywood termites?

- A. They require constant soil moisture to survive
- B. They build extensive mud tubes across foundations
- C. They live within the wood and need no external moisture
- D. They form the largest colonies of any termite group

3. Which is the primary reason a non-repellent termiticide is often preferred for colony control?

- A. Termites tunnel through it unaware and transfer it to nestmates
- B. It produces a strong odor that drives termites away
- C. It kills every termite instantly on contact with the soil
- D. It is always the least expensive product available

4. Which feature is the most dependable single way to distinguish a termite from an ant in the field?

- A. The overall color of the insect's body
- B. The shape of the waist, broad versus pinched

- C. The size of the insect relative to a coin
- D. The time of year the insect is observed

5. Which is the most appropriate treatment for a drywood termite infestation distributed throughout an entire multi-story structure?

- A. A perimeter trench of liquid soil termiticide
- B. Localized injection of a single accessible beam
- C. Whole-structure tent fumigation of the building
- D. Improving the ventilation of the crawlspace

6. Which statement about the pesticide label is the most accurate?

- A. Only the first-aid section carries legal weight
- B. The label may be disregarded for severe infestations
- C. The label is an advisory guideline open to interpretation
- D. Using a product inconsistently with the label is illegal

7. Which is the single most effective long-term measure for preventing most wood-destroying organisms?

- A. Controlling moisture in and around the structure
- B. Painting every exterior wood surface annually
- C. Raising the indoor thermostat temperature
- D. Removing all vegetation from the entire property

8. Which is the most precise description of the worker caste's role?

- A. Defending the colony against invading predators

- B. Foraging for and consuming the cellulose in wood
- C. Laying the eggs that sustain the colony's growth
- D. Flying from the colony to establish new nests

9. Which is the most accurate statement about the relationship between LD50 and toxicity?

- A. A higher LD50 indicates a more toxic substance
- B. A lower LD50 indicates a more toxic substance
- C. LD50 measures only chronic, long-term toxicity
- D. LD50 is identical across all registered pesticides

10. Which is the best reason the substructure is prioritized in a termite inspection?

- A. It contains the home's most valuable finished surfaces
- B. It is consistently the easiest area to access quickly
- C. It sits closest to the soil, the main subterranean entry route
- D. It is the only location where drywood termites can live

11. Which statement about conducive conditions is the most accurate?

- A. They are always evidence of active infestation
- B. They guarantee that an infestation is currently present
- C. They can never exist without an active infestation
- D. They favor infestation but are not themselves infestation

12. Which is the most reliable sign for identifying a drywood termite infestation specifically?

- A. Pencil-width mud tubes climbing a foundation wall

- B. Soil-streaked galleries following the wood grain
- C. Clean galleries with coarse debris and insect parts
- D. Six-sided fecal pellets ejected through kick-out holes

13. Which is the primary purpose of a termite shield installed on a foundation?

- A. To force termites into the open where they are visible
- B. To chemically poison termites on contact with the metal
- C. To permanently block all termite entry into the wood
- D. To provide structural support to the floor framing above

14. Which is the most accurate statement about the federal-state regulatory relationship?

- A. The EPA personally issues each applicator's license
- B. States may exceed the federal baseline but not fall below it
- C. States must set requirements identical to the federal baseline
- D. FIFRA prohibits states from running certification programs

15. Which is the single best first step upon arriving at an inspection?

- A. Drilling the slab to inspect the soil beneath it
- B. Applying a preventive termiticide to the perimeter
- C. Gathering the property's prior pest and treatment history
- D. Certifying the structure based on its outward appearance

16. Which is the most accurate reason mixing and loading is the highest-risk step?

- A. The product is handled in its most concentrated form

- B. The product is already fully diluted and harmless
- C. No protective equipment is required at this stage
- D. The pesticide label does not apply during mixing

