

Captain's Rules of the Road Practice Test (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. According to the Rules of the Road, a vessel underway and making way in fog shall sound every two minutes—**
 - A. one prolonged blast.**
 - B. two short blasts.**
 - C. one short blast.**
 - D. three prolonged blasts.**

- 2. Bare steerageway is best described as the speed at which a vessel can maintain steering and headway.**
 - A. The maximum speed to operate**
 - B. The minimum speed to maintain steering and headway**
 - C. Full speed ahead**
 - D. Stop**

- 3. For Rule 14 to apply, which of the following is true?**
 - A. Both vessels must be power-driven.**
 - B. They must be meeting on reciprocal or nearly reciprocal courses.**
 - C. The situation must involve risk of collision.**
 - D. All of the above.**

- 4. What is the minimum sound signaling equipment required aboard a vessel 10 meters in length?**
 - A. A bell only**
 - B. A whistle only**
 - C. A horn only**
 - D. Any means of making an efficient sound signal**

- 5. Which marking identifies a partly submerged object being towed, as used in inland rules?**
 - A. A diamond shape on the towed object.**
 - B. A red flag.**
 - C. A circular buoy.**
 - D. A square white flag.**

- 6. Which vessel is NOT required to carry an after masthead light?**
- A. A vessel under 20 meters**
 - B. A vessel of 45 meters in length trolling**
 - C. A vessel over 60 meters**
 - D. A sailing vessel**
- 7. In a crossing on open water, a vessel fishing is in a crossing with a sailing vessel on its starboard side. Which vessel is the stand-on vessel?**
- A. The fishing vessel**
 - B. The sailing vessel**
 - C. The other vessel**
 - D. Neither stands**
- 8. Which vessel is classified as 'restricted in her ability to maneuver' when transferring cargo while underway?**
- A. Vessel underway**
 - B. Vessel engaged in fishing**
 - C. Vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver**
 - D. Vessel power-driven**
- 9. A power-driven vessel towing another vessel astern (tow less than 200 meters) shall show two masthead lights in a vertical line instead of either the forward or after masthead lights.**
- A. False**
 - B. Only during daylight**
 - C. Only in Inland waters**
 - D. True**
- 10. Which vessel would exhibit sidelights when underway and not making way?**
- A. A sailing vessel**
 - B. A vessel at anchor**
 - C. A fishing vessel**
 - D. A power-driven vessel**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. According to the Rules of the Road, a vessel underway and making way in fog shall sound every two minutes—

- A. one prolonged blast.**
- B. two short blasts.**
- C. one short blast.**
- D. three prolonged blasts.**

In fog, ships use specific whistle signals to convey their status to others, so everyone can anticipate actions in limited visibility. For a vessel that is underway and making way, the required signal is a single prolonged blast, repeated at intervals of not more than two minutes. This long, continuous sound clearly communicates that you are moving and present, helping other vessels gauge your presence and speed so they can maneuver safely around you. The other options don't fit this particular rule. Two short blasts and three prolonged blasts are associated with different situations or signals and do not match the standard indication for a moving vessel in fog.

2. Bare steerageway is best described as the speed at which a vessel can maintain steering and headway.

- A. The maximum speed to operate**
- B. The minimum speed to maintain steering and headway**
- C. Full speed ahead**
- D. Stop**

Bare steerageway is the minimum forward motion needed for the rudder to be effective and for the vessel to keep moving while you steer. At this threshold, there's enough water flowing past the rudder to enable steering and maintain headway; if you go any slower, steering becomes unreliable and the boat can drift. So the best description is the minimum speed necessary to maintain both steering control and forward motion. It isn't about going fast, so it isn't the maximum or full speed, and it isn't stopping, since stopping would remove any headway and steering ability.

3. For Rule 14 to apply, which of the following is true?

- A. Both vessels must be power-driven.**
- B. They must be meeting on reciprocal or nearly reciprocal courses.**
- C. The situation must involve risk of collision.**
- D. All of the above.**

Rule 14 covers head-on or near head-on encounters between power-driven vessels. It only applies when all of these conditions are met: both vessels are power-driven, they are on reciprocal or nearly reciprocal courses, and the situation involves a risk of collision. When these elements line up, the rule governs how the vessels should navigate to avoid a collision, typically guiding them to alter course to starboard to pass port to port.

4. What is the minimum sound signaling equipment required aboard a vessel 10 meters in length?

- A. A bell only**
- B. A whistle only**
- C. A horn only**
- D. Any means of making an efficient sound signal**

The fundamental idea is that any vessel must carry a working sound signaling device, not a specific type. For a vessel 10 meters long, the rule requires the ability to produce an effective sound signal, and the exact instrument isn't fixed. A bell, a whistle, a horn, or any other device capable of making a clear, audible signal satisfies this requirement, as long as it can be used to signal properly in the conditions at hand. The key is the capability to signal efficiently, not the particular kind of device.

