

Able Bodied Seaman - Rules of the Road Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	5
Answers	8
Explanations	10
Next Steps	15

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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.

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!

Questions

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- 1. Under what condition can a sailboat be without its masthead light?**
 - A. When sailing and not motoring**
 - B. When anchored**
 - C. In fog**
 - D. During daylight**

- 2. In the acronym, what does 'Some' represent?**
 - A. Pilot**
 - B. Seaplane/including WIG aircraft**
 - C. Sail**
 - D. Overtaking vessel**

- 3. Which four vessel types are described as turning off side, stern lights, and if required masthead lights when underway and not making way?**
 - A. Fishing; trawling; NUC; RAM**
 - B. Fishing; crossing; NUC; RAM**
 - C. Trawling; NUC; RAM; Sailing**
 - D. Fishing; Trawling; Sailing; RAM**

- 4. Three Greens on a yard indicates Mine clearance.**
 - A. Mine clearance**
 - B. Goes bang real hard**
 - C. Pilot ahead**
 - D. Sailing machine**

- 5. If a fishing vessel has gear extended 150 meters to the side, what day shape addition is used?**
 - A. Cone pointing down**
 - B. Cone pointing up**
 - C. Ball**
 - D. Diamond**

- 6. Which set of vessels is described as turning off side, stern, and if required masthead lights when underway, not making way?**
- A. Fishing; trawling; NUC; RAM**
 - B. Fishing; Trawling; RAM; Power driven**
 - C. Trawling; NUC; RAM; Sailing**
 - D. Fishing; NUC; RAM; Crossing**
- 7. What are the intervals for restricted visibility underway sound signals?**
- A. Intervals of not more than five minutes**
 - B. Intervals of not more than two minutes**
 - C. Intervals of not more than one minute**
 - D. Intervals of not more than ten minutes**
- 8. When the tow length exceeds 200 meters, what additional day shape must be displayed?**
- A. Circle**
 - B. Square**
 - C. Triangle**
 - D. Diamond**
- 9. In a near-collision, the stand-on vessel should take action to avoid collision.**
- A. Maintain its course and speed.**
 - B. Turn to port.**
 - C. Reverse engines.**
 - D. Take action to avoid collision.**
- 10. The absence of a masthead light indicates the vessel is which type?**
- A. Sailing vessel**
 - B. Power-driven vessel**
 - C. NUC**
 - D. Fishing vessel**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Under what condition can a sailboat be without its masthead light?

- A. When sailing and not motoring**
- B. When anchored**
- C. In fog**
- D. During daylight**

The key idea is that the masthead light signals that a vessel is under power or making way, so it isn't required for a vessel that is sailing and not using its engine. When a sailboat is powered only by its sails and not by the motor, it isn't considered a power-driven vessel moving through the water, so the forward white masthead light can be omitted. You still follow the navigation-light requirements for a sailing vessel when underway at night, but the masthead light specifically isn't needed in this scenario. The other situations involve conditions where different lights or situations apply (anchored, fog, daylight), so they don't align with the exception for a sailboat that is sailing without motoring.

2. In the acronym, what does 'Some' represent?

- A. Pilot**
- B. Seaplane/including WIG aircraft**
- C. Sail**
- D. Overtaking vessel**

Some is used as a reminder in the rules that not all craft you encounter on the water are traditional ships or boats. In this context, some craft operate on the water surface as aircraft, specifically seaplanes and wing-in-ground (WIG) craft. They are treated as vessels when they are on the water, which is why the best answer is that some represents Seaplane, including WIG aircraft. The other terms don't fit because they don't denote a class of waterborne craft: a pilot is a person, sail refers to a propulsion method, and an overtaking vessel describes a maneuver, not a vessel type included in this mnemonic.

3. Which four vessel types are described as turning off side, stern lights, and if required masthead lights when underway and not making way?

- A. Fishing; trawling; NUC; RAM**
- B. Fishing; crossing; NUC; RAM**
- C. Trawling; NUC; RAM; Sailing**
- D. Fishing; Trawling; Sailing; RAM**

In COLREGS, some vessels have lighter or modified light requirements when they're underway but not making way, so other boats aren't misled by the normal running lights during slow or halted operations. This is especially true for vessels whose activities or status could be mistaken for a vessel on the move, or that operate in ways that make full running lights impractical or confusing. The four vessel types described as allowed to turn off side and stern lights (and masthead lights if required) under this condition are fishing vessels (including those engaged in trawling) and vessels not under command (NUC) or restricted in their ability to maneuver (RAM). For these kinds of vessels, the rules recognize that the standard running lights can be misleading or unnecessary when they're underway but not making way, so permissible signaling focuses on the status they actually have rather than a full set of navigation lights. Other options mix scenarios or vessel types that don't carry this specific exemption, so they aren't the best fit for describing this particular lighting relaxation. In short, the correct grouping reflects fishing-related operations plus the two categories (NUC and RAM) that have distinct signaling needs when not making way.