17. Which statement most accurately distinguishes carpenter ants from termites?

- A. Carpenter ants consume wood as their primary food
- B. Carpenter ants require constant soil contact to live
- C. Carpenter ants leave six-sided pellets beneath wood
- D. Carpenter ants excavate wood to nest but do not eat it

18. Which is the most precise reason a treated soil zone must be continuous?

- A. A continuous zone lowers the cost of the product used
- B. Subterranean termites will exploit any gap to reach the wood
- C. Gaps improve ventilation beneath the treated structure
- D. Termites die the instant they approach any treated soil

19. Which is the most accurate statement about wood-decay fungi?

- A. They can grow and damage wood that remains completely dry
- B. They reduce moisture in the surrounding wood as they grow
- C. They are identical to surface mold in their effect on wood
- D. They require elevated wood moisture in order to grow

20. Which is the best description of why an inspection cannot guarantee a structure is "termite-free"?

- A. Termites are incapable of infesting most structures

- B. Federal law forbids any positive findings in a report
- C. The guarantee would unfairly raise the inspection fee
- D. The inspection covers only visible, accessible areas

21. Which is the most accurate statement about the Formosan subterranean termite?

- A. It lives entirely within dry attic framing
- B. It requires no moisture and ignores the soil
- C. It builds moisture-retaining carton nests and huge colonies
- D. It produces six-sided pellets like a drywood termite

22. Which is the single most important environmental concern specific to soil termiticide application?

- A. Excessive noise disturbing nearby residents
- B. Contamination of wells and groundwater
- C. Visible staining of the foundation concrete
- D. A temporary rise in the indoor temperature

23. Which is the most accurate statement about the CORE exam?

- A. It tests only wood-destroying insect identification
- B. It applies solely to agricultural pesticide users
- C. It replaces the need for any category-specific exam
- D. It covers universal safety knowledge for all applicators

24. Which is the best reason to document inaccessible areas in a report?

- A. To disclose limitations and protect against liability

- B. To make the report appear longer and more thorough
- C. To avoid having to complete an inspection diagram
- D. To guarantee those hidden areas are free of infestation

25. Which is the most accurate statement about swarmers (alates)?

- A. They are the caste that directly consumes the wood
- B. Their elimination destroys the entire colony at once
- C. They build the mud tubes used by the colony
- D. They are reproductives whose presence signals a mature colony

26. Which is the most reliable way to confirm whether a mud tube is active?

- A. Measuring the precise length of the tube
- B. Photographing the tube without disturbing it
- C. Breaking it open to check for live termites or fresh repair
- D. Spraying the tube and returning after one month

27. Which is the most accurate statement about borate wood treatments?

- A. They are effective only against carpenter bees
- B. They remain effective after repeated heavy wetting
- C. They are highly toxic to mammals at use rates
- D. They protect against termites, beetles, and decay fungi

28. Which is the primary advantage of pre-construction termite treatment?

- A. It is performed only after the home is occupied

- B. It relies mainly on drilling through finished slabs
- C. The soil and structural wood are fully accessible
- D. It removes the obligation to follow the product label

29. Which is the most accurate reason trophallaxis is central to termite control?

- A. It allows termites to fly during a swarm
- B. It enables soldiers to defend the colony entrance
- C. It spreads slow-acting baits and non-repellents colony-wide
- D. It eliminates the colony's need to consume cellulose

30. Which statement about the signal word "DANGER" is the most accurate?

- A. It indicates the highest acute toxicity of the three words
- B. It indicates the lowest acute toxicity of the three words
- C. It means the product requires no protective equipment
- D. It means the product is exempt from all label directions

31. Which is the most accurate description of brown rot damage?

- A. It leaves wood bleached, stringy, and spongy
- B. It browns the wood, which cracks into a cubical pattern
- C. It only discolors the surface without weakening the wood
- D. It hardens the wood and makes it resistant to probing

32. Which is the best reason supervised field experience is required in many states?

- A. It replaces the need to pass any written exam

- B. It exempts the applicant from continuing education
- C. Written exams alone fully confirm field competence
- D. It confirms practical competence the written exam cannot

