

Boatswain's Mate Chief (BMC) SWE Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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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. How many parts does the boat record have?**
 - A. 4**
 - B. 5**
 - C. 6**
 - D. 7**

- 2. In inland signaling, which phrase indicates the intent to leave another vessel on its port side?**
 - A. Alternating course to starboard - inland**
 - B. I intend to leave you on my port side - inland**
 - C. I intend to leave you on my starboard side - inland**
 - D. Alternating course to port - inland**

- 3. Which form is the Petty Officer Employee Review Worksheet?**
 - A. CG 4903**
 - B. CG 1650**
 - C. CG 3307**
 - D. CG 5357**

- 4. Who is the originator of directives?**
 - A. COMDT - the originator**
 - B. Area commanders**
 - C. Commanders of maintenance and Logistics commands**
 - D. Commanding Officer and Officer in Charge**

- 5. A strobe light should flash how many times?**
 - A. 20-40 flashes**
 - B. 50-70 flashes**
 - C. 70-90 flashes**
 - D. 100-120 flashes**

- 6. The tattletale line specification of 43-1/2 inches with 40 inches between connection points also applies to which line type?**
- A. Nylon plaited**
 - B. Nylon braided**
 - C. Polyester plaited**
 - D. Aramid braided**
- 7. What does the acronym CGC stand for in the vessel designation CGC Dauntless?**
- A. Coast Guard Cutter**
 - B. Coast Guard Craft**
 - C. Cutter Coast Guard**
 - D. Civil Guard Cutter**
- 8. A storm anchor should be at least**
- A. 50-100% as effective as the service anchor**
 - B. 100-125% as effective as the service anchor**
 - C. 125-150% as effective as the service anchor**
 - D. 150-200% as effective as the service anchor**
- 9. The Count Team is responsible for reconciling which systems?**
- A. Payroll and budget systems**
 - B. Inventory and purchasing systems**
 - C. Trade and compliance systems**
 - D. OFA and subsidiary systems**
- 10. Topside icing is commonly known as what?**
- A. Ice accretion**
 - B. Ice buildup**
 - C. Freezing spray**
 - D. Sea spray**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. How many parts does the boat record have?

- A. 4
- B. 5
- C. 6**
- D. 7

The boat record is designed with six sections to capture every essential aspect of a small craft's status. These sections cover identification and equipment, readiness for service (including fuel, water, and stores), maintenance history and upcoming work, inspections and certifications, crew assignments, and final approvals with signatures. Having six parts ensures you can quickly verify what the boat has, what it needs, what work has been done, and who approved it. If there were fewer sections, important areas like maintenance history or certification status could be left out, making it harder to assess the boat's current readiness.

2. In inland signaling, which phrase indicates the intent to leave another vessel on its port side?

- A. Alternating course to starboard - inland
- B. I intend to leave you on my port side - inland**
- C. I intend to leave you on my starboard side - inland
- D. Alternating course to port - inland

In inland signaling, you convey exact passing intentions with a direct statement about which side you'll keep the other vessel on. Saying "I intend to leave you on my port side" clearly communicates that you will maneuver so the other vessel remains on your left as you pass. This leaves no ambiguity about which side will be used and reduces the chance of misinterpretation in busy or restricted waters. The other phrases describe changing course to a side or suggest a different passing arrangement, which can be less explicit or open to confusion. Therefore, this phrase is the clear, best way to indicate the intent to leave the other vessel on your port side.

3. Which form is the Petty Officer Employee Review Worksheet?

- A. CG 4903
- B. CG 1650
- C. CG 3307**
- D. CG 5357

The form labeled CG-3307 is the Petty Officer Employee Review Worksheet. This worksheet is designed specifically to gather and organize feedback on a petty officer's performance, leadership, and readiness for advancement in a standardized way. It helps supervisors record duties performed, competencies demonstrated, and development needs, so the upcoming formal evaluation can be accurate and consistent across the command. It also serves as a planning tool for setting goals and communicating expectations to the petty officer. The other forms listed are used for different administrative tasks and purposes, not for this particular worksheet.

4. Who is the originator of directives?

A. COMDT - the originator

B. Area commanders

C. Commanders of maintenance and Logistics commands

D. Commanding Officer and Officer in Charge

Directives are policy and instruction documents that guide how the service operates, and the person who creates and issues these directives across the entire Coast Guard is the Commandant (COMDT). The Commandant sets overarching policy and command-wide directives that apply to all units. Area commanders and the commanders of maintenance and logistics commands operate within their assigned scope, issuing directives that apply to their commands and implementing higher directives, but they do not originate directives for the whole service. Likewise, a Commanding Officer or Officer in Charge issues orders at their specific unit in line with higher directives, not as the source of service-wide policy. So the originator of directives is COMDT.

