

YOUR FREE READER'S COMPANION

The CSLB B Exam Cram Pack

*A companion to California General Building (B) Contractor License Exam Prep · by
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Thanks for picking up the study guide. This companion is the part you carry with you: fold it into your notebook, tape it to the wall over your desk, or read it in the parking lot before you walk in to test. It pulls the two exam blueprints, the highest-yield topics, a week-by-week study plan, and the exam-day checklist into a few pages you can drill in an afternoon. Every weighting here matches the official CSLB content outlines, so nothing in this pack contradicts what you studied in the book. One honest note up front: this is an independent study aid. It is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or connected to the Contractors State License Board or any government agency, and licensing rules change, so always confirm current fees, thresholds, and code editions directly with the CSLB before you rely on them.

Almost nobody who fails the B license fails because the material was too hard. They fail because they studied the trade they already know and skated past the Law and Business exam, which is where most points quietly leak away. The exam is predictable. It is built straight from a published blueprint, and once you know which sections carry the weight, you know exactly where to spend your hours. Carry this pack, drill the heavy sections first, and walk in calm. You have built things harder than this test. - Marcus

The Two Exams, and Why the Blueprint Is Your Map

To earn a California Class B (General Building) license you must pass TWO separate closed-book, multiple-choice exams: the Law and Business exam, which every classification takes, and the General Building (B) trade exam. Both draw their questions in fixed proportions from a public content outline. That is the single most useful fact in this whole pack, because it means the test is not a mystery. Each section below carries a known percentage of the questions. Study to those percentages, not to your comfort zone.

Law and Business exam blueprint

This is the exam most B candidates underestimate. You run a jobsite fine, so you assume you will pass the "paperwork" test, and then it bites you. Look at the weights: Contract Requirements, Employment, and Business Finances alone are well over half the exam.

#	Section	Weight
1	Business Organization and Licensing	13%
2	Business Finances	15%
3	Employment Requirements	20%
4	Insurance and Liens	12%
5	Contract Requirements and Execution	21%
6	Public Works	5%
7	Safety	14%

General Building (B) trade exam blueprint

The trade exam is written from the general's chair. You are not asked to size a panel like an electrician or set a boiler like an HVAC contractor. You are asked what a B contractor must coordinate, sequence, and inspect. Core Trades is nearly a third of the whole exam, so that is where your trade-study hours belong.

#	Section	Weight
1	Planning and Estimating	15%
2	Framing and Structural Components	20%
3	Core Trades (plumbing, electrical, HVAC, concrete, earthwork, insulation, roofing)	30%
4	Finish Trades (paint, tile, flooring, cabinetry, plaster and drywall, windows and doors, landscaping)	20%
5	Safety	15%

Note: weightings above follow the published CSLB content outlines (Law and Business, and General Building B). CSLB updates these outlines from time to time. Confirm the current outline on the CSLB

website before your exam date.

High-Yield Topics Checklist

These are the concepts the exams return to again and again. Check each box only when you can explain the idea out loud without notes. Where a specific dollar amount, day count, or code minimum matters, the exam tests the principle far more than the exact figure, and the figures can change, so learn the concept and verify the current number with the CSLB or the 2025 California codes.

Law and Business

Done	Topic	What to be able to do
☐	Class B scope	Explain the "two unrelated trades" rule and when a single-trade job belongs to a C classification
☐	Qualifier roles	Tell RME from RMO, and know who can certify qualifying experience
☐	Business entities	Compare sole proprietor, partnership, corporation, and LLC on liability
☐	Accounting basics	State Assets equals Liabilities plus Owner's Equity; read a balance sheet vs an income statement
☐	Employment law	Know the difference between an employee and an independent contractor, and payroll obligations
☐	Workers' compensation	Explain when coverage is required and what an exemption means
☐	Contract required elements	List what a valid construction contract must contain, including the license number
☐	Home improvement contracts	Explain the written-contract rule and the capped down payment (verify current cap with CSLB)
☐	Progress payments and retention	Compute a hold-back on work earned this period, not on the full contract
☐	Mechanics liens	Know the preliminary notice concept and the purpose of a lien
☐	Bond and licensing basics	State why a contractor bond is required (confirm current bond amounts with CSLB)

General Building (B) Trade

Done	Topic	What to be able to do
☐	Quantity takeoff and estimating	Read plans and price a job from a takeoff, spread overhead, add profit
☐	Framing and loads	Identify load paths, common framing members, and what a structural inspection checks
☐	Plumbing coordination	Sequence rough-in before cover-up; know DWV slope concept (verify slope by pipe size in current Plumbing Code)