33. Which is the most accurate statement about restricted-use pesticides?

- A. They may be applied freely by any member of the public
- B. They are exempt from all FIFRA labeling requirements
- C. They may be applied only by or under a certified applicator
- D. They carry no signal word because they are nontoxic

34. Which is the single most decisive factor in choosing between soil treatment and fumigation?

- A. The color of the structure's exterior siding
- B. Whether the infestation is subterranean or widespread drywood
- C. The age of the licensed inspector performing the work
- D. The day of the week the treatment is scheduled

35. Which is the most accurate statement about how termites digest cellulose?

- A. They rely on symbiotic gut microorganisms to break it down
- B. They secrete their own enzymes that fully digest it alone
- C. They cannot consume cellulose and feed only on honeydew
- D. They digest lignin instead, leaving cellulose untouched

36. Which is the most precise reason a slab-on-grade foundation is difficult to inspect?

- A. Termites can enter hidden through cracks and penetrations

- B. The crawlspace is fully open for direct examination
- C. All structural wood is exposed above the slab surface
- D. Slab foundations contain no plumbing penetrations

37. Which is the most accurate statement about the inspection diagram?

- A. It replaces the written report in its entirety
- B. It pinpoints findings and inaccessible areas precisely
- C. It primarily estimates the property's market value
- D. It is optional and rarely used in modern practice

38. Which is the best reason bait toxicants are deliberately slow-acting?

- A. To reduce the manufacturing cost of each station
- B. So the stations never require any further monitoring
- C. So foragers survive to share the toxicant through the colony
- D. To kill foraging workers instantly at the station

39. Which is the most accurate statement about carpenter bees?

- A. They bore round, finger-width holes into bare softwood
- B. They consume the wood they tunnel through as food
- C. They prefer well-painted and sealed interior trim
- D. They build mud tubes from soil up the foundation

40. Which statement about exceeding the labeled application rate is the most accurate?

- A. It is acceptable when the infestation is severe

- B. It is required to guarantee faster colony elimination
- C. It is illegal, more hazardous, and environmentally harmful
- D. It is encouraged because higher rates are always safer

41. Which is the most reliable single sign of a subterranean termite infestation?

- A. Six-sided fecal pellets beneath the infested wood
- B. A round, finger-width hole in a bare deck railing
- C. Mud tubes built of soil bridging the ground to the wood
- D. Fine, flour-like frass sifting from small round holes

42. Which is the most accurate statement about a conducive condition versus an active infestation?

- A. A conducive condition favors infestation but is not infestation
- B. A conducive condition is always proof of active termites
- C. A conducive condition and an active infestation are identical
- D. A conducive condition can only exist alongside live insects

43. Which is the primary reason the worker caste, not the swarmer, causes structural damage?

- A. Swarmers chew through wood faster than any worker
- B. Soldiers consume the wood while defending the colony
- C. Workers forage for and consume the cellulose in the wood
- D. The queen leaves the nest to feed directly on the wood

44. Which is the most accurate statement about particle drift versus vapor drift?

- A. Particle drift occurs only after the product evaporates

- B. Vapor drift is the movement of soil particles during trenching
- C. Particle and vapor drift are two names for the same event
- D. Particle drift is droplet movement during application; vapor drift is afterward

45. Which is the single best summary of why a colony continues damaging wood after a swarm ends?

- A. The hidden workers remain and keep consuming wood
- B. The swarmers were the only wood-consuming caste
- C. Eliminating the swarmers destroys the entire colony
- D. The swarm itself was the actual source of the damage

46. Which is the most accurate statement about white rot wood-decay fungus?

- A. It browns the wood and cracks it into a cubical pattern
- B. It destroys cellulose and lignin, leaving wood bleached and stringy
- C. It only discolors the surface without weakening the wood
- D. It grows and damages wood even when the wood stays dry