5. Which marking identifies a partly submerged object being towed, as used in inland rules?

- A. A diamond shape on the towed object.**
- B. A red flag.**
- C. A circular buoy.**
- D. A square white flag.**

Day shapes on inland waterways tell other vessels what situation is ahead. A diamond shape on the object that's being towed is the standard mark used to indicate a partly submerged object is towed. This specific cue alerts nearby boats that there is a hazard that isn't fully visible and that it is attached to a towing vessel, so extra room and caution are wise. The other visuals listed don't carry this exact meaning: a red flag is a general warning signal in different contexts, a circular buoy is a navigational aid, and a square white flag isn't the inland marking for a partly submerged towed object.

6. Which vessel is NOT required to carry an after masthead light?

- A. A vessel under 20 meters**
- B. A vessel of 45 meters in length trolling**
- C. A vessel over 60 meters**
- D. A sailing vessel**

The main idea is that the after masthead light is required only on power-driven vessels that meet a length threshold. Specifically, two masthead lights (forward and after) are required on power-driven vessels of 50 meters or more in length. Vessels shorter than 50 meters do not have that obligation. So a trolling vessel that is 45 meters long does not need to carry an after masthead light. A vessel over 60 meters would be expected to have both masthead lights, and sailing vessels follow different lighting rules since they aren't governed by this power-driven two-masthead-light requirement.

7. In a crossing on open water, a vessel fishing is in a crossing with a sailing vessel on its starboard side. Which vessel is the stand-on vessel?

- A. The fishing vessel**
- B. The sailing vessel**
- C. The other vessel**
- D. Neither stands**

In a crossing, the stand-on vessel is the one that has the other vessel on its starboard side and must maintain course and speed while the other vessel takes early action to avoid. Here, the sailing vessel is on the fishing vessel's starboard side, so the fishing vessel has the other on its starboard side and is the stand-on vessel. The sailing vessel is the give-way vessel and should maneuver to avoid. The stand-on vessel continues on its present course unless it becomes clear the other vessel isn't maneuvering to avoid or a risk of collision exists.

8. Which vessel is classified as 'restricted in her ability to maneuver' when transferring cargo while underway?

- A. Vessel underway**
- B. Vessel engaged in fishing**
- C. Vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver**
- D. Vessel power-driven**

Transferring cargo while underway places a vessel into the RAM category because the operation restricts her ability to maneuver. When cargo is being transferred, lines, equipment, and the need to maintain a steady position relative to the transfer target limit the vessel's ability to change speed or direction. Under COLREGS, a vessel restricted in her ability to maneuver is defined as one whose work nature prevents easy maneuvering, with cargo transfer underway being a classic example. That's why this vessel is considered restricted in her ability to maneuver, and other vessels should take appropriate action to avoid affecting her operations. The other descriptions describe vessels by their general type or propulsion, but they do not by themselves indicate a restriction in maneuverability.

9. A power-driven vessel towing another vessel astern (tow less than 200 meters) shall show two masthead lights in a vertical line instead of either the forward or after masthead lights.

- A. False**
- B. Only during daylight**
- C. Only in Inland waters**
- D. True**

When a power-driven vessel is towing another astern and the tow is under 200 meters, you signal the towing arrangement by showing two white masthead lights in a vertical line at or near the stern, instead of using the usual forward and after masthead lights. This distinct vertical pair clearly communicates to other vessels that you are actively towing and helps them gauge the situation, especially in close quarters or crowded waters. The change is made to indicate the presence and length of the tow, reducing the chance of misinterpretation of your vessel's status. This signaling applies regardless of daylight or inland versus international waters—the towing configuration is about how you display lights to indicate a tow, not about the time of day or the waterway category.

10. Which vessel would exhibit sidelights when underway and not making way?

- A. A sailing vessel**
- B. A vessel at anchor**
- C. A fishing vessel**
- D. A power-driven vessel**

Sidelights are part of the running lights that vessels must display to show their presence and direction at night. When a vessel is underway, these lights (red on the port side and green on the starboard side) help other vessels determine where you are and which way you're heading. If a vessel is underway but not making way, it's still considered underway, so the same running lights apply. A power-driven vessel fits this scenario most clearly: it has propulsion and is regarded as underway even if it isn't currently moving forward, so it must exhibit sidelights to signal its position and course. Vessels at anchor are not underway and use anchor lights instead; fishing vessels have special lighting for gear operations, which differ from the standard sidelights; and a sailing vessel, while it can be underway under sail, isn't the clearest match to the condition of "underway and not making way" in this context.

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://captainsrulesoftheroad.examzify.com>

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

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