4. Three Greens on a yard indicates Mine clearance.

- A. Mine clearance**
- B. Goes bang real hard**
- C. Pilot ahead**
- D. Sailing machine**

In naval signaling, the signals shown on the yardarm carry specific meanings, and a distinctive arrangement of signals is used to convey operations in progress. Three green signal pennants displayed on the yardarm is the recognized indication that mine clearance is under way in the area. So the best interpretation is that mine clearance operations are active, and you should proceed with heightened caution and follow any directions from authorities. The other phrases don't align with standard signaling meanings, so they aren't applicable interpretations of this specific signal.

5. If a fishing vessel has gear extended 150 meters to the side, what day shape addition is used?

- A. Cone pointing down
- B. Cone pointing up**
- C. Ball
- D. Diamond

Day shapes quickly tell other mariners what a vessel is doing. For a fishing vessel with gear extended to the side, the flag to signal this activity is a cone-shaped day shape. When the gear runs 150 meters or more to the side, the required shape is a cone pointing up. This specific cone orientation alerts others that long fishing gear is out abeam, helping nearby vessels keep safe distances and plan passes accordingly. The other shapes describe different situations and wouldn't communicate the same fishing-with-long-gear status.

6. Which set of vessels is described as turning off side, stern, and if required masthead lights when underway, not making way?

- A. Fishing; trawling; NUC; RAM**
- B. Fishing; Trawling; RAM; Power driven
- C. Trawling; NUC; RAM; Sailing
- D. Fishing; NUC; RAM; Crossing

When a vessel is underway but not making way, the navigation-light requirements change for certain operations or statuses. Some vessels—like fishing vessels (including trawlers) and those that are Not Under Command or Restricted in Ability to Maneuver—are allowed to display only the lights necessary to indicate their status and avoid confusion or interference with their work. Because of the nature of their activity or their maneuvering limits, they may turn off the side and stern lights (and, if required, the masthead light) while still showing the lights that identify their situation. This is why the set that includes fishing, trawling, Not Under Command, and Restricted in Ability to Maneuver is described as turning off those running lights when underway but not making way. Other vessel types would normally show the standard running lights, so they don't fit this description.

7. What are the intervals for restricted visibility underway sound signals?

- A. Intervals of not more than five minutes
- B. Intervals of not more than two minutes**
- C. Intervals of not more than one minute
- D. Intervals of not more than ten minutes

In restricted visibility, vessels underway must signal their presence at regular short intervals so nearby ships know someone is there and can gauge how close they are. The standard interval for this signal is not more than two minutes, using a single prolonged blast. This cadence keeps the signal frequent enough to be reliable in fog or haze, helping to prevent collisions. Intervals longer than two minutes (five, ten minutes) could leave others without timely notice, increasing the risk of misunderstanding or collision. The one long blast itself is the recognized signal, typically lasting about 4 to 6 seconds, and is repeated at up to two-minute intervals.

8. When the tow length exceeds 200 meters, what additional day shape must be displayed?

- A. Circle
- B. Square
- C. Triangle
- D. Diamond**

Towing operations rely on day shapes to communicate what's happening to other vessels. A vessel that is towing shows a basic day signal that indicates towing, and when the tow is particularly long, an extra signal is added to warn others about the extended length. If the tow exceeds 200 meters, the additional day shape required is a diamond. This diamond signals to approaching vessels that the tow is long, so they should give extra room and proceed with caution. The other shapes listed aren't used to indicate a long tow in this rule.

9. In a near-collision, the stand-on vessel should take action to avoid collision.

- A. Maintain its course and speed.
- B. Turn to port.
- C. Reverse engines.
- D. Take action to avoid collision.**

In a near-collision, the stand-on vessel must take action to avoid collision if the situation indicates that the other vessel's actions alone aren't reducing the hazard. This follows Rule 8, which requires taking early and decisive action to prevent a collision. The stand-on vessel isn't absolved from acting just because it's supposed to maintain course and speed in a crossing situation; when risk remains or the other vessel isn't maneuvering to avoid, the stand-on must maneuver to create a safe passing. So the best response is to take action to avoid collision—alter course, adjust speed, or both in a clear, timely way. The goal is to resolve the risk promptly rather than sticking with the present path or waiting for the other vessel to change course.

10. The absence of a masthead light indicates the vessel is which type?

- A. Sailing vessel**
- B. Power-driven vessel
- C. NUC
- D. Fishing vessel

In night navigation, lights show a vessel's status and type. A masthead light, the white light at the top of the mast, is required for power-driven vessels underway. Sailing vessels, when under sail only, are not required to display that top white light. So seeing no masthead light strongly indicates the vessel is a sailing vessel (under sail). Other vessels like NUC or fishing vessels have their own light patterns, but the absence of the masthead light specifically points to a sailing vessel under sail.

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://ablebodiedseamanrulesofroad.examzify.com>

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

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