[]	Electrical basics	Use Ohm's Law (V equals I times R) and Power (P equals V times I) at a coordination level
[]	HVAC sizing sense	Convert tons to BTU per hour (1 ton equals 12,000 BTU per hour)
[]	Concrete yardage	Compute cubic yards and add waste; always convert inch thickness to feet first
[]	Earthwork	Explain cut, fill, lifts, compaction, and positive drainage away from the foundation
[]	Roofing and slope	State slope as rise over run per 12; convert slope to percent
[]	Finish trades sequencing	Know the order of finishes and common defects to catch before sign-off
[]	Title 24 documentation	Recognize that missing energy paperwork stalls final inspection

An Eight-Week Study Plan

You do not need eight weeks, but you do need a path. Front-load the two heaviest exams' heaviest sections while your energy is high, then shift to practice questions, then simulate under a timer. Rereading feels productive and is the weakest way to study. Working questions, missing some, and rereading only the subsection you missed is what actually moves your score.

Week	Focus	Goal for the week
1	Getting licensed and exam format	Understand the two-exam path, the trap words, and how the test is scored
2	Law: Contract Requirements (21%) and Employment (20%)	Master the two heaviest Law sections first
3	Law: Business Finances (15%), Safety (14%), Licensing (13%)	Cover the next tier; drill accounting and safety recall
4	Law: Insurance and Liens (12%), Public Works (5%); full Law practice exam	Close out Law; take a timed practice exam and review every miss
5	Trade: Core Trades (30%)	Spend the most time here; drill the math (concrete, electrical, HVAC)
6	Trade: Framing (20%) and Finish Trades (20%)	Build coordination and sequencing knowledge
7	Trade: Planning and Estimating (15%), Safety (15%); full Trade practice exam	Finish Trade content; take a timed practice exam and review every miss
8	Simulate and shore up weak spots	Re-work all missed questions under a one-minute-per-question timer; reread only bold callouts

If you have less time, compress but keep the order: heaviest sections first, practice exams in the last third, timed simulation at the very end.

Exam-Day Checklist

Two exams, possibly on different days. Treat each one the same way. The morning of, reread only the bold callouts and the two blueprint tables in this pack. That is your highest-value review, and it keeps you calm.

Ready	Item
☐	Confirm your exam date, time, and test center location the day before
☐	Bring valid photo identification exactly as required by the scheduling notice
☐	Bring your admission or confirmation paperwork
☐	Know that a basic calculator is provided; you set up the problem, it does the arithmetic
☐	Arrive early; plan for traffic and check-in lines
☐	Eat something and hydrate; both exams reward a steady head, not a rushed one
☐	Read every question twice, watching for MINIMUM, BEST, EXCEPT, NOT, and ALWAYS
☐	Answer every question; there is no penalty for guessing, so never leave a blank
☐	Pace to about one minute per question; flag the hard ones and come back
☐	For math, write the setup and label units before you touch the calculator

Confirm current exam-day rules (allowed items, identification requirements, calculator policy) with the CSLB and your test vendor before you go. These procedures change.

The Mistakes That Sink People

Most missed points on both exams trace back to a short list of avoidable errors. Read this the night before. If you dodge these, you are ahead of most of the room.

Mistake	Why it costs points	The fix
Skimming the Law and Business exam	It is over half of what you must pass, and it feels "boring," so people under-study it	Give it equal or greater study time; it is where scores quietly leak
Ignoring the trap words	MINIMUM, BEST, EXCEPT, NOT, and ALWAYS flip what the question is really asking	Circle the trap word before you read the answers
Answering trade questions as a tradesperson	The B exam asks what the general coordinates and inspects, not how the specialist performs the task	Reframe every trade question: "What does the B contractor check?"
Concrete thickness left in inches	Multiplying feet by feet by inches gives a wildly wrong yardage	Always convert inch thickness to feet, then divide cubic feet by 27
Retention figured on the full contract	Holds back far too much and signals you do not understand progress billing	Apply the retention rate to the amount earned THIS period only
Confusing down payment with progress payment	A classic home improvement contract trap	Down payment is before work; progress payment is money earned as work is done
Memorizing figures that may have changed	Fees, caps, and thresholds shift, and a stale number is a wrong answer	Learn the concept; verify current figures with the CSLB and 2025 codes
Leaving questions blank	There is no penalty for guessing	Answer everything; a guess beats a blank every time

That is the whole pack. Drill the heavy sections first, work practice questions until the setups are automatic, and reread only the callouts the night before. Confirm every current rule, fee, and threshold with the CSLB, because this guide is an independent study aid and is not affiliated with the CSLB. You have done the work. Walk in and pass.

- Marcus Delgado