47. Which is the most precise reason states administer their own termite certification programs?

- A. The EPA has no involvement in pesticide regulation at all
- B. FIFRA delegates applicator certification to the states
- C. Termite biology changes significantly at each state line
- D. A single national license already governs every state

48. Which is the most accurate description of the NPMA-33 form?

- A. A federal pesticide product registration application

- B. A certificate verifying continuing education credits
- C. A business license issued by the state agency
- D. A standardized wood-destroying insect inspection report form

49. Which is the best reason a free inspection from a treatment-selling company may not satisfy a lender?

- A. Free inspections are explicitly prohibited by federal law
- B. The report comes from an interested party with potential bias
- C. Handwritten reports are never accepted by any lender
- D. The report would be too detailed for the lender to use

50. Which is the single most accurate statement about the purpose of trophallaxis in a colony?

- A. It circulates gut microbes and shared food among nestmates
- B. It allows the colony to abandon the egg-laying queen
- C. It enables termites to digest lignin without microbes
- D. It replaces the colony's need to forage for cellulose

Practice Exam 9: Answer Key and Full Explanations

1. A — A broken mud tube that termites rebuild with fresh material is the most reliable indicator of current activity, since live colonies repair damaged tubes quickly. Structure age, old swarm history, and crumbling tubes do not confirm present activity. Fresh repair is direct evidence of a living colony.

2. C — The most accurate statement is that drywood termites live within the wood and need no external moisture or soil contact. They do not require soil moisture, build mud tubes, or form the largest colonies. Independence from moisture is their defining trait.

3. A — The primary reason a non-repellent is preferred is that termites tunnel through it unaware and transfer it to nestmates via trophallaxis. It does not repel by odor, kill instantly, or always cost the least. Colony-wide transfer is its key advantage.

4. B — The waist shape, broad in termites versus pinched in ants, is the most dependable single distinguishing feature. Color, size, and season are unreliable. The waist can be checked instantly and accurately in the field.

5. C — Whole-structure tent fumigation is most appropriate for a drywood infestation distributed throughout a multi-story structure, because the gas reaches all hidden galleries. Perimeter trenching and localized injection cannot reach distributed colonies, and ventilation addresses moisture. Fumigation provides the necessary reach.

6. D — The most accurate statement is that using a product inconsistently with the label is illegal, the basis of "the label is the law." The entire label is enforceable, not just first aid, and it may never be disregarded. Label compliance is mandatory under FIFRA.

7. A — Controlling moisture is the single most effective long-term preventive measure, because moisture favors nearly all wood-destroying organisms except drywood termites. Painting, raising the thermostat, and clearing vegetation are far less central. Moisture is the master condition.

8. B — The most precise description of the worker's role is foraging for and consuming the cellulose in wood, which is why workers cause the damage. Defending, laying eggs, and founding colonies belong to other castes. Workers are the destructive caste.

9. B — The most accurate statement is that a lower LD50 indicates a more toxic substance, because a smaller dose is lethal. The relationship is inverse, LD50 measures acute toxicity, and values differ among products. A smaller lethal dose means greater toxicity.

10. C — The best reason the substructure is prioritized is that it sits closest to the soil, the main subterranean entry route, exposing sill plates and joists. It is not the easiest area, the most valuable space, or the only drywood habitat. Proximity to soil makes it high-yield.

11. D — The most accurate statement is that conducive conditions favor infestation but are not themselves infestation. They are not proof of active termites and can exist without any infestation present. They are reported as risk factors.

12. D — Six-sided fecal pellets ejected through kick-out holes are the most reliable sign specific to drywood termites. Mud tubes and soil-streaked galleries indicate subterranean termites, and clean galleries with insect parts indicate carpenter ants. The pellets are the drywood signature.

13. A — The primary purpose of a termite shield is to force termites into the open where they are visible for inspection. It does not poison termites, permanently block entry, or provide structural support. Its value lies in aiding detection.