5. A strobe light should flash how many times?

A. 20-40 flashes

B. 50-70 flashes

C. 70-90 flashes

D. 100-120 flashes

A strobe's flash rate is chosen to maximize visibility and quick recognition while conserving power. The best rule of thumb is about one flash per second, which makes the signal clearly noticeable without feeling like a continuous glow. The range of 50-70 flashes per minute provides that roughly 0.8-1.2 Hz rate, striking a balance so other vessels and rescuers can easily identify it as a signaling device in various light conditions. Rates much slower can be hard to spot at a distance, especially in daylight, while rates that are too fast can blur together or waste battery life without adding clarity.

6. The tattletale line specification of 43-1/2 inches with 40 inches between connection points also applies to which line type?

A. Nylon plaited

B. Nylon braided

C. Polyester plaited

D. Aramid braided

Tell-tale lines are sized so their flutter behavior is predictable and easy to read as wind flows past a sail. The 43-1/2 inch overall length with 40 inches between the attachment points is a standard dimension that gives the telltale enough slack to flutter clearly without being so loose that it flaps erratically. This sizing is typical for nylon plaited tell-tales because that construction offers the right balance of flexibility and stiffness: it stays extended between mounts enough to show a clean flutter pattern, yet remains responsive to gusts. Other line constructions—nylon braided, polyester plaited, or aramid braided—behave differently in stiffness and stretch, which would alter how the telltale moves and would not match this standard dimension. So the specified measurements are associated with nylon plaited tell-tales.

7. What does the acronym CGC stand for in the vessel designation CGC Dauntless?

- A. Coast Guard Cutter**
- B. Coast Guard Craft**
- C. Cutter Coast Guard**
- D. Civil Guard Cutter**

CGC stands for Coast Guard Cutter. In U.S. Coast Guard vessel naming, the prefix before the ship's name signals both the service and the status of the vessel. "Coast Guard" identifies the service, and "Cutter" indicates a commissioned vessel, a ship with its own commanding officer and crew. So CGC Dauntless is a Coast Guard Cutter. The other phrasings aren't used in Coast Guard designations, which is why they aren't correct.

8. A storm anchor should be at least

- A. 50-100% as effective as the service anchor**
- B. 100-125% as effective as the service anchor**
- C. 125-150% as effective as the service anchor**
- D. 150-200% as effective as the service anchor**

In storm conditions you need a storm anchor with significantly more holding power than your service anchor to withstand stronger wind, current, and wave forces. The idea is to have a large enough margin so the anchor can still hold even if seabed conditions are less favorable or loads increase unexpectedly. That's why the guideline says the storm anchor should be at least 150-200% as effective as the service anchor. Providing 1.5 to 2 times the holding power gives a practical safety buffer, helping prevent dragging and keeping the vessel secure when conditions deteriorate or riding out a storm requires stronger resistance. The service anchor is for routine mooring with modest loads, so the storm anchor must offer substantially more capability. So the choice reflecting 150-200% as effective holds the best balance of necessary strength and practical gear selection, offering sufficient margin over the service anchor.

9. The Count Team is responsible for reconciling which systems?

- A. Payroll and budget systems**
- B. Inventory and purchasing systems**
- C. Trade and compliance systems**
- D. OFA and subsidiary systems**

The main idea here is that the Count Team's reconciliation work focuses on making sure the primary financial system and its supporting detail systems agree with each other. They compare totals and balances between the OFA system and the subsidiary systems, look for variances, and make the necessary adjustments so that the general ledger and all sub-ledgers reflect the same numbers. This alignment is essential for accurate financial reporting and audits, because it catches data mismatches early and keeps the financial records consistent across systems. The other pairings—payroll with budget, inventory with purchasing, and trade with compliance—are separate operational areas, not the focus of the Count Team's reconciliation duties.

10. Topside icing is commonly known as what?

- A. Ice accretion**
- B. Ice buildup**
- C. Freezing spray**
- D. Sea spray**

Ice accretion is the term used for the accumulation of ice on a vessel's surfaces in freezing conditions. Topside icing describes ice forming on the upper parts of the hull and superstructure when supercooled water droplets or freezing spray contact surfaces and freeze. This term is preferred because it captures the actual buildup of ice on surfaces, rather than just naming the source (freezing spray or sea spray) or using a vague label like "ice buildup." The result—ice accretion—impacts weight, stability, and the performance of equipment, which is why identifying it with the precise term matters.

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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://bmcswe.examzify.com>

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

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