14. B — The most accurate statement is that states may exceed the federal baseline but not fall below it, since the EPA sets the floor. The EPA does not issue individual licenses, states need not be identical, and FIFRA does not prohibit state programs. This explains state-to-state variation.

15. C — The single best first step is gathering the property's prior pest and treatment history, which directs the inspection and is often required by state standards. Drilling, preventive treatment, and certifying by appearance are not appropriate first steps. History-gathering prevents missed findings.

16. A — The most accurate reason mixing and loading is highest-risk is that the product is handled in its most concentrated form. It is not diluted or harmless at this stage, PPE is required, and the label always applies. Concentrate exposure is the most hazardous handling.

17. D — The most accurate distinction is that carpenter ants excavate wood to nest but do not eat it. They do not consume wood, require soil contact, or leave six-sided pellets. Not eating wood is the key contrast with termites.

18. B — The most precise reason a treated zone must be continuous is that subterranean termites will exploit any gap to reach the wood. Continuity is not about cost or ventilation, and termites do not die instantly near treated soil. Any break defeats the barrier.

19. D — The most accurate statement is that wood-decay fungi require elevated wood moisture to grow. They cannot grow in dry wood, do not reduce wood moisture, and differ from mold in weakening the wood. Their presence always signals a moisture problem.

20. D — The best description is that the inspection covers only visible, accessible areas, so a "termite-free" guarantee is unsupportable. Termites can infest structures, no law forbids positive findings, and the guarantee does not affect the fee. Hidden areas limit certainty.

21. C — The most accurate statement is that the Formosan termite builds moisture-retaining carton nests and forms huge colonies. It does not live only in dry attics, ignore moisture and soil, or produce drywood pellets. The carton nest and colony size are its signatures.

22. B — The single most important environmental concern specific to soil termiticides is contamination of wells and groundwater, since the product goes directly into the soil. Noise, staining, and temperature are not the central concern. Protecting water sources is critical.

23. D — The most accurate statement is that the CORE exam covers universal safety knowledge for all applicators. It is not limited to WDI identification or agriculture, and it does not replace category exams. CORE is the shared foundation for every category.

24. A — The best reason to document inaccessible areas is to disclose the inspection's limitations and protect against liability. It is not padding, a substitute for the diagram, or a guarantee about hidden areas. Honest disclosure is a core protection.

25. D — The most accurate statement is that swarmers are reproductives whose presence signals a mature colony. They do not consume wood, build mud tubes, or constitute the whole colony. Eliminating them does not destroy the hidden workers.

26. C — The most reliable way to confirm activity is breaking the tube open to check for live termites or fresh repair. Measuring, photographing, or treating-and-waiting do not establish activity. Fresh repair confirms a living colony.

27. D — The most accurate statement is that borates protect against termites, beetles, and decay fungi. They are not limited to carpenter bees, do not survive repeated wetting well, and have low mammalian toxicity. Their broad-spectrum protection is their value.

28. C — The primary advantage of pre-construction treatment is that the soil and structural wood are fully accessible before the structure is enclosed. It is not done after occupancy, does not rely on drilling finished slabs, and never waives the label. Full access is the key benefit.

29. C — The most accurate reason trophallaxis is central to control is that it spreads slow-acting baits and non-repellents colony-wide. It does not enable flight, defense, or eliminate the need to eat cellulose. Food-sharing is the transfer mechanism that makes colony control possible.

30. A — The most accurate statement is that DANGER indicates the highest acute toxicity of the three signal words. It does not indicate the lowest toxicity, waive PPE, or exempt the product from label directions. The signal word governs the level of care required.

31. B — The most accurate description of brown rot is that it browns the wood, which cracks into a cubical pattern. White rot leaves bleached, stringy wood, and mold only discolors. The cubical cracking is the brown rot signature.

32. D — The best reason supervised experience is required is that it confirms practical competence the written exam cannot. It does not replace the exam, exempt the applicant from continuing education, or imply the exam alone confirms field skill. Field time confirms real-world ability.

33. C — The most accurate statement is that restricted-use pesticides may be applied only by or under a certified applicator. They are not freely available to the public, not exempt from FIFRA, and not nontoxic. Their hazard is why their use is restricted.

34. B — The single most decisive factor is whether the infestation is subterranean or widespread drywood: subterranean calls for soil treatment or baiting, widespread drywood for fumigation. Siding color, inspector age, and scheduling are irrelevant. Treatment must match the organism and extent.

35. A — The most accurate statement is that termites rely on symbiotic gut microorganisms to break down cellulose. They cannot digest it with their own enzymes alone, do not feed only on honeydew, and do not digest lignin instead. This partnership underlies termite biology.

36. A — The most precise reason a slab-on-grade foundation is difficult to inspect is that termites can enter hidden through cracks and penetrations. There is no open crawlspace, the wood is not all exposed, and slabs do have penetrations. Concealed entry is the challenge.

37. B — The most accurate statement is that the diagram pinpoints findings and inaccessible areas precisely. It does not replace the written report, primarily estimate value, or sit unused in modern practice. Precise location is its purpose, and it is often required.

38. C — The best reason bait toxicants are slow-acting is so foragers survive to share the toxicant through the colony. They are not slow for cost or to avoid monitoring, and they must not kill foragers instantly. Slow action enables colony-wide elimination.

39. A — The most accurate statement is that carpenter bees bore round, finger-width holes into bare softwood. They do not eat the wood, prefer painted trim, or build mud tubes. The round hole in bare wood is their signature.

40. C — The most accurate statement is that exceeding the labeled rate is illegal, more hazardous, and environmentally harmful. It is not acceptable for severe infestations, not required for speed, and higher rates are not safer. Applying exactly at the labeled rate is required.

41. C — The most reliable single sign of a subterranean infestation is mud tubes built of soil bridging the ground to the wood. Six-sided pellets indicate drywood termites, a finger-width hole indicates carpenter bees, and flour-like frass indicates beetles. Mud tubes are the subterranean signature.

42. A — The most accurate statement is that a conducive condition favors infestation but is not infestation. It is not proof of active termites, not identical to an infestation, and can exist without live insects. It is a risk factor reported separately.

43. C — The primary reason workers cause damage is that they forage for and consume the cellulose in wood. Swarmers and soldiers do not consume wood, and the queen does not leave to feed. The worker is the destructive caste.

44. D — The most accurate statement is that particle drift is droplet movement during application, while vapor drift is vapor movement afterward. Particle drift does not occur only after evaporation, vapor drift is not soil movement, and the two are distinct. Distinguishing them guides management.

45. A — The single best summary is that the hidden workers remain and keep consuming wood after a swarm ends. Swarmers are not the wood-consuming caste, eliminating them does not destroy the colony, and the swarm was not the damage source. The unseen workers are the ongoing threat.

46. B — The most accurate statement is that white rot destroys cellulose and lignin, leaving wood bleached and stringy. Brown rot causes cubical cracking, mold only discolors, and decay fungi cannot grow in dry wood. The bleached, stringy texture identifies white rot.

47. B — The most precise reason states run their own programs is that FIFRA delegates applicator certification to the states. The EPA is involved in pesticide regulation, termite biology does not change at state lines, and there is no single national license. Delegation produces the state variation.

48. D — The most accurate description is that the NPMA-33 is a standardized wood-destroying insect inspection report form. It is not a registration application, a CE certificate, or a business license. It provides a recognized format for documenting findings.

49. B — The best reason a free inspection may not satisfy a lender is that the report comes from an interested party with potential bias. Free inspections are not illegal, handwritten reports are not categorically rejected, and the concern is bias, not detail. This conflict undermines credibility.

50. A — The single most accurate statement is that trophallaxis circulates gut microbes and shared food among nestmates. It does not let the colony abandon the queen, enable lignin digestion without microbes, or replace foraging. This sharing also spreads baits and non-repellents through the colony.